



City of Apache Junction

Development Services Department



Date: 1/26/2021

Project Name: DR HORTON 8100 – Preapplication Comments **Please note additional comments may be provided at subsequent reviews. Upon formal submittal of the MPC please include a comment response letter to all comments below. **

Superstition Vistas Overview:

Planning for the 275 square mile area known as Superstition Vistas began in 2008 and concluded in 2011 with the Superstition Vistas Final Report & Strategic Actions. The city was an active participant and sponsor of that effort. Since that time the implementation activities called for in the planning document have been minimal consisting of only an amendment to the Pinal County Comprehensive Plan. It now rests on the City of Apache Junction, the State Land Department and the initial developers to ensure that the first 8,100 acres developed adhere to the espoused vision for the Vistas.

The city of Apache Junction has a 20 year perspective on the unplanned, haphazard, leap-frog, piecemeal growth that has occurred in “San Tan Valley”. The city and the developers/owner now have the opportunity to develop the first portion of the Superstition Vistas with the forethought that was expected from the Superstition Vistas planning and visioning process.

While the pre-application submittal did not provide much detail and could be viewed as a perfunctory step in a much more detailed and thorough process, the city desires to clearly articulate its expectations for this, the first phase of Superstition Vistas. While this first phase may not be able to provide for all of the attributes of the Superstition Vistas from a practical standpoint, it must set the tone for the remainder of the future development and it must ensure that decisions made in this first phase do not preclude incorporating features long into the future. As the PADAs, MPC zoning documents, Master Infrastructure Plans are prepared, close attention and reverence should be paid to ensure that the Superstition Vistas Final Report and Strategic Actions are fully incorporated into the approved and adopted documents. Otherwise, the four year planning effort will be for naught. The lessons learned, the desired outcomes and strategic actions are the fruit of that extensive planning process. The listed Lessons Learned and Desired Outcomes must be envisioned as core tenets of this first phase of the vast development. The city shares these desired outcomes.

Additionally, what are the lessons learned from the “Great Recession,” a worldwide pandemic, a projected intolerable metro heat island, and the increasing uncertainty of drinking water supplies that go along with an ever changing global and western region climate? Will this development set an example for resilience and economic prosperity for the region? Will it be a continuation of the last 70 years of urbanization in the Valley of the Sun? The city’s General Plan also envisions that this development will be different. That it will be better, in fact the best example of the future of suburban communities found anywhere.

From the Superstition Vistas Final Report and Strategic Actions

Desired Outcomes: The following is the set of desired outcomes and policy prescriptions.

Outcome #1: Planning and Development of Superstition Vistas Protects and Enhances Natural and Environmental Resources

- Implement development patterns that restore, protect and conserve environmental resources
- Make Superstition Vistas one of the most environmentally sustainable communities in the country by focusing on balanced development, water conservation and capture, energy efficient buildings, and land use and transportation systems that reduce auto use
- Ensure that new buildings are built with a low carbon footprint and with cost effective energy conservation materials
- Protect the steeper slopes of the foothills of the Superstition Mountains
- Protect the habitats and corridors of the washes and streams
- Consider open space as essential infrastructure on par with sewer, water and roadways
- Establish specific goals for parks that are easily accessible to residents in every neighborhood
- Ensure that future development focuses on reducing high peak demands for electricity and water, as well as reducing annual consumption
- Conserve and retain storm water in Superstition Vistas, and develop it for on-site irrigation
- Prioritize the implementation of the most cost effective measures to conserve resources while retaining a strong financial return

Outcome #2: Superstition Vistas Contributes to a Robust and Sustainable Economy

- Ensure that job and housing growth are matched over time to the extent feasible
- Create good quality jobs for people of all ages
- Develop economic catalysts to spark job growth in advance of housing growth
- Create an environment in the new centers that supports new and expanding entrepreneurs and small business owners
- Attract people and businesses by developing vibrant urban centers and great neighborhoods
- Develop methods of providing infrastructure timed with development needs
- Recognize quality of life, natural beauty, diversity and the uniqueness of the Superstition Vistas as important elements of efforts to attract and keep businesses
- Cooperate with regional economic development efforts to achieve economic success and prosperity
- Support developing an educational system that results in an educated workforce in all segments of the community and includes training for a wide range of job skills
- Support the development of one or more universities as a major economic catalyst
- Foster cooperation among Pinal County, Maricopa County and neighboring jurisdictions for economic development

Outcome #3: Transportation Planning and Investments in Superstition Vistas Provide for Multi-Modal Regional and Local Travel

- Ensure that Superstition Vistas develops major through roads and transit facilities that connect Phoenix and Tucson, thus strengthening the Sun Corridor megapolitan
- Ensure that Superstition Vistas has a well-designed and sufficiently funded transportation plan that will meet the needs of the new development for auto, transit, walking, and biking
- Ensure that a network of roads and streets is developed within Superstition Vistas that allows for great connectivity in the developed areas
- Ensure that a robust transit system, with proper governance, is developed within Superstition Vistas that is well funded, and grows with the Vistas
- Create a high quality non-auto connection to the Gateway Airport from the business centers of Superstition Vistas
- Structure the transportation system to provide appropriate choices so that all segments of the community can

meet daily living requirements • Develop in a way that encourages walking and biking for a substantial part of travel demands • Develop walkable neighborhoods and commercial centers • Coordinate the transportation system with the land uses so that people can choose to reduce their reliance on the automobile by living closer to work, living or working close to transit, and living in pedestrian and bicycle friendly areas • Provide efficient and cost-effective movement of goods both within and beyond Superstition Vistas • Implement adequate and efficient new transportation infrastructure at the same time development is anticipated. • Assure adequate and timely maintenance of infrastructure as Superstition Vistas ages • Develop and fund a preventive maintenance program that extends the life of the infrastructure built in Superstition Vistas

Outcome #4: Superstition Vistas Enables the Market to Provide Balanced Housing and Community Amenities in Order to Maximize Financial Return and Capture More Growth in a Sustainable Community

• Provide housing of different types and styles that is within the purchasing power of people of a spectrum of incomes and life stages in Superstition Vistas • Create and maintain safe neighborhoods • Provide quality housing and schools • Ensure that Superstition Vistas grows cultural institutions—the arts, music, food, dance, and theater • Provide locations for festivals and gatherings to celebrate the community of Superstition Vistas • Ensure that Superstition Vistas grows a heart—one or more downtowns—and ensure that they are healthy and vibrant • Develop land use regulations that achieve the Vision of Superstition Vistas, that are adaptable over time, and that facilitate timely redevelopment or infill consistent with the evolving long-term Vision for Superstition Vistas

Outcome #5: Superstition Vistas Provides Equity and Opportunity for All Residents • Ensure that the K-12 education system that develops in Superstition Vistas is among the very best

• Ensure there is opportunity for small, medium-sized and minority owned businesses • Ensure that the housing choices in Superstition Vistas allow for Arizonans of all incomes to settle in this area. • Ensure all residents have access to quality housing, jobs, education and health care • Commit Superstition Vistas to be inclusive, have a variety of income levels, and be accessible to all races, cultures, and ethnicities • Respect the cultural and political identity of Native Americans as Superstition Vistas develops • Ensure that intolerance and prejudice, explicit or covert, is not used in the formation of land use and other public policy

Outcome #6: Planning Processes for Superstition Vistas are Transparent and Implementable

• Continue coordinated planning among the State Land Department, Pinal County, and other stakeholders • Ensure transparent and inclusive planning efforts as Superstition Vistas develops • Develop a clear implementation and funding program for the Vision and future adopted plans

* The City's 2020 General Plan, Active Transportation Plan and the Superstition Vistas Final Report and Strategic Actions: lessons learned and desired outcomes should form the basis of the MPC planning efforts and MPC District Zoning. The MPC District Zoning will be reviewed under these planning principles.

Preapplication Staff Comments (Staff Contact: Sidney Urias – 480-474-5087, Email: surias@apachejunctionaz.gov):

1. A Fiscal Impact Analysis will be required for the proposed development. The scope of the Fiscal impact should delineate both the “first phase”- 2,800 acres and the entirety of the 8,100 acres. Analysis should include at minimum the following:
 - Total number of residential roof tops at total build out for the 2,800 acres/8,100 acres
 - Anticipated square footages for Commercial, Industrial, Mixed-use and Institutional
 - Timeline for buildout of the 2800 acres
 - Projected tax revenue from all sources
 - Number of jobs created
 - Anticipated Development Impact and Permitting Fees
 - Public operation and maintenance costs of infrastructure and amenities
 - Expected population growth
2. How will the proposed development be unique? A high-quality development is expected from City Council, City Staff and the residents of Apache Junction. How will the “Reverence” project show reverence to the community’s rich history and development aspirations?
3. In order to adequately provide timely reviews of proposed plans Staff will need a high level development schedule from both developers. This is particularly important since the City anticipates both developers progressing at different rates. Examples of milestones include MPC submittal, anticipated MPC council approval, start of backbone infrastructure, clearing and grading of first phase of subdivisions, preliminary plat submittals, start of residential construction and anticipated home sales. Also, how many SF permits are to be anticipated each year?
4. Please provide a Neighborhood Participation Plan. Due to the size and scope of the proposed development, Staff recommends multiple community meetings and public hearings with the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council.
5. Please note the proposed MPC and supporting/associated documents will have to adhere to the goals, policies and regulations of the General Plan, Active Transportation Plan and Engineering Standards. Please update the narrative and MPC documents to include such references.
6. Design Standards will be required as a part of the MPC for residential, commercial and industrial development. The design standards will be reviewed by the Master developer and administratively reviewed by City Staff unless an appeal is requested by the applicant. Specific provisions will be outlined in the PADA.

7. Please provide Staff with an updated land use map noting densities, intensities, lot mixes and community amenity locations. Both development sites should be integrated and function as one Master Planned Community.
8. Due to the size, scope and population increase, the City will require sites for additional public facilities, such as police and fire stations, library, public parks and possibly a City maintenance yard. Acreage amounts will vary according to use.
9. The City and Apache Junction Water District participated in a growing water smarter program through the Sonoran Institute and Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy. The City embraces the nexus between land use and water planning. The City will require adherence to the “One Water” principle as described and outlined in the 2020 General Plan. Utilizing the 1H2O “One Water” principle recognizes that the region is facing a future with less water and where stormwater, potable water, wastewater are truly interconnected through water conservation, water reuse, stormwater recharge, and wastewater recharge/infiltration. Stormwater, potable water, non-potable water, and wastewater reports shall reflect the 1H2O principles.
10. Please note the MPC should include overarching principles for community theming, design standards, development standards, open space and amenities, monument signage, wall and fencing and landscape standards. Once the MPC document and land use map is received, more detailed and specific comments will be forthcoming. Development expectations and examples include but are not limited to the following principles:
 - Development requires a balance of economic, environmental and community goals without favoring one at the expense of another.
 - Mixed-use centers should be developed to group destinations.
 - The residential and non-residential development should encompass electric vehicle and smart infrastructure design.
 - Housing options should appeal to a wide range of needs and incomes. Housing choices must offer both urban conveniences, access to open space and options ranging from apartments, attached homes to single-family detached homes. Please note, the City continues to discourage Active Adult Communities (55+) that limit broader community interaction.
 - The proposed development should seek to increase water and energy conservation through LEED certified best practices.
 - Principles of Low Impact Development will be required. Please review the “The Greater Phoenix Infrastructure Handbook”. Link: <https://sustainability.asu.edu/sustainable-cities/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/02/LID-2018-Book.pdf>
 - A variety and high-level of architectural standards will be required. Residential design shall deemphasize garage dominant architecture by requiring significantly recessed, side entry, alley loaded or rear yard garages. Non-residential development should be located along the street, therefore buffering parking lots and facilities. Corporate architecture will not be allowed.

- The development should include a spectrum of land uses not only encouraging a variety of residential proposals but also employment nodes, corridors and opportunities.
- All proposed development will be required to be Dark Sky compliant.
- Pedestrian comfort and safety shall be required by way of detached and meandering sidewalks.
- Tree themed streets will be required within the development.
- Strategically placed pavers, entry features and monument signage will be required.
- Ensure connectivity for persons 8-80 internally: parks, trails, walkways, transit, open space, retention basins. Externally: regional corridors, trails, open space system, transit, passenger rail, regional road network.
- Site design should encourage clustering of development and preservation of natural amenities and open space.
- Neighborhoods should include a variety of public spaces (tot-lots, village greens, ballfields, community gardens, etc.) that are strategically distributed and physically well defined.
- Link development with quality of place = shade, urban habitat for birds, pollinators, community gardens
- Design emphasis should be on developing neighborhoods, not subdivisions.
- Non-motorized transportation should be accommodated in new road corridors and strategically retrofitted into existing transit corridors and greenway linkages.
- Strategically placed and adequately sized useable open space at both the community and neighborhood scales.
- Small-scale/pocket commercial parcels should be integrated throughout neighborhoods to encourage walking and alternate modes of transportation for entertainment, dining and shopping.
- Civic buildings and public gathering places are important and require prominent accessible sites.
- Community planning should recognize that natural resources are system-dependent, not limited to jurisdictional boundaries.
- Community, subdivision and site design should include desirable views and vistas. The views of the Superstition Mountains should be carefully considered throughout the planning phases. The views of the Superstitions should be a premier community amenity. After the Grand Canyon, it is the second most photographed landscape in Arizona.
- The scale and configuration of streets and open spaces (parks, greens, and squares) should be attractive and comfortable to pedestrians.
- Design is important and should contribute to the community's safety, security and attractiveness.
- Complete communities have defining edges with an identifiable center. A center should consist of a full and balanced mix of residential, commercial, office, recreational, cultural and civic uses.
- Community planning should create an efficient and cost effective system of public services, transportation, recreation, cultural institutions and housing to achieve a viable, sustainable region.