AGENDA MATERIAL
DATE 9/17/19 ITEM NO. RA24

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 16, 2019

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

Re: **September 17, 2019 Agenda Item 24 – P19RZ00006 Pima County River Road Rezoning**

The above referenced item is on the Board Agenda for September 17, 2019. According the September 13, 2019 memorandum from Planning Director Chris Poirier, the subject rezoning has triggered the requirement for a super majority vote by the Board of Supervisors. A super majority is required when more than 20 percent protest exists by number of property owners and area of property within the notification area. Based on the letters of protest and petition from neighbors in the Meadowbrooks Subdivision to the north of the subject property, primary concerns include increased traffic, resident's safety, flooding, lighting and decrease in property values.

Not including public hearings, Pima County staff has met with representatives of the Homeowners Association and neighborhood residents four times since the initiation of the Comprehensive Plan, which the Board of Supervisors approved. Dozens of individuals from the Association and the neighborhood participated in the series of meetings and their input helped to frame the proposed use and site layout. Many of the same concerns now being expressed where indicated and addressed during the neighborhood meetings, resulting in the inclusion of numerous Comprehensive Plan policies that have been carried through to the rezoning in the form of conditions, which eliminate or mitigate the immediate concerns.

The proposed rezoning conditions require compliance with all existing applicable development requirements for site access, drainage and layout. A specific condition related to transportation concerns cited by residents requires installation of a dedicated right-turn line at southbound Shannon Road and River Road. From a traffic flow standpoint, the intersection will work better following installation of the dedicated right-turn lane. Regarding flooding concerns, drainage patterns of the site flow away from the Meadowbrook Subdivision in a southwesterly direction. Proposed rezoning conditions requiring water harvesting through the use of retention and detention basins on the site, as well as water conservation measures. No new flooding impacts would occur to the Meadowbrook neighborhood as a result of the development.

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To address the neighborhood's concerns about visual impacts of the development, the building, which would be up to a maximum of 40,000 square feet, has been restricted to one story and a maximum of 24 feet in height for the highest point of the structure. The building has also been located on the site at the most southwesterly corner of the property, which is the farthest place from the neighborhood. Located between the building and the adjacent neighborhood is an existing block wall and a proposed enhanced 40 foot vegetative buffer area that includes an existing 10 foot landscape easement for the Meadowbrook Subdivision.

Within the buffer area will be enhanced landscape and vegetation installation as well as water harvesting basins to retain water to irrigate the vegetation. The site parking is located to the south of the landscape buffer and provides additional buffering between the Meadowbrook Subdivision and the building location. The entire site is approximately 8.5 acres with a significant portion east of the proposed building location and parking remaining in a natural undeveloped condition.

Neighbor concerns about lighting are addressed by a proposed condition requiring all lighting on the site to comply with the Pima County Outdoor Lighting Code and be designed to minimize light trespass on adjacent residential lots. The uses on the site are limited to professional office use, which would occur during normal Monday through Friday business hours. Based on the nature of the use and hours of operation the businesses are not likely to generate safety problems.

Meadowbrook residents have expressed concerns regarding a potential decrease in property values related to the development. Residential property values are primarily affected by overall market conditions, and to a lesser degree adjacent non-residential uses. New office development is a recipient of higher property tax assessments than residential and generally has a positive impact on residential property values given that it serves as a buffer to major roads, in this case River Road and Shannon Road, and is typically quiet and clean with little use in the evenings and on the weekends. Additionally, the proposed professional offices at this location would provide much needed employment in the northwest area and generate overall positive economic benefits. This particular property was identified for office uses by Pima County based on an inquiry for an engineering firm seeking property with proximity to Interstate 10 to expand its Phoenix-based operation into Tucson.

The subject property was originally dedicated to the County at the time of plat approval for the Meadowbrook Subdivision immediately to the north. This property was dedicated as future right-of-way for River Road. During evaluation of options and alignments for River Road, input from residents of the Meadowbrook Subdivision indicated a preference to locate River Road further to the south, at this now current location, and away from the Meadowbrook southern boundary. This remnant parcel remained behind after road construction.

The property is ideally situated at the intersection of River Road and Shannon Road with access to Interstate 10 a short distance away. As with other Pima County properties, the goal is to activate this site for employment generating uses. Based on the proposed rezoning conditions, this goal can be achieved while mitigating the effects of the future development on the surrounding properties and infrastructure. Dozens of individuals from the neighborhood participated in the series of meetings held with County staff and their input helped to frame the conditions attached to the rezoning.

Of the approximately 40 properties abutting the County parcel, roughly 17 are adjacent to the proposed developable portion of the subject property, which is concentrated to the west of the County parcel. The remaining properties will continue being immediately adjacent to the natural desert portion of the site as they currently are. Some residents have requested that the entire property remain natural or be converted into a natural open space park. This is not the highest and best use of the property. Comments to this effect were made by several Planning and Zoning Commissioners during the Planning and Zoning Commission Hearing, which resulted in a unanimous recommendation for approval of the rezoning. Additionally, Pima County owns Prickly Pear Park, a natural desert park, at the Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation offices located just west of this location at 3500 W. River Road.

It is recommended that the BOS approve the rezoning.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask me.

CHH/lab

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Carla Blackwell, Director, Development Services Department
John Moffatt, Director, Economic Development Dep