



Minutes of the Development Review Commission REGULAR MEETING June 27, 2023

Minutes of the regular hearing of the Development Review Commission, of the City of Tempe, was held in the Tempe History Museum, 809 E Southern Avenue, Tempe, AZ

Present:

Chair Michael DiDomenico
Vice Chair Andrew Johnson
Commissioner Don Cassano
Commissioner Barbara Lloyd
Commissioner Michelle Schwartz
Commissioner Linda Spears
Commissioner Joe Forte

City Staff Present:

Jeff Tamulevich, Director – Community Development
Ryan Levesque, Deputy Director, Community Development
Steve Abrahamson, Principal Planner
Mailen Pankiewicz, Principal Planner
Ambika Adhikari, Principal Planner
Jacob Payne, Senior Planner
Brenda Clark, Neighborhood Services Specialist
Joshua Rutherford, Economic Dev Special Project Administrator
Joanna Barry, Administrative Assistant II

Absent:

Alt Commissioner Rhiannon Corbett
Alt Commissioner Charles Redman
Alt Commissioner Robert Miller

Hearing convened at 6:01 p.m. and was called to order by Chair DiDomenico

Consideration of Meeting Minutes:

1. Development Review Commission – Study Session 4/11/2023
2. Development Review Commission – Regular Meeting 4/11/2023

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Cassano to approve Study Session and Regular meeting minutes for April 11, 2023 and seconded by Vice Chair Johnson.

Ayes: Chair DiDomenico, Vice Chair Johnson, Commissioners Cassano, Schwartz, Lloyd, Spears, and Forte.

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Vote: Motion passes 7-0

3. Development Review Commission – Study Session 5/9/2023
4. Development Review Commission – Regular Meeting 5/9/2023

Motion: Motion made by Vice Chair Johnson to approve Study Session and Regular meeting minutes for May 9, 2023 and seconded by Commissioner Spears.

Ayes: Vice Chair Johnson, Commissioners Schwartz, Spears, and Forte.

Nays: None

Abstain: Chair DiDomenico and Commissioners Cassano and Lloyd

Absent: None

Vote: Motion passes 4-0

The following items were considered for **Public Hearing**:

5. Introduction and First Hearing on an update to the General Plan including its 26 elements with one additional element proposed, "Climate Change and Extreme Heat," and the 17 maps within the document for **TEMPE TOMORROW – GENERAL PLAN 2050**. The applicant is the City of Tempe. **(PL230107)**

PRESENTATION BY STAFF:

Ambika Adhikari, Principal Planner, and Jacob Payne, Senior Planner, gave a presentation and advised the Commission of changes that have been made to the draft General Plan 2050 since it was initially released to the public on May 5, 2023.

Several changes were made to the May 5th draft to create the new draft dated June 20, 2023, which was shared with the DRC and was released to the public on June 20. The proposed changes were based on the input received from the extensive outreach with the neighborhood and other groups. Examples of changes include the following"

- Staff has made extensive changes to the Land Use Map reducing the proposed densities where appropriate. Proposed mixed-use designations in many areas were changed to commercial, retaining the current designation. The initially proposed "Central Tempe Growth Area" map and related text was deleted.
- The revised draft includes the concept of a "Downtown Historic Core", a location-specific preservation area, to better preserve the downtown's historic properties and cultural resources. The Core will identify the boundaries for a proposed area and develop design guidelines.
- Cultural Resources Areas (CRA) designation now proposed on several properties that meet the CRA criteria. New CRA is proposed for Wilson Arts and Garden, parts of Mitchell Park, Brentwood Cavalier, Broadmor, Date Palm Manor, and other locations. The CRA designation freezes the residential densities to those on the date of plan adoption.
- Text in the draft has been modified for additional clarity. Staff has added new definitions. Staff confirmed the availability and assurance of water resources for the future.
- Per residents' suggestions, staff has proposed the concept of a "Citizen Advisory Group" to monitor and facilitate implementation of the General Plan principles.

Mr. Adhikari advised the Commission about the next steps in the process, which include the DRC second hearing on July 25, and City Council hearings on August 10 and 24, 2023. Voter ratification is planned for March 2024.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

David Sokolowski

- The city projects that there will be additional 83,000 jobs by 2050.
- This supply and demand imbalance will inflate housing costs even more. Tempe residents will have to pay a premium in housing costs to avoid commuting each day.
- When we talk about general welfare, 70% of our city will be renters by 2030 and we have more people cost burdened by rent than homeowners, but renters are not being fully represented.
- The central Tempe growth area was removed, the density on southern and baseline was removed, and the cultural resource area was expanded. this plan needs to include a balanced approach, with options for renters and opportunities for affordable housing. that does not mean build everything in the Apache area or that the Apache area is the only neighborhood that has affordable housing.

Carol Stewart

- Review water availability for potential growth and housing.
- Not affordable to live in Tempe.
Does not believe the median average income in Tempe is \$70,000.

Jana Lynn Granillo

- Was member of CWG and voted to not pass the GP 2050. Would like to know how many new responses have been received since the June 20, 2023 version of the draft was published.
- Increasing density does not guarantee affordability.
- Review densities around Alameda Character Area.

Robert Moore

- Was a member of CWG.
- Enhance outreach to marginalized groups.

Phil Amorosi

- Reduce density for Jen Tilly Terrace Neighborhood to 2040 GP level.
- Disappointed that the mixed-use was taken out and put back to commercial.
- Chapter on climate change needs to be clearer, especially relating to the private sector.
- Should extend Tempe Town Lake regional park to Priest Drive.

Shannon Dutton

- Add more CRA in North Tempe, create gateway, and lower density on gateway project.

Jack Ketchum

- Disappointed that the multi-use designations were rolled back in the plan.
- We have people that work in Tempe but cannot afford to live here.
- Have more density, mixed use (45 du/ac), and encourage to build more to realize the 20-minute city goal, and for sustainability.

Shawn Swisher

- Add more density in transit corridors and traffic intersections, use more specific language to promote sustainability.
- Need more walkable areas.

Anne Till

- Was a member of CWG
- Appreciates the pullback on the high-density on Broadway Road and Southern Avenue.
- Refer to Alameda Character Area plan.

Merrill Darcy

- Keep 25 du/ac in mixed-use location near neighborhoods.

Karyn Gitlis

- The Historic Downtown Core concept is good.
- Likes staff revisions.
- Limit Danelle Plaza to 25 du/ac.

Steve Amelott

- Mitigate climate change; add more trees, have more people to manage the trees.

Nolan Williams

- Was a member of CWG who voted in support of the plan.
- Roll back the density to the May 5th draft version.
- Does not like the expansion of the Cultural Resource Areas. Would like it removed from Daley Park.
- Need to build more for housing options.

Sam Thiele

- Remove CRA designation, it limits growth

Mike Treacy

- The Tempe Entertainment District proposal was good, with interesting development and forward thinking for Tempe. Are there any plans for the landfill?
- The draft General Plan is good, but there is nothing exciting about it.
- He did not see anything in the plan about addressing homelessness.

Christina Wirtz

- Ensure affordability of building materials to ensure housing affordability

Steven Gerner

- Fully supportive of the language in the plan about bike trails, circulation, and pedestrian access.
- He has employees who work at his companies in Tempe but cannot afford to live here.
- Stated MAG project 71,000 new residents in Tempe by 2050 so we need to add more housing.
- Liked the increased density that was in the May 5th version of the document.

Andrew Miller

- To accommodate more professionals and employees in Tempe, build more homes, increase density
- Bring back the May 5th version with the density, mixed use, and transportation options.
- Likes that sustainability is weaved into the document.
- Do public charette for dialogue related to transportation options.

Roberta Neil Miller

- No high density on Danelle Plaza.
- Tempe is rushing the plan through to please developers

Kendon Yung

- Happy to see sustainability included in the plan. Need to expand alternative transportation options.
- Should not be removing the mixed-use.
- Remove CRA near commercial properties along Mill and University and near intersections for University to 10th St.

Mary Oertle

- Does not like CRA designation in the Maple Ash to 10th Street area and would like it removed.

Efrain McConklin

- With increased density near Rural/Alameda people feel unsafe. It will increase traffic and take a toll one city municipal departments.
- Does not like bump outs in streets.

Martin Lynch

- Need to address homelessness

Liam Huggins

- Likes sustainability and expanding bike paths
- Is not sure what the CRA designation means.
- Need to add more density to enable more housing.

Cillian Harris

- Remember ancestors, and that we may run out of water

Jason Knorr

- Tempe is not affordable.
- Keep densities and build more mixed use and affordable housing.

Kent Oertle

- Bring creative people and professionals (e.g., in electronic industry) to Tempe, provide housing

Pamela Beihl

- Promote mixed-use housing, i.e., housing above grocery

RESPONSE FROM STAFF:

Mr. Adhikari addressed some of the public comments/questions that were made:

- Since the June 20th version of the General Plan was released, staff has received approximately 30 comments.
- Regarding the medium income, that is calculated by the federal government. The AMI (Area Median Income) for Tempe is currently \$88,800 for a family of four people. It is not \$70,000 per person. Cities use AMI levels for determining a family's eligibility for affordable housing.
- The City takes water resources very seriously and includes it in growth planning. Tempe staff have worked to assure water supply for Tempe long into the future. Tempe issues building permits only after showing assured water supply for 100 years. After this General Plan is done, Water Resources will create their Master Plan to review and develop details for water supply. The last Water Resources Master Plan was done in 2021, which assures more than adequate water supply for the MAG projected growth.
- On June 15th, the Community Working Group voted to advance the General Plan draft (including the changes to the May 5th version) to the DRC by a vote of 9-6.
- The General Plan projects density and land use to guide new development in an appropriate place. However, it is not a master plan or a code. For any site, applicants will need to go through the entitlement process for rezoning and general plan amendments.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION FROM THE COMMISSION:

Chair DiDomenico pointed out that Fire Station No. 7 was missing from the public services exhibit in the General Plan. Staff advised they would correct that.

Chair DiDomenico stated that at the next meeting, he would like to have more discussion about Danelle Plaza and the changes that are envisioned for it. There were a lot of concerns about Broadway Road, Southern Avenue, and even Baseline Road about the removal of previously suggested higher density. These transportation corridors are not served by light rail or other hard infrastructure but do have significant bus lines. He would like staff to explain what type of transportation improvements would need to be made to support the higher density on those three specific streets. He would also like more information on the CRA designation and what goes into it. Would like to hear how the City plans to address homelessness in the plan.

Commissioner Cassano stated there needs to be more clarification on the CRA.

Commissioner Schwartz stated she would like a better understanding of the sustainability language and whether the General Plan codifies it or not.

Vice Chair Johnson agreed with Commissioner Schwartz and asked if there was a way to build more concrete language into the document. Would also like more explanation on the 25 du/ac designation. Noted staff mentioned putting housing on commercially zoned property and would like more information about that. Someone from the public mentioned the land use in the General Plan only allows for a 20,000 more people, yet the projection is for 70,000. He asked if there was a way to measure that to see if it is accurate.

Chair DiDomenico stated that at the next hearing they will speak to two things; both the number of housing units that we anticipate adding and what percentage of that 70,000 are housed within the units.

Commissioner Lloyd stated she liked the approach in the plan about spreading out some of the density along the major arterials such as Broadway Road and Southern Avenue as they are thoroughfares that can handle a bit more density. Stated that building high-rises in high-density areas does not equate to affordability. Would like to revisit the mixed-use designation along larger arterial streets. Does not like the "no cap" on the land use map as that sets unrealistic and unsustainable expectations of potential developers. Likes that we are addressing climate change and providing more shade to developments. Appreciates the bike paths.

Commissioner Spears stated she is concerned about changing the mixed-use and density maps based on information received after the CWG had approved what was coming forward. She asked what the basis was for making that change. Regarding homelessness and affordable housing, this is handled more through the state legislature which controls what cities can do. Also has concerns about the CRA.

Commissioner Forte stated he is interested in learning why the density was stripped out in some areas. Also concerned about the CRA and what goes into a neighborhood designating that.

Ryan Levesque, Deputy Director – Community Developer, provided a brief background on the CRA designation. Staff will clarify the language in the revised draft Plan.

Mr. Adhikari stated that the General Plan cannot codify language. Regarding the 20,000 additional residents, he stated there might have been some confusion. Based on the newest MAG plan it is around 70,000 between 2020 and 2050. Staff will provide information on the dwelling units at the next hearing. Stated they typically use what the census gives them which he believes is 2.27 persons per household. Stated this is currently a draft document and that changes made after the CWG were based on feedback from several community meetings. Noted that commercial does allow for residential through the Use Permit process.

Staff Announcements: NONE

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Prepared by: Joanna Barry, Administrative Assistant II
Reviewed by: Ambika Adhikari, Principal Planner