

https://www.havasunews.com/news/builders-request-zoning-changes-for-remaining-lots/article_ee978418-d709-11eb-924c-db169ac34841.html

Builders request zoning changes for remaining lots

By Michael Zogg

Today's News-Herald

Jun 26, 2021



Construction crews work on the streets in the Wren Cove neighborhood with The Ridge neighborhood behind it and Lake Havasu City in the background.

Courtesy of Desert Land Group

With three neighborhoods prepped and mostly sold in Havasu Riviera, developers are starting to turn their attention to the final 157 acres of the 250-acre Riviera which will eventually include about 340 houses spread throughout the final five neighborhoods.

Desert Land Group, the Development Consultant at the Riviera, is currently in the process of requesting approval from Lake Havasu City for a rezone of all five of the remaining neighborhoods, and a slight adjustment to the zoning of one of the neighborhoods that has already hit the market. Desert Land Group's request is largely consistent with the Havasu Riviera Specific Plan, approved by the city back in 2008, with a few minor changes to the layout as originally envisioned a little more than a decade ago.

The rezone request and the 2008 specific plan both call for four of the last five neighborhoods to be zoned for multi-family residential, with the other zoned for mixed use. The only difference now is that the mixed use

part of the development has been moved further from the water — from neighborhood five in the specific plan to the back corner of neighborhood four. Neighborhoods five through eight would all be zoned multi-family residential.

“Just because of how the community laid out, it was better to put the residential closer to the water where the views are and to put the mixed use component a little further in the back,” said Desert Land Group CEO Mychal Gorden.

Although the current rezone request follows the guidelines agreed to in the Riviera’s specific plan, the last five neighborhoods have never officially gone through the rezone process. So they are still technically zoned as Agricultural Preservation, which was the original zoning from when the land was operated by the Bureau of Land Management. But Havasu’s General Plan Future Land Use Map was updated back in 2016 and categorizes the Riviera as Resort Related Mainland, which is suitable for this type of development according to the city staff report.

“We are three neighborhoods in, we have five to go,” Gorden said. “This takes the second half of Riviera, cleans up the master plan, and puts everything in order so we can keep pushing forward.”

Planned Development

As part of the rezone request all five of the future neighborhoods in Havasu Riviera are requesting to have a planned development added to the underlying requested zoning. The request also includes a planned development for 22 lots along the back edge of The Ridge, which is already selling property. Gorden said the planned developments will allow owner and developer Komick Enterprises more flexibility to ensure each lot has a good view of the lake, and to lay out the future neighborhoods amongst the rough terrain at the Riviera.

The planned development for part of The Ridge and for the fourth neighborhood would both adjust the maximum building height to 40 feet. The current maximum height at The Ridge, which is already zoned as multi-family residential, is 30 feet. The mixed use zoning being requested for neighborhood four would actually allow a maximum building height of 60 feet, but Gorden said they are requesting to lower that maximum height to 40 feet because there are no plans to allow buildings 60 feet tall.

Although adjustments to maximum heights are frequently controversial in Lake Havasu City because they generally affect an existing landowners’ views of the lake, Gorden said that isn’t the case out at the Riviera. In fact, he said the extra height will be used to protect everyone’s view.

“In Riviera the height and the location of those heights doesn’t really affect anybody because it is surrounded by a lot of open desert — you can’t even really see any of these homes anywhere in town whether they were 15 feet tall, 30 feet tall, or 60 feet tall,” Gorden said. “So height doesn’t really have an impact on the existing city itself, height is really more of a concern for us.”

Although the height requirement would be adjusted for the whole neighborhood, Gorden said only certain lots

within those neighborhoods will actually be able to build to that high. He said each lot will have specific height restrictions determined by the developer as they lay out each community. He said some lots may have a maximum height of 15, 16 or 18 feet, while others would be able to build a second story.

“We are only going to (allow extra building height) in the back row and in certain places where there is room for two-story homes to see over some homes in front of them,” Gorden said.

The planned development requested for neighborhoods five through eight – all of which are requesting multi-family residential zoning – would also increase the maximum building height from 30 to 40 feet, and it would allow some additional flexibility in how the lots can be laid out. The PD would reduce the minimum lot width from 60 feet to 50 feet, reduce the minimum lot depth from 120 feet to 100 feet, and reduce the minimum lot area from 7,200 square feet to 6,000 square feet.

“It’s really about having the flexibility to deal with the topography. We are not laying out a standard grid-shaped neighborhood in town on a normal street,” Gorden said. “We are working with some really severe topography out at Riviera so our streets curve differently and are laid out differently – that ends up creating these sometimes odd shaped parcels. But from a planning perspective those odd-shaped parcels can create some really unique houses and some really unique development opportunities.”

Gorden said, for the most part, lots with a reduced width would likely be deeper, while lots more shallow than typically allowed would be wider.

Lake Havasu City staff is recommending approval of the rezone request. It will be considered by the Planning and Zoning Commission, which will hold the first public hearing about the request during its July 7 meeting. The commission will then forward its recommendation along with the request to City Council which will hold a second public hearing followed by a final vote on the rezone.

Michael Zogg

Reporter