



COUNCIL MINUTES

November 18, 2019

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Study Session in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on November 18, 2019 at 4:31 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

John Giles
Mark Freeman
Jennifer Duff
Francisco Heredia
David Luna
Kevin Thompson
Jeremy Whittaker

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

OFFICERS PRESENT

Christopher Brady
Dee Ann Mickelsen
Jim Smith

1. Review and discuss items on the agenda for the November 18, 2019 Regular Council meeting.

All of the items on the agenda were reviewed among Council and staff and the following was noted:

Conflict of interest: None

Items removed from the consent agenda: None

Items removed from the agenda: 4-a, 4-i

2-a. Hear a presentation, discuss, and provide direction on the City of Mesa's Inner Loop District Study.

Planning Director Nana Appiah announced the City of Mesa hired a consultant to conduct a study to look at the specific mixture and allocation of land uses in the Inner Loop area of the Mesa Strategic Plan approved in 2008.

Principal Planner Tom Ellsworth introduced Leslie Dornfeld, owner of PLAN-et Communities, and Rick Merritt, president and co-founder of Elliott D. Pollack & Company, who displayed a PowerPoint presentation. **(See Attachment 1)**

Ms. Dornfeld stated the purpose of the study was to provide more definition to Inner Loop District land uses, which is the area north and west of the 202 freeway to the City boundary. (See Page 2 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Dornfeld reported the process began with preliminary research comparing development around five airports and presenting the information in February of 2018 at a public education session which approximately 50 people attended. She described the next steps as presenting alternative land-use options to stakeholders, holding a community meeting on the refined land-use plan and developing the final report. (See Page 3 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Dornfeld pointed out the goals of the proposed plan, which included respecting the updated overflight lines and minimizing impact on airport operations. She advised considerations taken into account were the infrastructure and opportunities for mixed-use and residential development. (See Page 4 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Dornfeld presented the three land-use alternatives. She stated the first alternative focused on maximizing the Elliot Road corridor and creating an urban environment, the second alternative maximizes residential opportunities, and the third focused on opportunities for employment. She emphasized the purpose of providing three alternatives was to create a discussion on what items were perceived to be more important. (See Page 5 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Dornfeld stated the recommended plan brings the important aspects of each of the three alternatives, emphasizing the Elliot Road corridor, which provides opportunity for housing outside of the overflight zones; keeping employment and industrial uses in the overflight zones; and includes mixed-use development along Warner Road. (See Page 6 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Merritt explained the economic analysis consisted of looking at the potential development for residential and industrial. He presented the Mesa Gateway and Inner Loop employment forecast, stating by 2050 over 79,000 jobs are expected in the Gateway area and 17,000 jobs within the Inner Loop area. (See Page 8 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Merritt detailed the private land ownership employment density analysis per district. He stated within the airport district there are nearly 11,000 acres with an average of 17 to 20 jobs per acre, for a total potential employment range averaging 185,000 to 220,000 jobs. He added in 2015 the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) estimated the City had 175,000 jobs. He remarked with the growth around the airport it is estimated an additional 10,000 to 12,000 jobs will be available and Arizona State University (ASU) Polytechnic campus is expected to generate another 12,000 to 15,000 jobs by 2020. (See Page 9 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Merritt summarized employment development density in other areas of the Valley and that I-10 and State Route (SR) 143 averages 17.5 employees per acre, the Tempe Industrial area averages 19.7 employees per acre, and the Cotton Center area south of Broadway between 40th Street and 48th Street averages 27.2 employees per acre. He compared the Scottsdale Airpark area, which averages 17 employees per acre, as an example of the future Elliott Road corridor. (See Pages 10 through 13 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Merritt stated the Inner Loop proposal would include 12,000 high-density units which will house approximately 30,000 residents. He added, as far as employment, the area will support 1.8 jobs per person, compared with 0.38 jobs per person citywide. (See Page 14 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Merritt presented examples of residential development suitable for the area as duplexes, triplexes and higher-density apartments. (See Page 15 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Merritt reported the plan is consistent with the Gateway Strategic Development Plan approved several years ago to provide diversity of high density and medium density residential uses and a mix of employment and residential.

Councilmember Thompson commented the City has one shot to make the right decision and he doesn't want to run the risk of damaging a major asset to the City. He stated the plan does not address flight restrictions that will impact the airport by residential encroachment and has concerns about allowing housing to be placed within the flight path and the Airport Overflight Area (AOA). He remarked Mesa has always been opposed to residential encroachment on the airport because it is such an important economic generator. He suggested a conversation needs to take place regarding how the airport can be protected, and that he is opposed to the current plan.

City Manager Christopher Brady clarified the presentation was to provide background information and does not represent the final plan. He stated the airport has shared with staff ideas on ways to mitigate flights in certain areas.

Councilmember Thompson reminded Council that flight school traffic was shifted from Falcon Field to Gateway Airport because of the issue of encroachment and Council is now considering doing the exact same thing at Gateway Airport.

In response to a question from Councilmember Luna, Ms. Dornfeld explained on the Mesa Gateway Strategic Plan map the orange represents the transit corridor, yellow represents neo-traditional housing, dark purple represents employment/industrial, light purple represents business park, and gray represents mixed-use.

In response to a question from Councilmember Luna, Mr. Merritt advised residential housing will be mostly multi-unit housing.

In response to a series of questions posed by Mayor Giles, Mr. Merritt agreed the power lines are an asset, stating the Elliot corridor starts at Hawes and goes east where most of the high-tech industrial development is located. He stated the plan respects concerns heard from the neighborhood north of Elliot.

Mr. Appiah explained there is residential housing north of the power line on Elliot Road. He stated when reviewing plans, the highest and best use is determined by community input and whether it is physically possible and legally feasible to develop. He identified a major issue is residents protesting large industrial development in certain areas. He confirmed staff recommendations include community input as part of the proposal.

In response to a question from Mayor Giles, Mr. Appiah stated as part of the proposal there is a power line easement to allow access.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Thompson, Mr. Appiah clarified there is a requirement for residential setback of 300 feet from the power line for new residential which follows the current guidelines for existing residential.

In response to a question from Councilmember Thompson regarding concerns from residents opposed to industrial being directly adjacent to Boulder Creek Elementary School, Mr. Brady replied there has been discussion of creating a transition of uses between the residential and the school down to the Elliot Corridor while still preserving economic opportunity.

Councilmember Thompson commented there is room for improvement in the plan and ultimately the goal should be protection of Gateway Airport.

In response to a question from Mayor Giles, Mr. Brady agreed the City wants to protect and allow access to the power line. He described the challenge of running the easement from the north to the power corridor, but through an agreement with Salt River Project (SRP), the City is able to run the easement along the edges of the retention basin to assist with commercial development on Elliot Road.

In response to a question posed by Mayor Giles, Mr. Appiah explained housing is allowed in the new traditional neighborhood with a zoning category that ensures it is not stand-alone residential and there is vertical integration of mixed uses to create a better transition.

Ms. Dornfeld added the intent of the plan is a heavily officed commercial corridor with the potential for vertical mixed-use residential and commercial on the lower levels.

Mr. Merritt stated the chart shows 30% of the acreage in the mixed-use districts of the transit corridor would be residential.

In response to question from Mayor Giles, Mr. Merritt confirmed there will be more high-density residential as opposed to single-family homes.

Ms. Dornfeld pointed out the General Plan prohibits single-family homes in this land-use category.

In response to a question posed by Mayor Giles, Ms. Dornfeld identified the hash marks indicate a non-residential zone to emphasize the Elliot Road corridor. (See Page 6 of Attachment 1)

In response to a comment from Mayor Giles, Ms. Dornfeld remarked the freeway is also elevated in many areas to allow construction of a high-rise building product to attract businesses looking for airport and freeway locations.

Mayor Giles suggested extending the hash mark non-residential designation along the frontage of the rest of Elliot Road to preserve the look and feel of a commercial/industrial corridor.

In response to a question from Mayor Giles, Mr. Ellsworth explained the AOA areas are found in the zoning code but are also an implementation of the airport land-use compatibility study. He stated the AOA 1 areas are within the 65 noise delineation lines, the AOA 2 areas are between 65 and 60 noise delineation, and AOA 3 areas are everything else but still inside the airport influence area. He added in the AOA 1 and 2 areas, single-family residential is strictly prohibited, and in the AOA 3 area the zoning ordinance also requires aviation easements, noise attenuation within construction, and notification to the airport to protect the airport from encroachment of incompatible land uses.

Mr. Brady expanded by saying the City of Mesa is trying to take an extra step to mitigate complaints and is the only city that establishes and enforces zoning requirements in the AOA 3 areas.

In response to a question from Councilmember Whittaker, Mr. Brady indicated the City of Mesa zoning code requires additional disclosures and notices of activity that other cities do not require.

Discussion ensued relative to the land-use study and the AOA designations.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Duff, Councilmember Thompson stated he feels there is opportunity for residential, although he does not like how the City wants to zone for residential due to the flight path. He expressed his concern with the flight path being affected and impacting the airport because of residential encroachment which will lead to noise complaints.

Mr. Brady advised the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) uses AOA for standards on noise. He stated when conducting studies, the process is dynamic, and the airport looks at what is happening today and a future projection of activity.

In response to a question from Councilmember Whittaker, Mr. Brady explained for the last 10 years there has been a fly friendly procedure that is shared with pilots to attempt to align as close as possible with the utility corridor.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Whittaker regarding whether the airport has objections to the plan, Mr. Appiah informed Council the airport is supportive of the plan and the plan aligns with their land-use compatibility study.

In response to a question from Councilmember Whittaker, Ms. Dornfeld discussed the flight paths and the AOA areas. She added the last page of the plan shows the large and small aircraft flight tracks.

In response to a question from Councilmember Whittaker, Mr. Merritt stated the mix of employment versus residential is good and there is plenty of land beyond the Inner Loop to accommodate more employment for future growth of the area.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Duff, Ms. Dornfeld explained the Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) is the method used to describe aircraft noise exposure and the output is a numeric value in decibels that represents a 24-hour average noise exposure value.

In response to a question from Councilmember Duff regarding whether the noise level would be significantly different a half mile or a mile outside of the AOA 3 area, Mr. Brady replied there is not a model measuring the level, but logically the answer would be yes.

In response to a question from Councilmember Heredia, Mr. Ellsworth explained the area between Elliot Road and Warner Road is within Maricopa County and everything else is within the City of Mesa.

In response to a series of questions from Councilmember Heredia, Mr. Merritt reported there is a general mix of employment types depending on the business but can include call centers or warehouse jobs. He advised the goal of the plan is to have a work, play, live type environment.

Councilmember Thompson expressed his vision and goal for the Inner Loop District is to be a net importer of labor instead of an exporter which will encourage employees from other cities to work in Mesa.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Whittaker, Mr. Appiah discussed a rezoning case that has been under review for over a year waiting for the completion of the study to ensure compliance. He added the study has taken into consideration the whole area to guarantee there is a balance of land uses. He recommended continuing the same process throughout the City to have a mixture of housing to employment ratios.

Mr. Brady explained the study covers 3,200 acres that encompasses the Inner Loop area; and the application before Planning & Zoning (P&Z) is approximately 1,100 acres, of which 900 acres is not in the City today. He stated the 3,200 acres is part of a larger vision for a planned process of annexation.

Mayor Giles thanked staff for the presentation.

3. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of various boards and committees.

- 3-a. Historic Preservation Board meeting held on October 1, 2019.
- 3-b. Economic Development Advisory Board meeting held on October 1, 2019.
- 3-c. Transportation Advisory Board meeting held on May 21, 2019.
- 3-d. Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting held on September 11, 2019.

It was moved by Vice Mayor Freeman, seconded by Councilmember Thompson, that receipt of the above-listed minutes be acknowledged.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Giles-Freeman-Duff-Heredia-Luna-Thompson-Whittaker
NAYS – None

Carried unanimously.

4. Current events summary including meetings and conferences attended.

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| Mayor Giles – | Mesa Music Festival – Downtown Mesa Visit Mesa – Autism Certified by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards Mayors Changing Cities Conference – New York University |
| Vice Mayor Freeman – | Veterans Day – Royal Air Force memorial service Townhall – Poston Junior High Lehi Community Meeting |
| Councilmember Duff – | Guerrero Rotary Park Community Mural Painting Neighborhood Leadership Class – Neighborhood Services Mesa Music Festival – Downtown Mesa Creative Catalysts brunch Citizenship Fair Veterans Day – Royal Air Force and parade |
| Councilmember Luna – | Visit Mesa – Autism Certified by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards Urbix Resources ribbon cutting at Falcon Field |
| Councilmember Thompson – | White House Roundtable with Secretary Carson |

5. Scheduling of meetings.

City Manager Christopher Brady stated that the schedule of meetings is as follows:

Friday, November 29, 2019, 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. – Merry Main Street Kickoff

Monday, December 2, 2019, 4:30 p.m. – Study Session

Monday, December 2, 2019, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

JOHN GILES, MAYOR

ATTEST:

DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 18th day of November 2019. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK

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(Attachments – 1)