

Vistoso Highlands

Major General Plan Amendment Application Second Submittal OV1113-002

Submitted to:
Town of Oro Valley
Development and Infrastructure Services
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Prepared by:

September 16, 2013

Attachment 3

Vistoso Highlands | Major General Plan Amendment

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Vistoso Highlands | Major General Plan Amendment

Project Overview

Vistoso Highlands is located at the northwest corner of Rancho Vistoso Boulevard and Vistoso Highlands Drive in Rancho Vistoso. Rancho Vistoso is a master planned community that has been developed over the previous two decades and has established a precedent for the quality of development in Oro Valley and the region. The Vistoso Highlands application requests a change in land use designation to a less intense General Plan designation to complement the existing residential development patterns within Rancho Vistoso. The existing General Plan designation is Neighborhood Commercial and Office (NCO). We propose to amend the General Plan designation to Medium Density Residential (MDR: 2.1-5.0 DU/AC). The Medium Density Residential classification aligns with the Medium and High Density Residential designations of the existing residential parcels in the vicinity of Vistoso Highlands. The application outlines the projects compliance with the General Plan.

The current General Plan designation was established with the Rancho Vistoso Planned Area Development which envisioned the site as a Neighborhood Commercial and Office designation. The evolution of Rancho Vistoso has yielded less dwelling units and a smaller overall population than was planned to support the current Neighborhood Commercial and Office use. Currently, the viable commercial and office projects serving Rancho Vistoso are located at the major intersections and the primary entries for the development, which is a traditional land use pattern for a master planned community. These centers meet the needs of Rancho Vistoso's residents and the greater community.

The initial step to proceed with the development of the site is to secure entitlements for the project beginning with an amendment to the General Plan. The proposed change to single family residential development for Vistoso Highlands presents the best use of the property based on the historical trends and current market demands. It is a unique opportunity to activate an undeveloped parcel within Rancho Vistoso and to complete a core area in the community. The change will provide housing options for new residents to Oro Valley and continue the diversification of housing in the Town. The development will be consistent with the applicable Goals and Policies and integrate the principles defined in the General Plan's Planning Elements

Property Summary

Location: The property is located within Rancho Vistoso at the northwest corner of Rancho Vistoso Boulevard and Vistoso Highlands Drive. Address: 500 W. Vistoso Highlands Drive

Site Area: 17.9AC

Assessor Property Numbers: 219-20-004M & 219-20-004L

Existing Land Use: Rancho Vistoso PAD

Existing General Plan Designation: Neighborhood Commercial & Office (NCO)

Proposed General Plan Designation: Medium Density Residential (MDR: 2.1-5.0 DU/AC)

General Plan Amendment Review Criteria

Per Section 22 of the Oro Valley Zoning Code, the proposed General Plan amendment shall demonstrate consistency with the vision, goals, and policies of the General Plan and establish compliance with the following criteria.

The proposed change is necessary because conditions in the community have changed to the extent that the plan requires amendment or modification.

The property is within the core of Rancho Vistoso which has seen consistent development activity for more than a decade. The community has evolved through many development trends to accommodate the market conditions while maintaining a consistent vision and implementing a quality development. The original planning of Rancho Vistoso identified several neighborhood commercial nodes envisioned to meet the needs of an urbanized master planned community development.

Per the Rancho Vistoso PAD, the community proposed 13,862 residential units and an estimated population of 32,815. Our analysis identifies there are approximately 7,000 developed residential units based on the current Pima County GIS data excluding developments such as Splendido and the future residential parcels yet to be developed. The current build-out is approximately 50% of the proposed development potential as identified in the PAD. There are many factors such as market conditions, product evolution and demographic shifts that influence the ultimate build-out of the community. The commercial and office market demands are serviced by the larger commercial centers developed at the major intersections and primary entries to Rancho Vistoso. Thus, the use of this property as neighbor commercial and office is not in demand or viable in today's market.

Currently, Rancho Vistoso is experiencing a resurgence in demand as the residential market recovers and new household generation commences. Vistoso Highlands is situated in a district of Rancho Vistoso with diverse residential offerings ranging from semi-custom single family detached to multi-family product. The introduction of residential on this site is complementary to the adjacent uses and developed product in the vicinity. The ownership proposes to amend the designation allowing residential development under the Medium Density Residential General Plan designation to provide a marketable product. In addition, the proposed residential use complements the mix of existing residential development in the vicinity.

The proposed change is sustainable by contributing to the socio-economic betterment of the community, while achieving community and environmental compatibility.

Vistoso Highlands will meet the demand for a segment of the housing market and enhance the overall diversity of housing opportunities in Rancho Vistoso and Oro Valley consistent with the Housing Element of the General Plan. The project presents housing opportunities for new and existing residents broadening the fabric of the community that live, work and play in Oro Valley. In addition, the community will conform to the design and aesthetic standards guided by the Rancho Vistoso PAD and the Oro Valley Design Standards ensuring the implementation of the quality community.

Vistoso Highlands will be in conformance with the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Ordinance (ESLO) that requires the Medium Density Residential General Plan designation to provide 25% open space plus preserve 95% of the Critical Resource Area. The ESLO requirement results in approximately 4 acres of open space that may contain natural open space, passive open space, trails, recreational areas, buffers and drainage. The net developable area is approximately 14 acres. Please note that the site has experienced extensive disturbance over the years.

The project will conform to the Oro Valley Residential Design Standards regarding the allowance for two-story homes. Two-story homes are located in the vicinity of the site including the townhomes south of Vistoso Highlands, the homes at Sunset Ridge along Rancho Vistoso Boulevard and the multi-story development at Splendido.

The property is located along the existing transportation and infrastructure system with ample utilities in place. Being part of a developed area, the project will not require an extension of infrastructure and services to serve the property. Vistoso Highlands is an infill project for Rancho Vistoso and Oro Valley.

The proposed change reflects market demand which leads to viability and general community acceptance.

The Vistoso Highlands General Plan Amendment request presents a viable use that is complementary to the existing residential development in the vicinity. As a master planned community, residential development is the core use to create community. The Medium Density Residential designation supplements the market demand for residential properties in Rancho Vistoso. Currently, the property remains undeveloped as a market demand has not materialized. Neighborhood Commercial and Office is not a viable use in this location due to the lower developed density in the area. Mountain Vista Plaza is a prime example of a neighborhood commercial complex that has struggled based on reduced market demand in the area.

Commercial centers located at the major intersections along Rancho Vistoso Boulevard at Tangerine Road and Oracle Road serve as the optimal location for commercial in the area. Vacancies in the commercial centers within the vicinity are decreasing and new commercial development proposals are being introduced and implemented along the Tangerine Road and Oracle Road corridor. The existing commercial center at Tangerine Road and Rancho Vistoso Boulevard is approximately two miles from the site. The location provides reasonable access for the community and the location is positioned on a successful and well traveled transportation corridor. The original vision for this parcel to serve as neighborhood commercial had merit if the densities that were proposed were actually developed around this parcel. Ultimately, the current density of the development will not support the neighborhood commercial use thus the site has remained undeveloped. The commercial needs are well served by the existing commercial development in Rancho Vistoso and those developments would be better served to remain as the key commercial nodes and thrive as additional users populate within their service areas.

Residential development is clearly successful in Rancho Vistoso and the demand for the remaining residential land in Oro Valley is significant. Therefore, the addition of a new residential development aligns with a successful long term residential development program implemented in Rancho Vistoso.

The amendment will not adversely impact the community as a whole, or a portion of the community without an acceptable means of mitigating these impacts through the subsequent zoning and development processes.

Conformance with the Rancho Vistoso PAD and Oro Valley Design Standards, the public input process through the subsequent rezoning and development processes and our planning process for the site, will ensure Vistoso Highlands minimizes the impacts to the community. The public engagement process facilitated by the Town of Oro Valley ensures that the adjacent residents and the community are notified and engaged in the process. In addition, the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Ordinance open space requirements increase the open space areas above and beyond the existing open space dedicated by the Rancho Vistoso PAD. The project will demonstrate compliance with the ELSO requirements as part of the rezoning process.

The public meeting held on April 11th, 2013 presented an opportunity for adjacent residents to voice their initial concerns about the application. Please see the attached response to comments and questions raised at the initial public meeting. As discussed at the meeting, the General Plan Amendment application is the first step in an extensive public process. The subsequent rezoning will provide the public an opportunity to review further details related to the development. As part of the rezoning, we will demonstrate that the project will be in conformance with the planning and design requirements set forward by the Rancho Vistoso PAD to which all development in Rancho Vistoso is subject to.

As part of our public outreach, we are scheduled to meet with the Rancho Vistoso HOA at their upcoming Board meeting in September to discuss the application and continue the dialogue with the Rancho Vistoso residents. We will continue to work with the community through the planning process to keep them informed and constructively address their input.

General Plan Policy Conformance

Vistoso Highlands will conform to the Goals and Policies set forth in the General Plan. The following highlight key elements of the General Plan Amendment application.

Land Use

- Vistoso Highlands will complement the existing residential development patterns within Rancho Vistoso and Oro Valley.
- The proposed Medium Residential Density designation aligns with the Medium and High Density Residential designations of the existing residential parcels in the vicinity of Vistoso Highlands.
- The current General Plan designation of Neighborhood Commercial and Office is not a viable use based on current and proposed population density in the area. Existing competition from the existing commercial centers located at the major transportation intersections and primary entries for Rancho Vistoso limits the viability of the property under the current designation. The site has been zoned as Neighborhood Commercial and Office for over two decades and has remained vacant.
- The project will be in compliance with the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Ordinance.

Community Design

- The project will be consistent with the character of Rancho Vistoso PAD and Oro Valley Design Standards.
- The project will integrate the required buffers to transition from the streetscape frontage along Rancho Vistoso Boulevard and Vistoso Highlands Drive.
- All outdoor lighting will be shielded in conformance with the Oro Valley Outdoor Lighting Code.

Economic Development

- The proposed use will activate the currently vacant site.
- New residential opportunities will introduce additional residents to Oro Valley contributing to the local economy and the growth of the community.
- The commercial needs are well served by the existing commercial development in Rancho Vistoso and those developments would be better served to remain as the key commercial nodes and thrive as additional users populate within their service areas.

Cost of Development

- The existing infrastructure was constructed as part of the Rancho Vistoso improvements and has the capacity to support the development so there is not an additional cost for Oro Valley to expand existing infrastructure.
- The developer of the property will be responsible for all on-site improvements

Transportation / Circulation

- Vistoso Highlands is located along existing transportation corridors eliminating the need for new infrastructure improvements.
- The proposed General Plan designation is less intense than the current designation.
- Vistoso Highlands will use the current access points:
 - Rancho Vistoso Boulevard with a median opening at the access point along the eastern frontage.
 - Hidden Springs Drive at Vistoso Highlands Drive along the southern frontage.

Public Facilities, Services & Safety

- Vistoso Highlands is located within Oro Valley's Urban Services Boundary.
- Public facilities such as schools, fire stations, police stations are already established and provide service to the area.

Housing

- Vistoso Highlands provides an opportunity to meet the growing housing demands in Oro Valley.
- Vistoso Highlands will meet the demand for a segment of housing market and enhance the overall diversity of housing opportunities in Rancho Vistoso and Oro Valley.
- New household generation will help support the local Oro Valley businesses enhancing the current commercial offerings in the area.

Parks and Recreation

- Vistoso Highlands will provide a recreation area as required by Oro Valley and as a portion of the ESLO requirement.
- Vistoso Highlands will integrate sidewalks providing connectivity for the residents to the extensive sidewalk and bike lane network in Rancho Vistoso and Oro Valley.

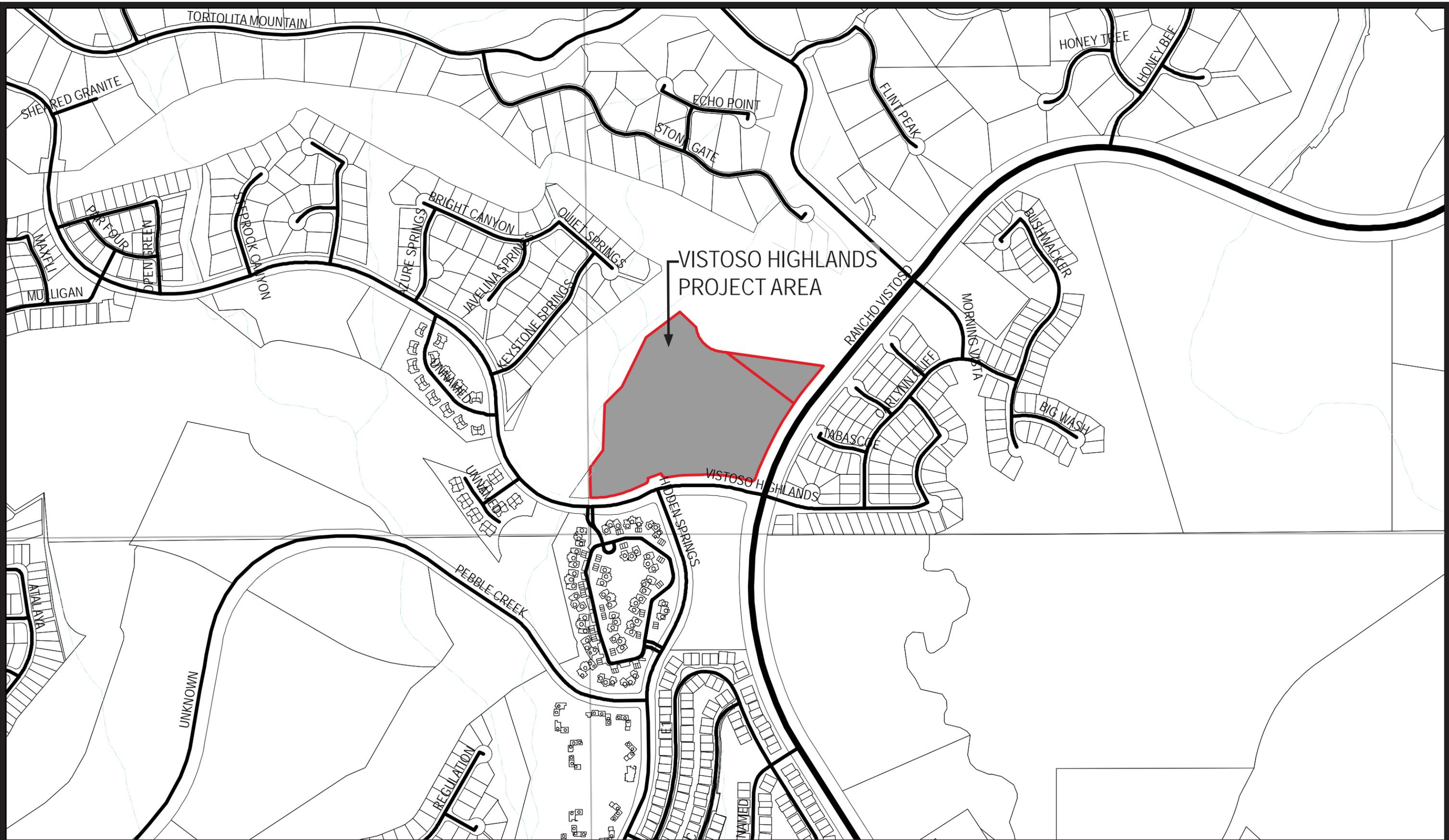
Open Space and Natural Resource Conservation

- Vistoso Highlands will be in compliance with the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Ordinance (ESLO) integrating the 25% open space requirement and the Critical Resource Area on the western boundary of the site.
- The project will integrate buffers and a recreation area into the open space as required by the Rancho Vistoso PAD and Oro Valley retaining the existing character along Rancho Vistoso Boulevard.
- Vistoso Highland is situated within a developed urban area and has extensive existing on-site disturbances.
- The wash on the western edge of the project will not be impacted by the improvements.

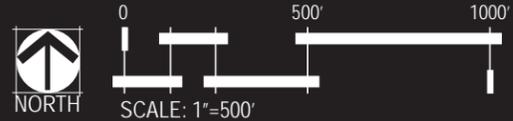
Water Resources

- Vistoso Highlands is located within Oro Valley's Urban Services Boundary and Oro Valley Water Utility water service area.
- Project will manage drainage on-site and ensure storm water discharge matches historical flows.
- The landscape irrigation system will integrate a smart irrigation controller to manage and conserve irrigation water.

In summary, the Vistoso Highlands General Plan Amendment request conforms to the General Plan's Goals and Policies for the Planning Elements and will create a positive contribution to Rancho Vistoso and Oro Valley.



VISTOSO HIGHLANDS
PROJECT AREA

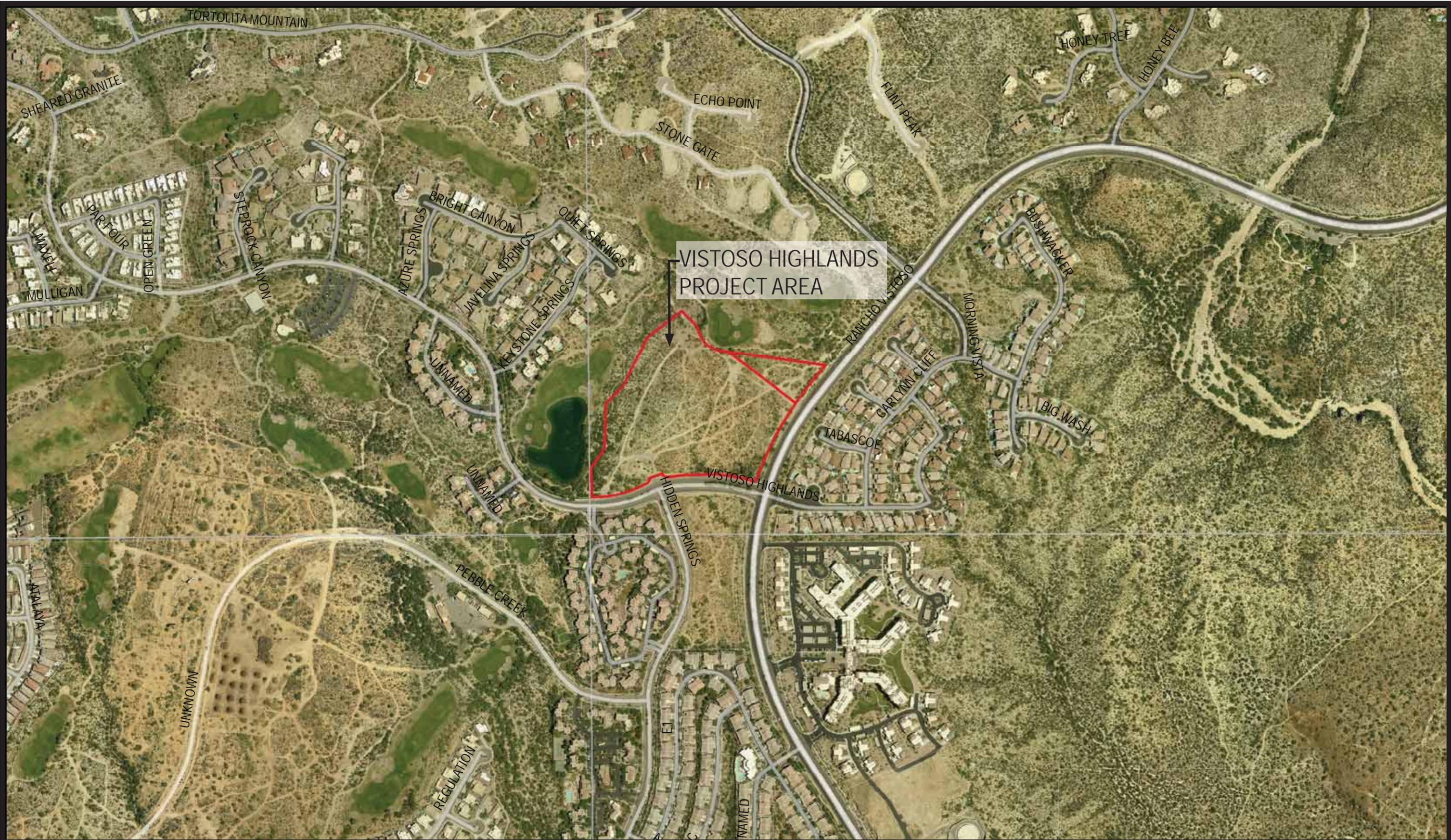


VISTOSO HIGHLANDS - LOCATION MAP
September 16, 2013

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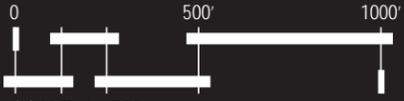
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VISTOSO HIGHLANDS
PROJECT AREA



NORTH



SCALE: 1"=500'

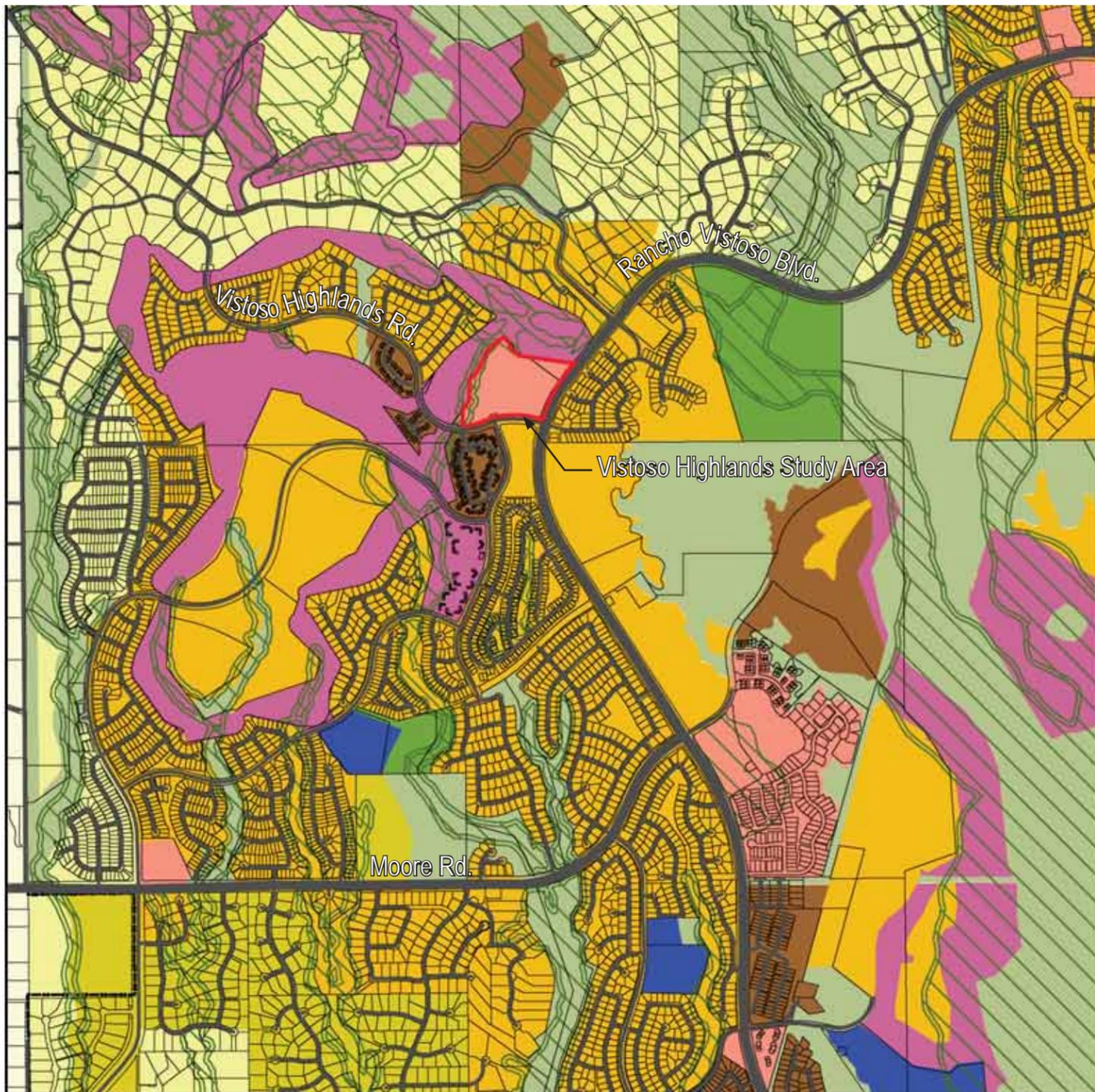
VISTOSO HIGHLANDS - CONTEXT MAP

September 16, 2013

418 North Toole Avenue
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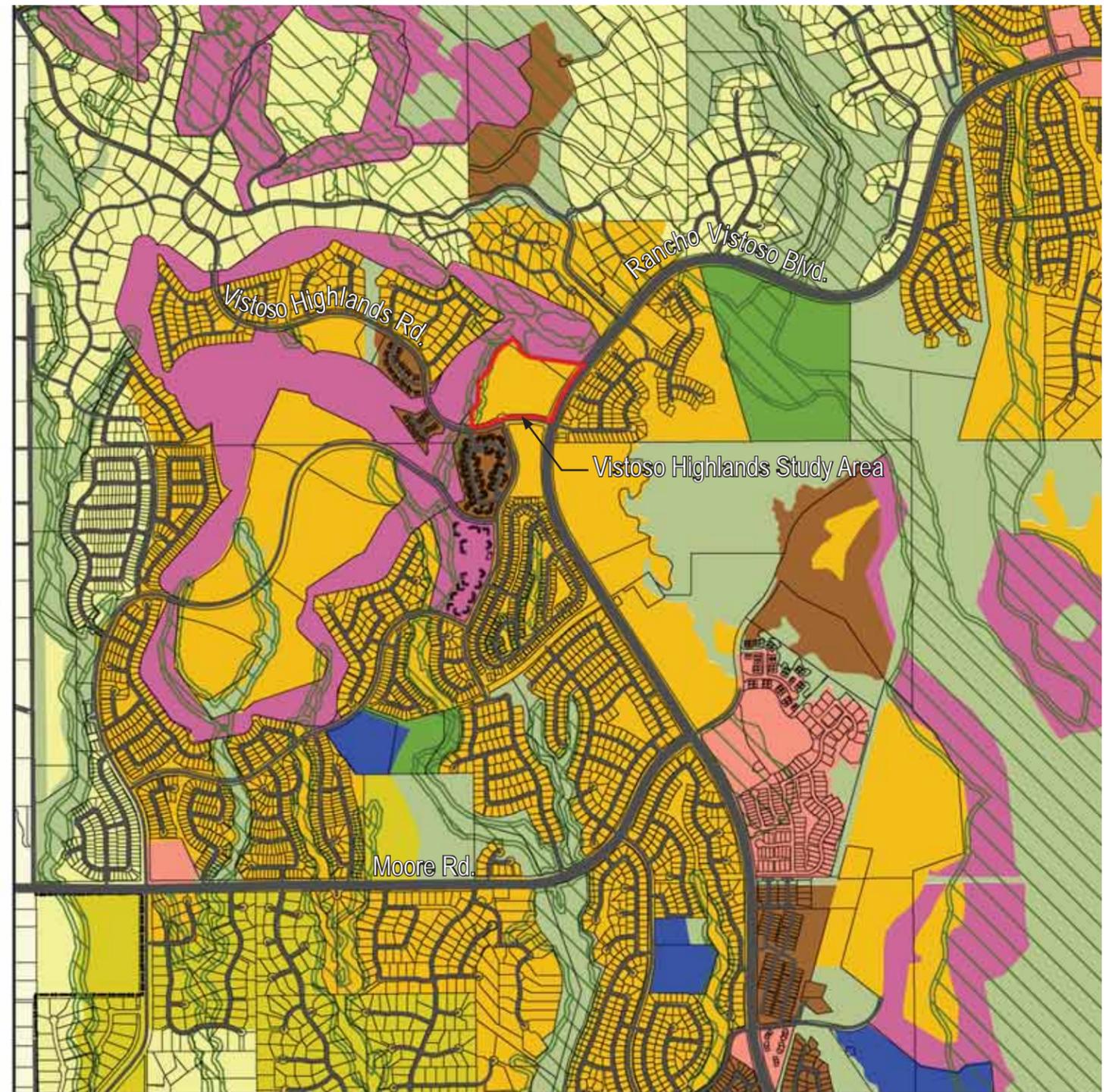


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Existing General Plan

Not to Scale



Proposed General Plan

Not to Scale

Legend

 Low Density Residential (0.4 - 1.2 DU/AC)	 High Density Residential (5+ DU/AC)	 School	 Significant Resource Area
 Low Density Residential (1.3 - 2.0 DU/AC)	 Resort / Golf Course	 Park	
 Medium Density Residential (2.1 - 5 DU/AC)	 Neighborhood Commercial / Office	 Open Space	



September 12, 2013

Chad Daines
Town of Oro Valley
Development and Infrastructure Services
11000 N La Canada Drive
Oro Valley, AZ 85737

RE: Vistoso Highlands | Major General Plan Amendment

Dear Chad:

We appreciate the feedback from staff and the residents in response to the Major General Plan Amendment application. At this point in the process, we believe the amendment request demonstrates consistency with the vision, goals, and policies of the General Plan and establishes compliance with the review criteria for an amendment request. In addition, we are scheduled to meet with the Rancho Vistoso HOA at their upcoming Board meeting in September to discuss the application and continue the dialogue with the Rancho Vistoso residents. We will continue to work with the community through the planning process to keep them informed and constructively address their input. The following summary responds to staff's review comments issued from the review of the Major General Plan Amendment application dated April 30th, 2013 and the specific topics discussed at the public meeting on April 11th, 2013.

Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL)

Response

1&2) We acknowledge that the project will be required to address the ESL open space and conservation requirements during the rezoning process.

General Plan Amendment Narrative

Comment

3) You mention that Rancho Vistoso has developed with less dwelling units and a smaller overall population than initially envisioned. Please expand on this argument by providing Rancho Vistoso build-out numbers.

Response

Per the Rancho Vistoso PAD, the community proposed 13,862 residential units and an estimated population of 32,815. Our analysis identifies there are approximately 7,000 developed residential units based on the current Pima County GIS data excluding developments such as Splendido and the future residential parcels yet to be developed. The current build-out is approximately 50% of the proposed development potential as identified in the PAD. There are many factors such as market conditions, product evolution and demographic shifts that influence the ultimate build-out of the community. Currently, Rancho Vistoso is experiencing a resurgence in demand as the residential market recovers and new household generation commences as well as the move up market reemerges. Vistoso Highlands is situated in a district of Rancho Vistoso with diverse residential offerings ranging from semi-custom single family detached to mutli-family product. The introduction of residential on this site is complementary to the adjacent uses and developed product in the vicinity.

Comment

4) You mention that there was a public meeting on April 11th where initial concerns were verbalized. Please review the attached neighborhood meeting summary and make sure to address all non-site plan related concerns in your narrative.

Response

The following addresses specific topics discussed at the public meeting to provide relevant information pertaining to the General Plan Amendment.

- *Two-Story Homes:*

The project will conform to the Oro Valley Residential Guidelines regarding the allowance for two-story homes. During the rezoning process and the presentation of a site plan, we can discuss the specifics of views and provide exhibits to address any relevant concerns. Two-story homes are located in the vicinity of the site including the townhomes south of Vistoso Highlands, the homes at Sunset Ridge along Rancho Vistoso Boulevard and Splendido is a multi-story development.

- *Medium Density Residential Land Use Designation:*

The project is requesting the Medium Density Residential Land Use Designation to allow for single family detached, townhomes or patio homes with a density in the range of 2.1 to 5.0 dwellings per acre. For clarification, we anticipate a total number of units in the 70-80 range. We are not requesting a General Plan designation or zoning classification to construct a project similar to Splendido.

- *Builder:*

At this point, the builder has not been determined.

- *ESL Open Space Requirements:*

The ESL requirement results in approximately 4 acres of open space that may contain natural open space, passive open space, trails, recreational areas, buffers and drainage. The net developable area is approximately 14 acres and the yield will be determined during the rezoning process. As noted above, we anticipate a total number of units in the 70-80 range.

- *Setbacks:*

The project will be required to conform to the streetscape buffer along Rancho Vistoso Boulevard and Vistoso Highlands. The remaining property edges are adjacent to the golf and open space which per the Rancho Vistoso PAD create the buffer between parcels.

- *Gated Access:*

We are evaluating the request from the public meeting to integrate gated entries for the development. We will determine this component during the rezoning.

- *Development Standards:*

Per the meeting summary, we will address during the rezoning.

- *Rancho Vistoso HOA:*

We are scheduled to meet with the Rancho Vistoso HOA at their upcoming Board meeting in September. We will need to make a formal request to be included in the Rancho Vistoso HOA.

- *Traffic Signal at Rancho Vistoso Boulevard and Vistoso Highlands:*

At this time, we understand a traffic signal is being considered by Oro Valley Public Works for the intersection.

- *Future Rezoning Requirements:*

The General Plan Amendment is the initial step in securing entitlements for the property. The subsequent rezoning will provide the public an opportunity to review further details related to the development. As part of the rezoning, we will request that the project be in conformance with the planning and design requirements set forward by the Rancho Vistoso PAD which all development in Rancho Vistoso is subject to.

▪ *Infrastructure:*

The site is located within an existing infrastructure network that was developed for the greater Rancho Vistoso master planned community. Rancho Vistoso has been developed at 50% of the proposed build-out thus the capacity to support new development is available.

Comment

5) Provide further explanation including analysis and information relative to residential demand and commercial markets in the region and Oro Valley.

Response

As mentioned in the response to Comment #3, the residential market has significantly recovered in Oro Valley as demand continues to trend upwards. Quality of life, jobs, education, recreational opportunities and convenient retail destinations make Oro Valley attractive to a diversity of demographics. Rancho Vistoso is a premier community in Oro Valley and the region so the interest in new residential neighborhoods is in demand.

In regard to the commercial market, the major intersections in Oro Valley serve as the optimal location for commercial in the area. Vacancies in the commercial centers within the vicinity are decreasing and new commercial development proposals are being introduced and implemented along the Tangerine Road and Oracle Road corridor. The commercial center at Tangerine Road and Rancho Vistoso Boulevard is approximate two miles from the site. The location provides reasonable access for the community and the location is positioned on a successful and well traveled transportation corridor. The original vision for this parcel to serve as neighborhood commercial had merit if the densities that were proposed were actually developed around this parcel. Ultimately, the current density of the development will not support the neighborhood commercial use thus the site has remained undeveloped. The commercial needs are well served by the existing commercial development in Rancho Vistoso and would be better served to remain as the key commercial nodes and thrive as additional users populate within their service areas.

Comment

6) As a point of clarification in your discussion of open space, this project will be required to protect 95% of the Critical Resource Areas, in addition to the 25% open space requirement.

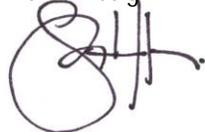
Response

Noted. The ESL open space areas will be refined during the rezoning process.

In summary, the Vistoso Highlands General Plan Amendment request conforms to the General Plan's Goals and Policies for the Planning Elements and will create a positive contribution to Rancho Vistoso and Oro Valley.

Please contact me with any questions or if you need additional information at 520.609.1466 or sweaks@norris-design.com.

Respectfully,
Norris Design



Stacey Weaks, RLA, LEED AP