



# City of Apache Junction

Development Services Department



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## PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** September 14, 2021

**CASE NUMBER:** P-21-50-MPC "Auction Property at Superstition Vistas"

**OWNERS:** D.R. Horton, Inc.

**APPLICANT:** Patrick Brown, D.R. Horton, Inc.

**REQUEST:** Approval of Master Planned Community Rezoning and Development Unit Plan for approximately 2,783 acres from RS-GR (General Rural Low Density Single-Family Detached Residential) to MPC (Master Planned Community) to facilitate the construction of a maximum of 10,940 new residential units and a maximum of 443,400 square feet of Non-Residential Development.

**LOCATION:** The Auction Property is bounded by Elliot Avenue to Ray Avenue and from Meridian Drive to the Idaho Road alignment.

**GENERAL PLAN/  
ZONING DESIGNATION:** Master Planned Community ("MPC") currently zoned RS-GR (General Rural Low Density Single-Family Detached Residential).

**SURROUNDING USES:** North: Vacant State Land;  
South: Vacant State Land;  
East: Vacant State Land;

West: Residential subdivisions in the City of Mesa.

**BACKGROUND :**

On November 4, 2020, the Arizona State Land Department ("ASLD") conducted an auction of 2,783 acres ("Auction Property"). The Auction Property is bounded by Elliot Avenue on the north to Ray Avenue on the south and from Meridian Drive on the west to the Idaho Road alignment on the east. The Auction Property is located within the greater 275 square miles commonly referred to as "Superstition Vistas". The Auction Property has historically been vacant and without any development history.

As the successful bidder at the auction, D.R. Horton was tasked by ASLD to master plan and rezone approximately 8,090 acres known as "The Site". The Site is made up of two parcels, the first is approximately 2,783 acres, and the second parcel consists of approximately 5,307 acres, which is being retained by the State Land Department for future disposition (the "Retained Property").

At the time of the auction, the Auction Property and portions of the Retained Property were situated in an unincorporated area of Pinal County. The portion of the Retained Property north of Elliot Avenue is already inside the city limits. D.R. Horton also accepted the responsibility to request annexation of the Auction Property and portions of the Retained Property into the municipal limits of the City of Apache Junction. The annexation process started with the filing of a blank annexation petition with the Pinal County Recorder on December 22, 2020.

D.R. Horton has also partnered with Brookfield Residential Properties, Inc. to develop approximately half of the Auction Property.

**PROPOSALS :**

P-21-50-MPC is a proposed Master Planned Community ("MPC") rezoning of the 2,783 acres for the Auction Property.

The MPC plan contains the criteria by which the City will administer and regulate the zoning and development of the Auction Property. The MPC includes procedures and guidance regarding Amendments, Land Use Budgets, reference to Infrastructure Master Plans, and conformance to the Apache

Junction 2020 General Plan's goals and policies. The second half of the MPC plan includes a more detailed plan known as the Development Unit Plan. The Development Unit Plan provides criteria and guidelines regarding Permitted Uses, Open Space and Parks Framework Plan, Landscape Framework Plan, Lighting Plans, Residential Development Standards, Commercial Development Standards, Architectural Guidelines, Street Standards and Signage to name a few.

The Auction Property has been divided in two Development Units (see Development Unit exhibit). D.R. Horton will be responsible for the planning and development of Development Unit 1 while Brookfield Residential will be responsible for the planning and development of Development Unit 2. Due to the regulations and comprehensive planning efforts found in the MPC plan, each development unit will be developed and function as a desirable community with unique and innovative features.

Furthermore, The MPC plan will replace the existing Apache Junction Zoning Ordinance and will guide the planning and design of any development located within the bounds of the Auction Property.

**GENERAL OVERVIEW OF MPC CONTENTS:**

The text and tables below are meant to provide a general overview of the contents of the MPC plan. It is not meant to serve as a comprehensive list, but rather a high level overview of the proposed plans and regulations.

**LAND USE BUDGET (page 65 of the MPC) :**

<b>Land Use Budget</b>			
<b>Description</b>	<b>Development Unit 1</b>	<b>Development Unit 2</b>	<b>Auction Property Total</b>
<b>Gross Acreage</b>	1,375 AC.	1,408 AC.	2,783 AC.
<b>Minimum Required Open Space (15%)</b>	206 AC.	211 AC.	417 AC.
<b>Units</b>	5,470 D.U.	5,470 D.U.	10,940 D.U. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Maximum Density Transfer In (30%)</b>	1,640 D.U.	1,640 D.U.	
<b>Units With Maximum Transfer In</b>	7,110 D.U.	7,110 D.U.	
<b>Maximum Density Transfer Out (30%)</b>	1,640 D.U.	1,640 D.U.	
<b>Units With Maximum Transfer Out</b>	3,830 D.U.	3,830 D.U.	
<b>Non-Residential Gross Floor Area</b>	221,700 S.F.	221,700 S.F.	443,400 S.F. <sup>2</sup>
<b>Non-Residential Gross Floor Area Ratio</b>	0.25	0.25	0.25
<b>Maximum Non-Residential Gross Floor Area Transfer In</b>	66,500 S.F.	66,500 S.F.	
<b>Non-Residential Gross Floor Area With Maximum Transfer In</b>	288,200 S.F.	288,200 S.F.	
<b>Maximum Non-Residential Gross Floor Area Transfer Out</b>	66,500 S.F.	66,500 S.F.	
<b>Non-Residential Gross Floor Area With Maximum Transfer Out</b>	155,200 S.F.	155,200 S.F.	

1. Maximum combined number of units allowed within Development Units 1 & 2

2. Maximum combined non-residential gross floor area allowed within Development Units 1 & 2

As noted above, the MPC plan provides maximum densities for the Auction Property. Residential and Non-Residential densities are divided evenly between Development Unit 1 and Development Unit 2. Maximum density transfers from one development unit to another are limited to thirty percent (30%). Residential Units for the Auction property are limited to a maximum of 10,940 units. Maximum Non-Residential square footage for the Auction Property is 443,400 square feet.

**Proposed Land Use Classifications (page 69 of the MPC) :**

<b>Land Use - Lot Size Table</b>							
<b>Land Use Classification</b>	<b>Low Density</b>		<b>Medium Density</b>		<b>High Density</b>		
<b>Land Use Description</b>	<b>Single-Family</b>				<b>Multi-family</b>		
<b>Development Category</b>	SF-10	SF-7	SF-5	SF-2	MF-1	MF-2	MF-3
<b>Density Range</b>	0-4 du/ ac	2-6 du/ ac	4-8 du/ ac	6-16 du/ac	8-16 du/ac	14-31 du/ac	26-40 du/ ac
<b>Lot Size</b>							
<b>9,800 and Up</b>	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
<b>7,000-9,799</b>	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
<b>2,500-6,999 (Detached)</b>		P	P	P	P	P	P
<b>2,500-6,999 (Attached)</b>			P	P	P	P	P
<b>Up to 2,499 (Detached)</b>				P	P	P	P
<b>Up to 2,499 (Attached)</b>				P	P	P	P
<b>Cluster</b>				P	P	P	P
<b>Hammerhead</b>				P	P	P	P
<b>43,560 SF Front Load</b>					P	P	P
<b>43,560 SF Rear Load</b>					P	P	P
<b>Single-Family for Rent</b>					P	P	P
<b>Multi-family</b>					P	P	P

P = Permitted

The MPC also proposes density ranges for lot sizes which are meant to accommodate for a variety of residential product types. The table above is grouped in Low Density, Medium Density and High Density ranges; within those ranges, more specific Development Categories are defined such as SF-10, SF-7, SF-5 and SF-2 for single-family type of development. Development Categories for Multi-family consist of MF-1, MF-2 and MF-3.

**Permitted Uses:**

**Residential Use Regulations (page 70 of the MPC) :**

The MPC provides guidance for Residential Use Regulations. The proposed table generally follows the current Residential Use Regulations noted in the Apache Junction Zoning Ordinance. Staff has reviewed the table and are supportive of the proposed uses in residential districts.

**Non-Residential Use Regulations (pages 72-81 of the MPC):**

Similarly, the MPC provides verbiage regarding Non-Residential Use Regulations. Staff has reviewed the table and believes the allowed uses are conducive to a diverse local economy.

**Residential Development Standards (pages 120-146 of the MPC):**

The Auction Property will include a variety of residential product types from more traditional single-family homes to higher density attached or for rent multi-family. The MPC Plan provides criteria for the planning and development of all residential development categories permitted within the Auction Property. The provided criteria includes minimum lot area, minimum lot width, maximum lot coverage, maximum building height, minimum building spacing, maximum density, minimum setbacks and applicable lot size ranges.

**Commercial Development Standards (pages 147-150 of the MPC):**

The Auction Property will include non-residential uses as a part of the overall community framework. The MPC Plan provides criteria for the planning and development of all non-residential development categories permitted within the Auction Property. The provided criteria includes minimum lot area, minimum lot width, maximum lot coverage, maximum building height and minimum setbacks.

**Proposed Street Sections (pages 156-166 of the MPC):**

The MPC plan has envisioned a diverse community with a range of product types, density and uses. To provide flexibility in creating unique neighborhoods with safe and convenient vehicular circulation, a series of street standards have been proposed. The proposed street sections note when and where certain street sections would be appropriate and provide exhibits to accompany the Major and Local Street Standards tables. The tables also provide guidance regarding the placement and orientation of residential product types and their relationship to the proposed street sections.

### **Architecture (pages 167-187 of the MPC):**

The MPC plan provides examples of a variety of architectural styles in order to facilitate a diverse community. The architectural character of the residences must have details and materials that are authentic to the architectural style being portrayed. The proposed residential product types must include a minimum of four (4) distinct architectural features as outlined for each style. Architectural styles include but are not necessarily limited to Spanish Colonial, Craftsman/Bungalow, Tuscan, Modern Farmhouse, Modern Prairie, Western Contemporary, Mid Century Modern, Territorial Ranch and Traditional Southwest. In addition to the minimum required features, the MPC provides additional verbiage to ensure a diverse streetscape such as, no two identical elevations or floorplans shall be placed side-by-side or directly across from one another and building/garage setbacks ensure that each home has a different positioning on the lot to provide breaks in the street scene.

Furthermore, the MPC plan also provides architectural guidelines regarding multi-family and commercial development.

### **Open Space and Parks Guidelines (pages 188-199 of the MPC):**

Parks and open space are a critical part of the community design. The MPC provides a hierarchy of park types and potential programming options which ensure a high level of quality and lifestyle for the community. The MPC organizes Parks into four (4) distinct categories which differentiate from one another in size and proposed amenities. The categories include, Local Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Community/District Parks and Regional Parks. Exhibits/examples of each park type are provided within the MPC plan for reference. The Development Unit Plan notes the general location and number of proposed parks for each Development Unit.

### **Landscape Standards (pages 201-223 of the MPC):**

The landscape standards section covers minimum plant sizing and location requirements for traditional residential development, multi-family development, non-residential development and parking lot landscaping. Lastly, the section provides language regarding Native Plant Inventory and Salvage plans.

**Engineering Standards (pages 224-238 of the MPC):**

The MPC employs various methods of managing stormwater within the Development Units. In order to provide creative design solutions which support the design of neighborhoods, parks, and other uses, slight amendments to the City Code were required. Moreover, standards for Low Impact Development ("LID") will be utilized within the Property when appropriate such as but not limited to curb openings, sediment traps, stormwater harvesting basins, vegetated or rock bioswale, bioretention systems and curb extensions. By incorporating LID standards and approaches, the impacts of development on ecological and hydrological functions are lessened.

**Lighting and Signage Standards (pages 240-285 of the MPC):**

The MPC lighting standards are intended to create awareness while maintaining the city's dark sky requirements. These standards shall limit light pollution, promote energy conservation, reduce glare, and limit quantity of fixtures. Exterior lighting designs shall encourage a balance between safety and aesthetics, while minimizing negative impacts to the natural environment, night sky and surrounding neighborhoods.

Moreover, the MPC also provides regulations regarding proposed signage. Signage is intended to mark the arrival into a community and provide wayfinding for vehicular and pedestrian destinations. Signage is regulated to protect the high-quality aesthetic of the community and promote the effectiveness of signs with regulating standards.

**PLANNING STAFF ANALYSIS:**

**Relationship to General Plan:**

The subject site is designated by the city's General Plan as "Master Planned Community". The overall proposed density for the Auction Property will not exceed 3.93 du/acre.

**Zoning/Site Context:**

The 2,783 acres is surrounded by vacant land to north, south and east. To the west, the Auctioned Property is immediately contiguous the City of Mesa's jurisdictional limits.

### **Infrastructure Improvements:**

As part of the development of the Auction Property the applicant is responsible for a number of infrastructure improvements including but not limited to the construction of water and sewer lines, booster stations, a water treatment plant and streets.

Furthermore, all other necessary on-site and off-site improvements, such as community amenities, retention basins, accessible routes and trails, and landscape buffers, will be built at the time of development for individual parcels or subdivisions.

### **Public Input:**

Approximately 950 neighborhood open house notification letters were sent to all property owners within a 300-foot radius of the Site. D.R. Horton held three (3) in person open house meetings on June 14, 2021, June 23, 2021 and August 4, 2021 at the Apache Junction Multi-Generational Center. The applicant also held a virtual meeting on June 16, 2021. Approximately sixty (60) people attended the meetings and generally expressed support of the proposed project. Attendees inquired on a range of topics including timing of development, required infrastructure improvements, timing of the SR-24 completion, proposed community amenities, expected home prices and the location of schools and other public facilities to name a few. Details of the meetings are summarized in the final public participation report (attached).

Staff received one (1) call regarding the MPC plan. The resident expressed support of the development, but had questions regarding infrastructure and the timing of the first homes for sale.

### **FINDINGS OF FACT:**

As required by the Apache Junction Zoning Ordinance, a Master Planned Community request may be approved by the City Council after consideration has been given to the criteria outlined below:

1. The development proposed is in conformance with the General Plan.

*Applicant Response: The City of Apache Junction General Plan Land Use Map has designated the Auction Property as "Master Planned Community" (max 20 du/ac). This area was designated as Master Planned Community to provide general guidance for the development of vacant State Trust Land. The Master Planned Community designation ensures that a variety of uses are planned and developed in a comprehensive manner to facilitate a high quality of life and vibrant local community in conformance with the General Plan policies and goals.*

2. The streets and thoroughfares proposed are in harmony and conformance with the General Plan.

*Applicant Response: A Master Transportation Plan has been developed for the Site which contains the requirements for construction of streets and thoroughfares based on the proposed land use budget which supports the goals and policies as described within the General Plan.*

3. The proposed development will be compatible with the character of the surrounding area.

*Applicant Response: The proposed MPC District contains a land use budget that provides for a variety of uses to be planned and developed ensuring compatibility with the surrounding character of the area.*

4. The conceptual site locations proposed for the public facilities such as schools, fire protection, law enforcement, water, wastewater, streets, public services and parks, are adequate to serve the anticipated population within the MPC District.

*Applicant Response: The proposed MPC District has developed Infrastructure Master Plans for water, wastewater, non-potable water, drainage and transportation which supports the proposed land use budget. A tentative location for public facilities such as schools, parks, a fire station, a library or other public services are shown within the development unit plan for each MPC district.*

#### **PLANNING DIVISION RECOMMENDATION**

Staff acknowledges the purpose of the MPC plan is to provide an overall vision and a regulatory framework for the development of the Auction Property. The MPC zoning provides for a range of development options to ensure high-quality development of residential and commercial uses. In addition, the regulatory

framework encourages a more creative approach to the planning of communities and neighborhoods in order to provide for an efficient, aesthetic, and desirable development.

As such, staff is supportive of the proposed project due to the comprehensive planning efforts and infrastructure improvements outlined in the MPC, and respectfully recommends to the Commission that they include the following conditions of approval as part of a favorable recommendation to the City Council.

### **RECOMMENDED MOTION FOR MASTER PLANNED COMMUNITY REZONING**

I move that the Planning and Zoning Commission recommend to the Apache Junction City Council the (APPROVAL/DENIAL) of MPC Rezoning request, case P-21-50-MPC, a request by Patrick Brown of D.R. Horton (owner/applicant), to facilitate the construction of a maximum of 10,940 new residential units and a maximum of 443,400 square feet of non-residential development for the property known as the Auction Property which is generally bounded by Elliot Avenue on the north to Ray Avenue on the south and from Meridian Drive on the west to the Idaho Road alignment on the east, from RS-GR (General Rural Low Density Single-Family Detached Residential) to MPC (Master Planned Community), subject to the following conditions of approval:

- 1) The Auction Property shall be developed in accordance with the MPC, Development Unit Plan, Infrastructure Master Plans and the corresponding Development Agreement.
- 2) Street improvements include but are not necessarily limited to, the construction of new streets and street networks, extension of pavement and the provision of sidewalks, curb, gutter, traffic signals, streetlights, underground utilities, fire hydrants, landscaping and shall be required as part of this planned development project, and subject to review and approval by the City Engineer.
- 3) All applicable permits shall be applied for and plans shall be designed to current City codes. Inclusively, all applicable development fees shall be paid at the time of permits issuance.
- 4) All common areas, amenity areas, and tracts within and immediately adjacent to 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 homeowners association(s).

- 5) The developer's engineer shall meet the civil engineering improvement plans and document requirements, as outlined in the MPC plan and in accordance with the city's approved engineering standards that are in effect at the time of plan submittal.

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Prepared by Sidney Urias  
Principal Planner

Attachments:

- Exhibit #1 - Auction Property MPC
- Exhibit #2 - Site Aerial
- Exhibit #3 - Development Unit Exhibit
- Exhibit #4 - Public Participation Report