

SERENO CANYON - 330 ACRES

PRELIMINARY PLAT APPLICATION

PROJECT NARRATIVE

REQUEST

This application represents a request for approval of the Design Review Board and Preliminary Plat for the Sereno Canyon Project, subject to the stipulations adopted per case# 1-ZN-2005.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The Sereno Canyon Property is a 330 acre site, located at the northeast corner of the Pinnacle Peak Road alignment and the 122nd Street Alignment. The Pinnacle Peak Road alignment serves as the properties southern boundary, while the Happy Valley Road alignment serves as the northern property boundary. The existing communities of Sonoran Crest and Saguaro Canyon are immediately adjacent to the western property boundary of the site.

The existing property is an assemblage of 13 private parcels and is vacant/undeveloped. A series of jeep trails are the only man-made impacts on the site. Access to the site boundaries can be achieved via 128th Street to the eastern property edge, or by way of Alameda Road which is improved to the western edge of the property (122nd Street alignment).

A request for approval of a Density Incentive on the overall 330 acres, maintaining the current zoning category of R1-130 ESL (Case# 1-ZN-2005), is pending on the subject property at the date of application. Approval of the density incentive request allows the

applicant to increase the overall units count from 102 units to 122 units. As a condition of approval, the project provides an increase of the required open space area (NAOS) from 139 acres to 205 acres. This is a 66 acre increase of the base requirement (47% increase)

MASTER PLANS

The City had requested the applicant to submit master plans for the property to supplement the rezoning application. These master plans will outline a cohesive development plan that considers infrastructure and environmental conditions relative to the overall site, as well as demonstrating the benefits of parcel assemblage as a means to promote sensitive design practices. Master planning of the site will create contiguous open spaces and allow for the ability to shift density away from environmentally sensitive areas.

OPEN SPACE

The project provides 205 acres (or 62% of the gross site area) of Natural Area Open Space as illustrated in the Preliminary Open Space Plan. Increased open space throughout the project was provided by reducing development envelope sizes within lots, widening areas that contain sensitive natural habitat and unique environmental features, identifying high-value corridors for connectivity throughout the project and increasing setback buffers to adjacent properties and roadways. The project promotes the natural setting of the site by minimizing disturbance in high visibility areas and assemble contiguous open space areas that will serve as corridors for wildlife and visual resources.

A site walk was conducted with City staff on May 3rd, 2005 to assess the specific locations of proposed roadways alignments and development envelopes as identified on the Preliminary Natural Area Open Space Exhibit and Preliminary Development Envelope Exhibit. Open space connectivity and corridors were examined to ensure adequate buffering and protection of natural features (i.e. major boulders and 50+ cfs wash corridors). The City's NAOS priority mapping and Foothills Overlay Guidelines were also reviewed with City Staff

Phasing of Open Space Dedications

Preliminary development envelopes have been delineated in the Preliminary Plat application reflecting portions of each lot that are most suitable for development. This suitability analysis accounts for natural and topographic conditions, sensitive environmental features, and setbacks from adjacent lots and off-site properties. The applicant proposes that an overall NAOS dedication of 189.7 acres be made at preliminary and final plat approval. An additional 15.3 cumulative acres (to achieve 205 total acres) will be dedicated during the final building permit process (but after final plat approval) to allow individual property owners the flexibility to specifically site on-lot improvements and determine the location of open space required for dedication as NAOS. The additional NAOS area will be required to meet the NAOS qualification criteria as outlined by the ESL Ordinance. The additional NAOS is lot specific and has been clearly defined in the NAOS Table included with this application.

AMENDED DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The pending rezoning case (#1-ZN-2005) includes the adoption of amendment of development standards on the subject property. Amendments to the R1-130 ESL district will be adopted to allow reductions for lot area, dimensions and setbacks. The approval of the amended development standards facilitates site plan design practices that encourages the recognition of sensitive natural features and permits the homes to be located in less sensitive areas of the site.

DEVELOPMENT ENVELOPES

Development envelopes have been thoughtfully sited throughout the project to reflect an appropriate balance between feasible development and the protection/avoidance of environmentally sensitive areas. Development envelopes will not encroach into hillside areas, significant washes (50+ cfs) or areas with significant boulder features.

A majority of the development envelopes delineated on the preliminary plat, will require that an additional amount of the lot be dedicated as NAOS (amount is lot specific). The

precise location of this additional NAOS dedication will be subject to individual lot site planning, thus providing future property owners with flexibility in siting on-lot improvements. These improvements will be restricted to the delineated development envelopes as shown (see Preliminary Development Envelope Plan), and the additional dedications will require compliance with the standards outlined in the ESL Ordinance.

The delineation of preliminary development envelopes for each residential unit has been defined to promote the integration of development into the existing natural environment. Delineated natural area open space areas are contiguous, provide ample buffer to adjacent properties and are designed to minimize impacts to the most sensitive natural features on the property. The site contains numerous boulder features that have been specifically integrated into proposed natural open spaces, trail corridors, park sites and community focal points. Major boulder features that meet the criteria for preservation as defined by the ESL Ordinance will be placed in protective easements throughout the site. The preservation of existing native vegetation will be an important component of the open space areas. However, the site was impacted by a large scale wildfire burn approximately 10 years ago and has not recovered to densities and maturities typical of the upper Sonoran Desert. The Concentrated Vegetation Exhibit identifies areas that have demonstrated the greatest levels of vegetation recovery on the site. These areas are typically associated with wash corridors and have been identified for preservation. Initial site planning and open space determinations were made utilizing a combination of available resources including environmental constraint surveys, topographic mapping and aerial photography. In addition, the City of Scottsdale's NAOS priority maps and the Dynamite Foothills Area Plan Environmental Constraints Map provided guidance as to the location of City prioritized environmental features.

The site plan proposes a development scenario that seeks to promote the sensitive integration of development into the existing landscape. This sensitive approach not only benefits the unique environmental characteristics of the site by ensuring its preservation, but will add value to future lots that retain the essence of this natural setting even after the residences have been built. To further this goal of sensitive integration, the applicant

has adopted many of the design standards and recommendations identified in the Dynamite Foothills Character Area Plan (DFCAP). The Area Plan will help to promote cohesion of development character in the area and will serve as a guideline for current and future design decisions. One of the design policies put forth by the DFCAP was the recommendation of the elimination of project perimeter walls. The project does not include the construction of perimeter walls, and instead proposes a combination of rear lot walls within development envelope areas and the discretionary use of decorative site walls to screen and buffer development from high traffic areas. Site walls will be limited to 4-feet in height and will generally be located in proximity to proposed monumentation and project entry gates only. Rear lot walls will be limited to 6-feet in height and will address security and privacy concerns of individual homeowners. The use of retaining walls may also be necessary in association with roadway and development envelope improvements. In addition, retaining walls will be designed to conform with City of Scottsdale design standards and ESL requirements.

Listed below is a summary of additional conformance standards set forth by the DFCAP and the Scottsdale General Plan. These standards have provided a framework for initial theming and design considerations during the planning process.

Conformance with the Dynamite Foothills Character Area Plan - Design and Performance Guidelines

Low Density Single Family Uses

- Defined construction envelopes that recognize sensitive natural areas
- Wherever possible, development impacts will minimize disturbance to mature Saguaros and Desert Trees
- Maximum building height will be limited to 24' per ESL ordinance
- Lawn/Turf areas will be restricted to enclosed private areas, typically located at the rear of the property
- Colors and textures will blend into the adjacent natural desert setting
- Use of lighting will be restricted to comply with adopted "Dark Sky" Ordinance

Conformance with City of Scottsdale General Plan

Rural Desert Character Types:

- The identity and natural desert character of this district should be strengthened and maintained by preventing encroachment of nonconforming uses and architectural styles, protecting open spaces and vistas, encouraging conservation of desert vegetation, building low profile structures, discouraging walls, and limiting road access.

- Special care should be taken to preserve the natural character of the land and natural drainage corridors.
- Desert vegetation is maintained in either in common open space areas or on individual lots.
- Site plans for developments on larger vacant tracts should be sensitive to topography, vegetation and natural drainage area.
- The impacts of development on desert preservation should be minimized through the preservation of washes and the use of natural buffers on the perimeter of developments.

Environmentally Sensitive Lands and Native Desert Character Types:

- Any development permitted in this district should be very low density and special care should be taken to minimize the impacts of development on the natural character of the land.
- Low impact recreational opportunities may be considered for these areas, including hiking, mountain biking and equestrian trails.

Recognize the value and visual significance that landscaping has upon the character of the community and maintain standards that result in substantial, mature landscaping that reinforces the character of the city.

- Require substantial landscaping be provided as part of new development
- or redevelopment.
- Maintain the landscaping materials and pattern within a character area.
- Encourage the use of landscaping to reduce the effects of heat and glare on buildings and pedestrian areas as well as contribute toward better air quality.
- Discourage plant materials that contribute substantial air-borne pollen.
- Encourage landscape designs that promote water conservation, safe public settings, erosion protection, and reduce the “urban heat island” effect.
- Encourage the retention of mature landscape plant materials.

CIRCULATION

The proposed site plan reflects efforts on behalf of the applicant to ensure a sensitive design approach and to address development concerns of surrounding property owners with regards to vehicular circulation and distribution. The community will include entrance gates at four locations. The primary entry will be at the eastern terminus of Alameda Road, with a private Local Collector level roadway that will extend eastward into the heart of the project. Secondary, full access entry gate locations will be located along the northern site boundary (Happy Valley Road alignment) and the eastern site boundary (128th Street alignment). The northern access point will tie into the proposed Ranch Gate Road alignment that will extend from 118th Street to 128th Street. The eastern gate will tie into the future 128th Street alignment.

TRAIL CIRCULATION

A public trail segment will be included along the 128th Street frontage and through the Sereno Canyon Community. The 128th Street trail improvements will be constructed within a 20-foot easement and will meander within the 100-foot scenic corridor easement. This segment will provide a linkage to the Alameda Road area and through the site to 128th Street and then to the proposed McDowell Sonoran Preserve trailhead to be located at the southern terminus of 128th Street. The trail will then extend through the property, adjacent to the internal streets, and connect to the proposed 128th Street trail alignment on the eastern boundary of the site. A private trail network will link to the proposed public trail network and will extend throughout the community. The use of the private trail network will be limited to community residents and will link to pocket parks and open space corridors.

COMMUNITY AMMENTIES

A designated private Community Center and park site has been identified in the central portion of the project and will serve the overall community. The Community Center will serve as a focal point for community residents and will incorporate a broad spectrum of amenities in addition to serving as a trailhead for private trails within the proposed project. The proposed private trail network will enhance pedestrian connectivity from all portions of the site and tie into three small community park sites located throughout the project. These park sites will serve primarily as trailhead locations for the private trail network and provide passive recreational amenities for residents of Sereno Canyon.

ARCHITECTURE

The architecture of the site will be guided though the use of Design Guidelines. The “Old World” flare of the Community Center and gatehouse will be an influence towards the direction of the guidelines but not an imposition of “sameness” in design. Variety of quality architecture will be encouraged.

UTILITIES

Utilities, including water and wastewater, will be conveyed to the site via extensions to existing public service lines in Alameda Road and the Happy Valley Road alignment. Please reference the utility master plans submitted in conjunction with this application for a more detailed description of proposed utility locations.

HYDROLOGY

The subject property naturally drains to both the east and west, off of a subtle watershed boundary that extends through the center portion of the property. Offsite drainage generally initiates from the McDowell Mountains to the south and crosses the site in a series of small braided washes. These braided wash corridors lend character to the site, their ephemeral waters historically shaping the contours of the property into small rolling hills, bisected by intermittent washes. Stormwater generated by on-site improvements will be managed by a series of small retention basins as outlined by the attached master drainage report.