

FARNSWORTH

BY WILLIAM LYON HOMES

Planned Area Development RSL-2.5 Rezoning

Rezoning Narrative

Southeast Corner | University Drive and 56th Street

**SUBMITTED TO:
CITY OF MESA PLANNING DEPARTMENT
Mesa, Arizona**

**APPLICANT:
IPLAN CONSULTING**

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PURPOSE OF REQUEST

This narrative accompanies a request to rezone the 32 acre Farnsworth owned golf course at Dreamland Villas. The existing zoning on the property is Maricopa County R1-8. The proposed zoning is RSL 2.5 with a Planned Area Development overlay. This proposal will establish City of Mesa zoning of RSL 2.5 PAD. The Planned Area Development overlay is proposed to assist staff in securing an acceptable site plan with the proposed development while also providing flexibility in the development standards to accomplish the garden court design. The current City of Mesa General Plan designation on the property is Medium Density Residential 6-10 (MDR 6-10) which supports the RSL zoning request and proposed site plan density of approximately 7.2 DU/acre.



CITY OF MESA 2025 GENERAL PLAN – LAND USE ELEMENT

The Land use Element of the Mesa General Plan guides future growth and development of the community. The Element illustrates how the City anticipates accommodating its future population growth as well as the eventual development patterns the City wishes to encourage. The General Plan Land Use Map designates this property as Medium Density Residential 6-10 du/acre.

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MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL 6-10, MDR 6-10 (6-10 DU/AC)

Identifies locations where urban density detached or attached single family residential including townhouse, and patio home developments is desirable. The target density for these areas is 6.5 du/ac for detached products and 8.0 du/ac for attached products. Appropriate locations offer direct collector or arterial road access, connections to potable water and sanitary sewer, and proximity to public safety services. The provision of park and open space (15 percent of net area excluding street system) is encouraged to provide opportunities for recreation and non-vehicular pedestrian connections like pathways, trails, etc. Other uses permitted in this category may include Office and limited Neighborhood Commercial of less than 10 acres, where deemed appropriate by the City

CONSISTENCY WITH THE GENERAL PLAN

Per preliminary discussions with staff, both the owner and the City understand that the property was annexed in 2009 and the follow up comparable zoning case was not processed during that time due to an administrative oversight. The owner seeks to work with the city to assist in ensuring the equivalent zoning case is filed in conjunction with the proposed development plans as presented in this application package.

The property is currently zoned Maricopa County R1-8 and not in conformance with the City of Mesa General Plan designation of 6-10 du/acre. However, our proposed RSL-2.5 with a PAD overlay zoning district request is in conformance with this designation. The 228 lots on approximately 32 acres equates to approximately 7.2 du/acre, well within the 6-10 du/acre range allowed by the designation.

SITE LAYOUT AND OPEN SPACE DESIGN

The proposed site plan depicts the subdivision layout and features primary and secondary subdivision access to Albany Street. Vehicular circulation through the subdivision is logical and efficient, with a loop street network that connects the individual private drives with Albany Street. Residents have close access to 56th Street, University Drive, and Main Street.

Proposed community open space comprises 27% of the site development and is primarily located in a central corridor through the subdivision that includes the amenity areas and a meandering sidewalk. Dedicated open space tracts are provided at several locations around the neighborhood in addition to the park openings to the street, facilitating safe and efficient circulation for pedestrians. Because of this connectivity, the centralized open space and amenity areas provide recreational opportunities in near proximity to all lots. Amenities include a community pool, bathroom/changing building, playground structure, turf areas for field sports, and seating opportunities.

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EAST VIEW LLC
1-11-19-041P

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GARDEN COURT CONFIGURATION

The prospective builder, William Lyon Homes, is proposing a "Garden Court" housing product that features six homes that front onto a shared landscape courtyard which provides pedestrian access to the homes. The courtyard landscaping in this area is all open and maintained by the HOA providing a lush and uniform look. Vehicular access to a private two car garage at the rear of the home is via a shared private drive. In addition to eliminating the presence of garage doors on the street, each courtyard is designed to create an intimate enclave of homes where only two homes front the street creating a lower density appearance within the community. Street side sidewalks allow direct access to the two front homes and private sidewalks to the homes in the courtyard, all without any crossing of a driveway. This separation of cars and pedestrians is a great benefit of this product type and harkens back to the early post-war developments where pedestrians had the priority over cars. Private yards are also provided for every home in addition to the shared open spaces. The exhibit below demonstrates how the private (dark green) and public (light green) areas work in the courtyard. Please note how the softer edges of the homes line the local streets and wrap street corner while still fronting appropriately on shared common open space:



This is accomplished through thoughtful design that meets building code standards for building separation and the strategic planning of "Use and Benefit" easements to provide meaningful yard spaces for each home and meet the requirements of the RSL 2.5 zoning district standards. The desired PAD overlay for the development would enable the builder some flexibility from development standards and are justified by exceeding the minimums in other development standards; the quality of community design; and the highly programmed amenities offered.

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The following development standards table is provided for reference:

	Proposed RSL-2.5 PAD	Mesa Code RSL-2.5
Min. Average Lot Area	2,500 SF	2,500 SF
Min. Individual Lot Area	2,597 SF	2,000 SF
Min. Lot Width – Interior Lot	42'	25'
Min. Lot Width – Corner Lot	55'	30'
Min. Lot Depth	53'	75'
<u>Minimum Yards*</u>		
Front – Bldg Wall	8'	12'
Front – Porch	8'	7'
Street Side	8'	10'
Interior Side	5'	3'
Interior Side: Total	10'	8'
Rear (private drive garage)	2' (12' to driveway C/L)	13'
<u>Maximum Height</u>		
Mid-Ridge Max.	30'	30'
Number of Stories	2	2

* Front is defined as the side of the home where the front entry door is located. Rear is defined as the side with the garage face.
BLACK BOLD represents where we exceed the Code requirement.
RED BOLD represents a requested deviation of the Code requirement.

PAD DEVIATIONS PROPOSED

In addition to the deviations identified to the development standards above, we are proposing the below deviations under the PAD which help achieve our goal of providing a single family detached (SFD) product in this General Plan designation (6-10DU/acre) which typically is built as an attached or multi-family product. We believe the requested deviations are warranted as the proposed single family detached product is much more compatible with the single family detached character of the overall area.

Distance to Open Space

Mesa's subdivision regulations require that all SFD units should be within 330' of an active open space area. Although this is a requirement for SFD neighborhoods where you have a larger acreage with numerous open space/retention areas, it is not appropriate for a project of this size or type. The Garden Court product is popular as it trades private yard space for more community open space and amenities. Amenities like a community pool and centralized gathering/play space area, as offered here, would not be offered in a typical subdivision even twice this size. Those amenities, however, benefit all by being centralized meaning a small portion of the perimeter units will have a farther travel distance to access them. In this case, we have designed the project so the maximum walking distance is 500-feet which we believe is a fair compromise given the benefit to the overall community.

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Architectural Diversity

Mesa's Code requires 3 distinct elevations for the first 20 lots and an additional elevation for every additional 20 homes. We have 228 lots thus would need 13 elevations to comply with this requirement. Our proposal includes 4 plans with 3 distinct elevations each resulting in 12 elevations for the project which is one short of the total required. However, we offer an alternative elevation for each of our four plans when placed on the street fronting lot which is unique to that plan therefore we technically offer 246 different elevations for the project which meets the requirement. Thus we do not believe this is a deviation needed but wanted to document the product details in this narrative to assure we were meeting the intent of the requirement.

Entries and Porches

The street presence is very important to the overall look and feel of every neighborhood and as such Mesa's Code requires that 50% of homes include covered front entries/porches that comprise 50% of the front facade with minimum dimensions of 4' deep and 8' wide. Our proposal includes 2 of 4 street facing plan facades that offer covered front porches meeting these criteria thus we believe we are meeting the intent of this requirement. That said, our internal courtyard front facades, which all have covered front entries/porches, fall short of the size requirements but are not visible from the street thus are proposed to be excluded from this requirement. Due to our discussions with Staff, we have made a significant effort in designing the street facing elevations to be in compliance thus believe we are meeting the desired intent of this requirement.

Garage Dimensions

Enclosed garages were thought of as a luxury as little as 20 years ago, even here in Arizona. However, as time has progressed garages have become an expected part of a new home and thus are an important component of home design. Vehicle sizes vary greatly but have actually decreased in recent decades due to technological innovations and efficiencies of design. In response to that, garages have also varied by home builders depending on the target buyer demographic. Rural areas where trucks and SUVs are prevalent see garages that are bigger and conversely urban areas where fuel efficient and small cars dominate, exhibit smaller garages. Our experience with the Garden Court product is that it fits into the urban category where families are smaller and typically own small to medium size vehicles. Coinciding with that trend is the need for the garages to be minimized in a product type of this density to allow for as much interior space as possible given the high density character of the product. The result is a minimum garage space of 19' by 20' which affords sufficient space for two average sized vehicles but can be problematic for vehicles such as long bed trucks or large SUVs. Fortunately, the demographic that is attracted to this product type typically does not have those type of vehicles thus the proposed size has not been an issue in our Garden Court communities in Gilbert and Phoenix.

Unfortunately, Mesa's recently adopted garage dimensions require a 20' by 22' dimension. We understand the reasoning of that requirement as the vast majority of new developments in Mesa are of a lower density larger lot where families would have a need for a larger vehicle. That simply is not the case with this product and /or density. William Lyon Homes has been building this product in the valley for the last 10 years and the buyers have no issue with the garage size. We expect that same result here. Furthermore, we proactively go above and beyond to ensure that prospective buyers understand the garage size in the model complex and ask each buyer to sign a document acknowledging this fact, so buyers know before buying what limitations exist. Over the years,

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ARCHITECTURE

The proposed homes feature distinct architectural detailing, porches, patios, and enhanced entries and fenestration. Since this home design utilizes a rear garage, the front the homes are richly articulated with street forward living area massing and fenestration articulation creating a very welcoming street presence and intimate courtyard feel.

The elevations are intended to provide interest and aesthetically superior elevation design, while sides of homes that front on neighbors' Use and Benefit easements are distinctly mitigated to provide privacy to those yard spaces. Front Porches are standard on all street facing elevations and when combined with the lack of garages facing the street results in a streetscape that is a far superior experience to a conventional subdivision.



CONCLUSION

Historically, this part of the valley has featured mostly retirement communities that largely remain under the jurisdiction of Maricopa County. The established population has voiced a concern about the introduction of a City of Mesa development that is not age restricted believing it to be an incompatible use. We obviously disagree and believe the proposed single family project is quite compatible and will actually help to revitalize an area that is starved for retail growth and redevelopment. The housing stock of the area has aged gracefully but is now mostly 30-50 years old. That combined with a shifting population that is younger has lead to many of the communities either eliminating the age restriction or redeveloping as more traditional development. That trend will only continue as the retiree population continues to shrink as new generations are choosing alternative retirement options such as master planned communities (Trilogy, Encanterra, Solera, etc.) and various types of urban condominiums. It is important for

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this area to react and change with the needs of the community. We believe this project is an excellent example of how that adaptation can be accomplished respectfully and sustainably.

Being a single family detached product is very important from a transition standpoint as this product offers an alternative to similar density attached and/or multi-family housing which we don't believe is a good fit for this site. With single family low intensity homes to our east, and multi-family and commercial projects to the north, south, and west, we believe a higher density single family detached density product is more appropriate. Given the fact that William Lyon Homes has successfully built this product in nearby Lyon's Gate (Gilbert) adds to our belief that this product type is not only appropriate in this location, but will help revitalize the area, adding diversity and making it a more sustainable neighborhood to live in, and as such we are very excited to be able to bring this project to the great City of Mesa.