Call Meeting to Order.

Chair Johnson declared a quorum present and the meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m.

1. Take action on the agenda item.

Items on the Agenda

Zoning Case: Z15-044
2. **Z15-044 District 5.** The 7100 and 7200 blocks of East McDowell Road (north side) District 5. Located east of Power Road on the north side of McDowell Road (14.3 acres). Rezone from PEP-PAD-PAD (7.53 ± acres) and LC-PAD-PAD (6.77 ± acres) to LC-BIZ-PAD and a Council Use Permit. This request will allow for the development of a transitional senior living facility (independent living, assisted living, memory care). Ralph Pew, Pew and Lake, applicant; JCA Holdings, LLC, owner. (PLN2015-00447) Continued from February 17, 2016

**Staff Planner:** Kim Steadman  
**Staff Recommendation:** Approval with Conditions

**Summary:** Staff member Kim Steadman presented case Z15-044 to the Board. Mr. Steadman stated that it’s a rezoning request for a transitional living community for seniors. The project features 124 units of independent living, 60 units of assisted living, and 32 units of memory care, on a roughly 14 acre site. It is on the Parcel 51 Las Sendas masterplan that calls for commercial/employment uses, and has a Development Agreement attached to the site. The requested zoning is LC-BIZ-PAD, and Mr. Steadman explained that the LC Zoning District is not appropriate for a multi-residential proposal. Staff suggests that the applicant applies for a RM-2 BIZ-PAD, which would allow the use, the height, and the reduction in parking that they are requesting. Since the requested zoning and GP are not appropriate to the request, Staff is recommending denial, but the applicant has submitted his own conditions of approval, if the Board votes to recommend approval.

Mr. Steadman confirmed for Chairperson Johnson that even if the applicant had applied for an RM-2 BIZ-PAD, the recommendation would still be “denial”, because the use is not appropriate, and this sentiment has been echoed by Economic Development and the Economic Development Advisory Board.

The applicant, Ralph Pew, 1744 s Val Vista Dr, #217 Mesa, introduced John Berry, John House, as the principals of the Hampton Group, the company developing the property. He informed the Board that they have developed senior community living projects in Youngtown, Peoria, Surprise, and Sedona, and all their projects feature independent, assisted, and memory care components. Mr. Pew went on to say that this development is seen as more problematic than it really is, as it will not over-burden schools, or significantly impact traffic, and added that he has been surprised by the negative reaction from Economic Development. Mr. Pew introduced Sarah Merley with Applied Economics, and informed the Board that he had asked her to compare, a hypothetical residential project, the proposed project, and a modest development of commercial and office, and she came to the conclusion that the proposed project worked best, and that the specific findings are included in the narrative.

The co-applicant, Reese Anderson, 1744 S. Val Vista Dr, #217 Mesa, presented the details of the case to the Board.
Dan Taylor, 2112 N. Ashbrook, a retired CEO of East Valley Resources, spoke in support of the project. He conveyed to the Board that in circumstances when one spouse has trouble taking care of their partner, projects like this that offer 3 levels of care all in one place, keep the family together. He mentioned that he has talked to various senior groups, and they are also in support of the project.

Boardmember Ikeda clarified with Mr. Pew that the economic development information was given to Sarah Merley.

Mr. Anderson explained the findings in the assessment done by Sarah Merley of Applied Economics to the Board.

Sarah Merley, 11209 N Tatum Blvd, Phoenix, ran economic feasibility studies assuming short term build-outs for the site. She came to the conclusion that because there is not a significant residential component in the area, it would take about 5 years before commercial/retail development would materialize, and added that commercial office uses may build out in several phases.

Mr. Anderson explained that if the goal was to attract retail/commercial uses, the obstacles faced would be that the site is located near only a half interchange at the 202 Red Mountain Freeway, and the already convenient grocery stores would provide competition in the area. As for a potential hotel/resort use, Mr. Anderson went on to explain that he asked Sheraton Hotels if they would look at the site, and they stated that there are better sites for a hotel use, and that they would not be interested in the property.

Brent Moser, Executive Managing Director, Mike Sutton, Senior Vice President, and Peter Mena with the Office Division, at Cushman and Wakefield, 2375 E Camelback Rd, Phoenix, introduced themselves to the Board.

Mr. Moser stated that he has done real estate for about 20 years, selling 200 properties, totaling around $1 billion in assets, and that it is to his opinion that the commercial real estate market has changed. He stated that he had marketed this property to around 10,000 people, 300 office related groups and 250 hotels. He spoke to the comment made in the report from the Chair of the Economic Development Advisory Board, stating that Mesa was running out of land along the Freeways. Mr. Moser commented that along the Red Mountain 202 there are 550 acres, and along the San Tan 202 there are 1,420 acres of land. He went on to say that in a “good” development year, 50-100 acres are developed. So by Mr. Moser’s estimation, there is still a 30-40 year supply left, not counting the land along Arizona Route 24 if it reaches full build-out. He added that traffic is divergent at the McDowell/202 interchange and it is not supportive of a retail/commercial development, and his opinion is echoed by every retail/commercial developer that he has spoken with in town.

Boardmember Ikeda confirmed with Mr. Moser that there is an abundance of state and county land in the general vicinity of the site, and concluded that the currently-approved uses would not be likely.
Mr. Moser added that there is a significant amount of National Forest and Tribal Land in the area, and that Las Sendas doesn’t have the density now, or in the foreseeable future.

Mike Sutton explained to the Board that land deals would get into escrow with developers, and they would ultimately determine that the demographics for retail/commercial were not there, and the traffic count exposure was complicated by a half-diamond interchange at McDowell and the 202. Mr. Sutton explained that there were times where there would be interest in a retail use, but eventually the deal would not work. Finally, Mr. Sutton explained that they never received any letters of intent for a hotel use.

Mr. Sutton explained to Boardmember Dahlke that when talking to retail developer, they would go through due diligence phase, the deal would fall apart. He recounted that this happened with Barclay’s, Vintage, Eisenberg, to name a few, and the buyer would always pull out citing the same issues.

Mr. Moser added that many industry veterans at his office and competing firms are under the belief that the site won’t work for commercial/office/retail.

John Barry, CEO of the Hampton Group, 8432 E. Shea, Scottsdale, confirmed for Boardmember Ikeda that the development will be staffed 24 hours by nurses and healthcare providers. He maintained that there will always be someone on site and that the amenities are open 24/7, with the only exception being the pool which closes at dark.

Mr. Anderson confirmed for Boardmember Dahlke that his client would prefer to not go through a Minor General Plan Amendment and rezoning. He stated that he felt that a better approach would be by going with the plan that Pew and Lake have proposed, protecting the residents in Las Sendas from a multi-family apartment complex, citing that changing the zoning outright would open the door for a by-right multi-family use. He conveyed to the Board that he felt that by obtaining a Council Use Permit, and maintaining the LC zoning district, the stipulations would require the project to be consistent with the project narrative, and ensure that the project would meet the statutory rules.

Greg Merrick 3060 N. Ridgecrest, Unit #182, in Ridgecrest, cited increased traffic but felt that the use is appropriate. He went on to say that he disagrees with Economic Development’s assessment that Parcel 51 will be an employment center, and stated that he does not see it as suitable for employment or retail. Mr. Merrick cited height as an issue, and added that a 4 story building is not compatible in the Desert Uplands Area. He agreed with Mr. Anderson that if the zoning were to change to RM-2, that would raise concerns from residents in Las Sendas that an apartment complex would be developed, if for whatever reason the Assisted Living project doesn’t materialize.

Tony Marinello- CEO of Mountain Vista Medical Center, 1301 S. Crismon, spoke
in opposition to the project. He explained to the Board that when IASIS purchased the land in June of 2012, they purchased the 5 acres based on the original plan calling for a hotel, retail amenities, etc. He stated to the Board that he is not opposed to the use, as he realizes the need for assisted living, but the purchase of the land was driven by the Development Agreement in place on the adjacent property. He explained to the Board that they are currently in the planning phase of their medical building, and they will potentially have to make some changes if the adjacent properties are not built to the Development Agreement.

Dave Camp, 8047 E. Echo Canyon St., President of Las Sendas Home Owner's Association, informed the Board that petitions of support were circulated among Las Sendas by paid solicitors, in violation of the “no-solicitation” policy in Las Sendas. Mr. Camp explained that there was never a request made to solicit the neighborhood. He closed with saying that the Las Sendas Board of Directors voted unanimously to oppose a 4 story structure on the property, citing inappropriateness and incompatibility with the community, and have taking no other position regarding this development.

Shirley Duclose, 3347 N. Boulder Canyon, felt that it was a quality development, and was not against assisted living, but just against a massive 4 story structure. She added that she would be agreeable to 1 and 2 stories, but nothing above that height.

Mr. Pew explained that from Ridgecrest to Boulder Canyon there is a 20’ slope and a 40’ slope when measure all the way across the site.

Mr. Anderson explained that a 3 story structure would be roughly 42’-45’ tall, and by his interpretation, City of Mesa Economic Development and Mountain Vista Medical Center would prefer the height, in line with an increase in density. He explained to the Board that for the demographic they are marketing too, the units must have at least a 9’ ceiling. He added that to reduce the height, the complex would need to be more spread out, and would encroach on more open space and views. In addition, Mr. Anderson explained that the further you spread out the building, the further residents are located from elevators, creating a situation where it becomes harder for them to move around. Mr. Anderson confirmed with Tony Marinello of IASIS, that their plans are to build a 2 story facility, and they will not go above 3.

Boardmember Ikeda speculated that the views to east and north will be preserved for Las Sendas residents, and the only views obstructed will be to the west and south.

Mr. Anderson explained that mature landscaping will screen the proposed buildings around the perimeter of the site, and the graduated buildings along the sloped site will preserve views as well. Mr. Anderson explained to the Board that he sees the proposed assisted living community as a great reciprocal use to the planned IASIS facility, serving as a built-in patient base right next door. He concluded by saying that it was very telling that IASIS is proposing something less
intense than allowed at the site.

Mr. Anderson explained that 82 residents were solicited in Las Sendas by a PR company hired by the developer. Mr. Anderson stated that he got a call from Doug Austin informing him of this, and then Mr. Anderson stopped the PR Group from soliciting residents in Las Sendas, honoring their “No-Solicitation” regulation.

Staffmember Kim Steadman explained to the Board what constitutes appropriate use. He stated that each Character Area starts with a determined focus, then appropriate uses, then primary zoning districts, then secondary zoning districts. Mr. Steadman explained that it is not correct to suggest that if a zoning district is mentioned in the General Plan, then it automatically conforms with the General Plan merely because it was mentioned. He said that if a Council Use Permit is required in any district, it means that the proposed use is not a use by-right, and that Staff would have concerns. He spoke to the applicants desire to avoid a rezoning to RM-2, citing that neighbors would be concerned that it’s a multi-family district, but he affirmed that the current proposed use is multi-family, and he sees no reason to skirt the issue. He closed by saying that Planning’s role is to step back to assess components that add together to create a healthy community, and employment centers are necessary in addition to a proliferation of residential uses.

Staffmember John Wesley restated Staff’s position, and explained that Mr. Anderson pulled out a few pieces of focus discussion in regards to a Neighborhood Center. Mr. Wesley drew attention to the last sentence in that particular statement, citing, “the goal for these areas over time is to provide for the regular shopping and service needs of the nearby population while becoming a center or focal point for surrounding neighborhoods, becoming a gathering place for local residents.” Mr. Wesley stated to the Board that the proposed senior care facility will not meet the intent of this character type. He added that if the Board is in support of the proposed use, and if the Board believes it’s an appropriate use, there would need to be a change to the General Plan, starting with creating a character type that is appropriate for the area. Mr. Wesley closed that the proposed current use, will not allow a Neighborhood Village Center to be developed as currently envisioned.

Boardmember Clement asked if the Board were to approve the proposal as presented, going forward without a General Plan Amendment, if there would be consequences with that type of decision as it moves to City Council.

Mr. Wesley explained that ultimately City Council is the final interpreter. He stated that he can give a professional recommendation, as the primary author of the General Plan, knowing its intent when it was written, but a recommending body can substantiate how the proposed use meets the definition. He added that the recommendation would have to be crafted very carefully and very clearly, otherwise there would confusion how the category is interpreted in the future, and it may become too wide open to ever be useful.

Mr. Wesley confirmed that the General Plan was updated in 2014, and the Plan Designation for Site 51 was drafted to be consistent with the approved zoning on
the site, to allow uses that had been approved. Mr. Wesley explained that historically, all plans involving Parcel 51 have been designated for employment use. In 2008, a concession was made to allow housing on the northern portion of the site, but Council still wanted employment in the area, so that drove the increased maximum height on the components of the site that were still available for employment uses, to be receptive to the amount of employment needed. In conclusion, Mr. Wesley stated that the current General Plan has reinforced that long term concept to where we are at today.

Boardmember Allen stated that she understands that schools and churches can be located in any district, but since a school is now on site, the commercial character has changed. She also mentioned that if the Board were to recommended changing zoning to RM-2, this would allow by-right any multi-family, without a CUP.

Mr. Wesley confirmed that Boardmember Allen was correct, and that RM-2 would allow any multi-residence development, as would be with a commercial zoning, the site plan could go away, and any number of commercial uses could come in, so a Development Agreement in either case may be appropriate to help limit those uses to what is really being intended.

Boardmember Allen stated that she felt it was a good project and a good use, it was just a matter of how to get from point A to B for recommending approval. Boardmember Allen then asked Mr. Wesley if he was comfortable with the applicant-submitted conditions of approval.

Mr. Wesley stated that Staff had received them that afternoon, and they were covered quickly, but Staff believes that they cover the primary items in stipulations, but they may require modification to the wording.

Boardmember Ikeda stated that he liked the project, and after hearing the commercial brokers, he stated that he didn’t know if a commercial would be viable. He added that he wasn’t too concerned about the height, as the proposed building doesn’t block Las Sendas’ east and north views.

Boardmember Allen stated that she was in support of the project, and mentioned that it was a good use for the site. She added that when the residential component and school came into Parcel 51, she felt that the whole dynamic of the site changed. She closed by agreeing with the professionals that commercial use is not the right use for the area, and encouraged guidance from the City Attorney’s to ensure the process is completely within bounds so she can be comfortable with the project.

Boardmember Clement stated that he was comfortable with the project, and since he has appraised real estate projects, he agrees with the assessments and likes the building form along the graduated slope, and the 4-sided architecture.

Chairperson Johnson agreed that the site wouldn’t see a high-powered, high-
exposure commercial user to the site, and she thought that an assisted living facility was appropriate for the area. She added that she wouldn’t want to see a multi-family zoning application to the site, to uphold the commitment to Las Sendas, and that she would rather go through the applicant’s CUP scenario for approval.

Boardmember Dalhke stated that she was supportive of the use as well, and felt that this is a well-done project. She understand Staff’s position on upholding the General Plan, as she was involved as an advisory member, but she thought the use was a great one, and she was hopeful that a way could be found to get the use to work.

Boardmember Astle stated that he lives by the General Plan, but believes in change, and realizes that the market is an ever-changing and transient thing. He liked the upper to lower level transition, and stated that a rezone to RM-2 would be a concern, and that he would rather work through a Council Use Permit.

Staffmember Wesley proposed going to a Neighborhood designation with a Suburban Sub-Type, explaining that Staff would prefer to see the RM-2 zoning, as Suburban Sub-Type does allow for the Limited Commercial, so it’s a middle of the road solution. He explained that in that scenario the applicant would propose the General Plan change, to eliminate the hurdle of not truly being consistent with the character type, but this would allow them to go forward with their zoning district to allow what they are asking for, and added that it’s just not the preferred way to make it work. Mr. Wesley proposed to the Board that Staff could work with the applicant and give the Board something supportable going to Council, having the applicant come back for the General Plan change, and then let them keep the Zoning Districts that they’re asking for.

Boardmember Allen confirmed that Mr. Wesley was suggesting that the applicant was asking for a Minor General Plan Amendment, with the ability to maintain the LC Zoning with a Council Use Permit.

Mr. Wesley confirmed that if the applicant was to request this, Staff could still meet requirements to advertise for the April Meeting.

Chairperson Johnson confirmed that this proposal would be a Continuance while bringing forward the Minor General Plan Amendment for next month’s meeting.

Mr. Pew stated to the Board that a continuance would be problematic for timing and financing. Mr. Pew asked the Board that if the General Plan Category could go to “Neighborhood”, and rezoning to LC, under the same theory we’re using now with the Council Use Permit as appropriate, do they as a Board, need to actually vote on that General Plan Amendment? Mr. Pew explained to the Board that it is his thought that they are a recommending body, and if they like the use, they can make a motion with that effect, with their recommendation, since Council is the ultimate determiner of what is consistent with the General Plan and what isn’t. He added that since the Board felt that the use, layout, and the height is okay; but
since Staff has urged them to do a Minor General Plan Amendment, he asked that the they would keep the case moving forward, and leave it in the hands of Council.

Staffmember Wesley explained that he was not comfortable with that process, and explained that all General Plan Amendments must be heard by the Planning and Zoning Board.

Mr. Pew explained that if a General Plan Amendment has to come to the Planning and Zoning Board for recommendation under statute, the choices tonight are to vote and recommend its approval, and indicate that a General Plan Amendment isn’t necessary, so that Council can address it.

Mr. Wesley explained that to zone land, the proposed use must be consistent with the General Plan. He went on to say that if we have said that character type is one component that it is not consistent with the proposed zoning, as well as others, and the use is not consistent with Economic Development’s goals and objectives, the Board would have to find that the use is consistent with the General Plan, and Mr. Wesley explained that he didn’t see how one could get to that conclusion with the character type.

Boardmember Allen inquired if the General Plan Amendment could be properly advertised for a meeting in 2 weeks.

Staffmember Wesley stated that there is an alternate posting day on Wednesday, but with other noticing requirements, it would be challenging to get the GP Minor on the agenda for March, so he suggested it to be heard at the April Meeting.

Boardmember Johnson asked if the conditions of approval provided could state that Council must approve the General Plan use as well.

Staffmember MaryGrace McNear stated that the proposal on the application is for a rezoning, but they haven’t requested a General Plan Amendment. She added that since Planning and Zoning is a recommendatory Board, a recommendation can be made for approval or a recommendation for denial, but considering the way that it has been public-noticed currently, the request is to rezone.

Mr. Pew asked the Board for a motion that approves the use, and if the Board believes that a General Plan Amendment is not necessary, to forego that component of the recommendation process.

Staffmember MaryGrace McNear restated that because a General Plan Amendment was not requested, it’s a little tough to send to Council when a General Plan Amendment is in question.

Mr. Pew rebutted that since we don’t think it’s necessary, and Staff disagrees, it will just come to a crescendo later.

Chairperson Johnson stated that there are three options: Make the decision to
deny the case, approve it with the applicant submitted conditions of approval, or to continue it to ask for a Minor General Plan Amendment.

Staffmember Wesley stated that if the Board wanted to go forward as Mr. Pew has outlined with a recommendation for approval this evening, we would need to hear your statements as to how you've looked at this and seen that it is consistent with the General Plan, so Council will have that as part of their record. He encouraged some discussion beforehand at least, or statements as part of the motion to the effect of how the Board sees what is being proposed to be consistent with the General Plan in order to make that motion for approval, and closed by suggesting going back to what the applicant had presented about how they came to that conclusion.

Chairperson Johnson stated that she liked the employment, like the residential use, and felt like the area has been compromised by the residential encroachment from the north.

Boardmember Allen felt that the employment center was compromised when the residential component and school were allowed. She reaffirmed that the proposal is a compatible use, and although some neighbors are in opposition, the design is fine.

Mr. Pew asked to meet with Mr. Berry and Mr. House, to understand the direction from his clients as to what they would prefer the Board to do tonight, and how to proceed, stating that it was difficult to communicate with them sitting a few rows behind.

Chairperson Johnson suggested getting the case moved forward with the mechanics that the Board has available, and confirmed with the applicants that they did not want a continuance.

Boardmember Allen asked Mr. Anderson to review why the project complies with the General Plan

Mr. Anderson stated that it goes back to principles, and that is was consistent with the General Plan. He went on to say that if the uses are listed in the General Plan, then you may proceed with that use, and that regarding the “Neighborhood Village Center”, he felt that Staff has taken this definition and mandated that there is a retail component. He added that the word “typical” doesn’t mean “must” or “shall”, that the word “goal” does not mean “must” or “shall”. Mr. Anderson explained that there is a residential use on the whole southern half of the total parcel, adding that there’s a school, there are offices, a total mix of uses. He added that memory care is classified as a public/semi-public classification, and that there’s more to it than just apartments for seniors. He added that nothing in the General Plan says you must have one or all, and that words must be understood and used by their typical meanings. He concluded by saying that the ability of a Council Use Permit is built into the LC District, giving Council the ability to decide on a residential use in a commercial district.
Staffmember MaryGrace McNear stated that the objective is not to refute anything Mr. Anderson said, but to add a little more understanding to statutory language that talks about a rezoning ordinance and how it conforms with a land-use element of a general plan, if it proposes land uses densities and intensities within the range of identified uses of the land use element of the General Plan. She went on to say that there are many elements to the General Plan including economic development, viability of commercial development, identification of centers for employment, commercial, retail, and other types of development. Just because it fits into the statutory definition, doesn’t mean that it’s necessarily consistent with the General Plan. She concluded by saying that we’ve discussed a decision that Council ultimately makes, but that she wanted the Board to understand that there’s a lot that goes into this, and that there has been a lot of work put into the General Plan, and that we are striving to develop these character areas.

Boardmember Ikeda stated that when you are putting together a General Plan, it seems like it’s up to a Board such as this to interpret

Staffmember MaryGrace McNear stated that this is true, but the Board should be making a recommendation based on their understanding and interpretation of the General Plan, and that’s why she gave a little fuller explanation of that statutory language. She went on to speak about the the IASIS property, and mentioned that the 2008 Development Agreement does call for medical office use on the very parcel where IASIS bought property, so the concept that medical uses have never been considered for that property is a little bit off, and also, the IASIS property does conform with the General Plan designation. Staffmember McNear agreed with Mr. Wesley, and restated that it would be very helpful if the Board explained in their motion, if they believe that the proposed assisted living use is consistent with the General Plan.

Boardmember Allen recommended approval of Case Z15-044, to rezone a property from PEP PAD PAD and LC PAD PAD to LC BIZ PAD with a Council Use Permit, along with the condition that Staff agrees with those applicant submitted conditions. She stated that her reason for this was that there are a mixture of uses located on the site, and that she saw it as a complete service center. In terms of economic viability, Boardmember Allen stated that she read both EDAB and Sarah Merley’s report, and determined that they contradict each other. Boardmember Allen felt that an assisted living facility was a more economically viable use, and since the site has sat vacant for 15 years, it’s the highest and best use at this time.

It was moved by Boardmember Allen and seconded by Boardmember Ikeda

**That:** The Board recommends the approval of the case Z15-044 conditioned upon:
1. Compliance with the basic development as described in the project narrative and as shown on the site plan, preliminary elevations, and landscape plan (without guarantee of lot yield, building count, lot coverage).
2. Compliance with all conditions of approval of Design Review case DR15-039.
3. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations.
4. Signs (detached and attached) need separate approval and permit for locations, size and quantity.
5. All street frontage landscaping to be installed in the first phase of construction unless a phasing plan is approved by the Planning Director.
6. Compliance with all requirements of the Subdivision Technical Review Committee, if required.
7. Compliance with all requirements of the Development Services Division with regard to the issuance of building permits.
8. Property Owner shall grant an Avigation Easement and Release to the City, pertaining to Falcon Field Airport, which will be prepared and recorded by the City (concurrently with the recordation of the final subdivision map, prior to the issuance of a building permit).
9. Written notice be provided to future residents, and acknowledgment received that the project is within five (5) miles of the Falcon Field Airport.
10. Noise attenuation measures are to be incorporated into the design and construction of the buildings to achieve a noise level reduction of 25 db.
11. Compliance with Native Plant Preservation Ordinance #3693 requiring submittal of a native plant preservation plan.
12. Compliance with the landscaping standards contained in the Desert Uplands Guidelines.
13. Compliance with an Amended Development Agreement related to the Property.

Vote: 6-0

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Note: Audio recordings of the Planning & Zoning Board Meetings are available in the Planning Division Office for review. They are also “live broadcasted” through the City of Mesa’s website at www.mesaaz.gov
MINUTES OF THE MARCH 1, 2016 PLANNING & ZONING MEETING

Other Business:
None.

Adjournment

Boardmember Allen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:13 pm. The motion was seconded by Boardmember Dahlke.

Vote: 6-0

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]
John D. Wesley AICP, Secretary
Planning Director