



Major General Plan Amendment Planning and Zoning Commission Staff Report

CASE NUMBER: OV1113-02 Vistoso Highlands
MEETING DATE: October 1, 2013
AGENDA ITEM: 3
STAFF CONTACT: Chad Daines, Principal Planner
cdaines@orovalleyaz.gov (520) 229-4896

Applicant: Stacey Weaks of Norris Design
Request: From Neighborhood Commercial/ Office (NCO)
To Medium Density Residential (2.1 – 5.0 du/ac)
Location: Northwest corner of Rancho Vistoso Boulevard and Vistoso Highlands Drive
Recommendation: Recommend Denial of the requested amendment.

SUMMARY:

The applicant proposes a Major General Plan Amendment from Neighborhood Commercial/ Office to Medium Density Residential for an 18 acre property located at the northwest corner of Rancho Vistoso Boulevard and Vistoso Highlands Drive (Attachment 1).

The applicant proposes to develop the property as a single-family residential development, with minimum 5,000 sq. ft. lots. The application and applicant responses to Code evaluation criteria are provided as Attachment 2. The Current and Proposed General Plan Land Use Maps are provided on Attachment 3.

BACKGROUND

Land Use Context

	EXISTING LAND USE (Attachment 1)	GENERAL PLAN (Attachment 3)
SUBJECT PROPERTY	Vacant	Neighborhood Commercial / Office (NCO)
NORTH	Golf Course	Resort/ Golf Course
SOUTH	Single-family Residential Vistoso Resort Casitas & Parcel 10N	Medium Density Residential (2.1–5 du/ac)
EAST	Single-Family Residential Monterey @ Vistoso / Splendido	Medium Density Residential (2.1-5 du/ac)
WEST	Golf Course	Resort/ Golf Course

Approvals To Date

June 1987: Rancho Vistoso Planned Area Development (C-1) approved.

Existing General Plan Land Use Designations (Attachment 3)

The current Oro Valley General Plan designates the property Neighborhood Commercial / Office (NC/O), which is described as follows:

Neighborhood Commercial/ Office (NCO) - This designation denotes commercial and office areas located with good arterial access (i.e. at the intersections of arterial streets or along Oracle Road) that is close to residential areas. Within these areas, uses such as grocery stores, drugstores, and offices tend to serve the surrounding neighborhoods and are integrated with those neighborhoods. Offices include professional offices, tourism-related businesses, and services.

Proposed General Plan Land Use Designation (see Attachment 3)

Medium Density Residential (MDR: 2.1–5.0 du/ac) - This designation is where single-family detached, townhouse, or patio home development is suitable, ranging from 2.1 to 5.0 dwelling units per acre. These areas should be located close to schools, shopping and employment.

Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) Ordinance Applicability to General Plan Amendments (GPAs)

The property contains the following ESL conservation categories:

- Critical Resource Area (CRA): 95% open space requirement
- Resource Management Area (RMA) Tier 2: 25% open space requirement

The ESL conservation system protects critical open space systems and linkages throughout the Town. ESL provides strict requirements for highest value resources and more flexible ones in areas of lower resource value. Riparian areas or very significant habitat features have the highest conservation requirements.

On the other end of the spectrum, lands designated as Resource Management Area (RMA) are important but have the lowest resource value and lower conservation requirements. Unlike higher resource value categories, including Major Wildlife Linkages (MWL), Critical Resource Areas (CRA), and Core Resource Area (Core), the RMA designation is driven by growth expectations of the General Plan. Each Resource Management tier aligns with the anticipated level of growth reflected in the General Plan. In other words, the General Plan designation determines the RMA Tier and subsequent amount of conservation (open space).

The following table summarizes the minimum open space requirements by General Plan designation:

RMA Tiers	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Minimum Open Space	66%	25%	0%
General Plan Land Use Designation	Rural Low Density Residential	Neighborhood Commercial/Office	Any GP Land Use Designation within a Growth Area
	Low Density Residential-1	Community/Regional Commercial	
	Low Density Residential-2	Commercial/Office Park	
	Resort/Golf Course	High Density Residential	
	Open Space	Medium Density Residential	
	School, Park	Public/Semi Public	
		MPC Rooney	
MPC Kai Capri			

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:

General Plan Amendment Criteria, Section 22.2.D.3

General Plan Amendments are evaluated for consistency with the General Plan Amendment criteria in the Zoning Code. It is the burden of the applicant to present facts and other materials to support these criteria. The applicant's full response to each of the criteria is attached (Attachment 2). Below is a summary of the applicant's responses (in italics) followed by staff's analysis of each criterion:

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

Applicant's Response: 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.

Staff Comment: According to Town records, the Rancho Vistoso PAD has been underdeveloped at approximately two-thirds of its planned density. It was requested that the applicant submit a detailed analysis with regard to the viability of the existing Neighborhood Commercial / Office (NC/O) designation. The narrative contains anecdotal statements, but does not contain the level of analysis necessary to establish non-viability of this property for commercial use in staff's opinion.

Neighborhood level commercial or office uses on this property would provide needed services within proximity to existing residential areas. An inventory of developed and vacant commercial properties in the area is provided as Attachment 4.

Additionally, a significant change which has occurred within the Rancho Vistoso area is the development of large areas which were originally planned for higher density residential uses to lower density single-family uses. This has resulted in housing lacking the variety envisioned by the adopted Rancho Vistoso PAD and intended by the General Plan. An alternative to retaining the NC/O designation may be consideration of a residential land use designation which provides variety in housing such as townhomes, casitas, condominiums, or even estate lots which would offer some diversity in housing opportunities consistent with the General Plan policies and original planning for Rancho Vistoso.

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

Applicant's Response: *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.

Staff Comment: The proposed development of single-family uses with a minimum lot size of 5,000 sq. ft. does not provide the diversity in housing opportunities envisioned by the General Plan and the Rancho Vistoso PAD. Alternatively, retention of the Neighborhood Commercial / Office designation can contribute to the socio-economic betterment of the community through the future location of neighborhood level commercial services and employment in close proximity to existing neighborhoods. Proximate services and jobs to existing neighborhoods promote walkability and reduce traffic impacts on roadways and contribute to quality of life. Commercial development also provides needed sales tax revenue to fund necessary services to residents including recreation facilities and public safety.

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

Applicant's Response: *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 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 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.

Staff Comment: Staff agrees that there is current market demand for production housing. However, significant areas for single-family residential development have been approved recently in this area which will increase the demand for convenient neighborhood commercial uses. These areas include RV Parcel 10N (28 lots), Stone Canyon Enclave Phase 1 (36), and Maracay at Vistoso (348 lots). Market demand for production housing should not drive the decision to change from NC/O to MDR.

The unprecedented economic conditions of the past 7-8 years have resulted in significant challenges for commercial developments. As the applicant points out, vacancies within these centers are decreasing as the overall economy recovers. Commercial projects with significant vacancies do not necessarily reflect the non-viability of that center for commercial uses; rather commercial vacancies are more than likely the result of the unprecedented economic downturn in recent years. As the economy recovers and recently approved residential projects are constructed, demand for nearby neighborhood levels services and employment will increase.

4. 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.

Applicant's Response: *The vision for Vistoso Highlands is to plan a project that minimizes impacts through the subsequent rezoning and development processes. 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. The project will conform to the Oro Valley Design Standards and the Rancho Vistoso PAD addressing design standards to minimize the impact of the improvements while maintaining a high quality development for the community. In addition, the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Ordinance requires 25% open space to reduce the development impacts. The project will demonstrate compliance with the ESLO requirements as part of the rezoning process.

Staff Comment: Staff agrees that impacts associated with the residential development of this property can be mitigated through the Town's rezoning and design process. The larger community impact of the amendment is the loss of neighborhood level commercial / office services and employment opportunities to a growing residential area, increased traffic and minor loss of revenues.

General Plan Vision, Goals and Policies Analysis

General Plan Amendments are also evaluated for consistency with the Vision, Goals and Policies of the General Plan. The following is an analysis relative to the amendments consistency with the Vision and key Policies in the General Plan.

General Plan Vision

To be a well planned community that uses its resources to balance the needs of today against the potential impacts to future generations. Oro Valley's lifestyle is defined by the highest standard of environmental integrity, education, infrastructure, services, and public safety. It is a community of people working together to create the Town's future with a government that is responsive to residents and ensures the long-term financial stability of the Town.

The Vision Statement from the General Plan emphasizes the need to carefully balance land use decisions which respond to a current conditions, against the long term impact to the community. In general, reduction of neighborhood commercial/office uses to respond to a currently active residential market can be detrimental the long term health of the community. Providing services within close proximity to residents improves quality of life, which is consistent with the overall General Plan Vision.

General Plan Policies

The application has been reviewed against notable General Plan goals and policies as follows:

Policy 1.3.1 The Town shall encourage the location of residential neighborhoods close to activity centers compatible with residential uses, and vice versa.

The location of this property directly serves this growing residential area. This policy supports retention of proximate, neighborhood level commercial and employment use on this property.

Policy 1.5.4 The Town shall ensure that areas appropriately zoned and planned for neighborhood commercial uses are developed.

This property is ideally located for neighborhood scale commercial and employment uses. Rancho Vistoso Boulevard is the main arterial roadway through Rancho Vistoso. This arterial roadway intersects with Vistoso Highlands Drive, a Major Collector Roadway providing direct and convenient access to the growing residential area to the west. Further, the property is buffered from residential

areas by the existing golf course on the north and west, making the site ideal for neighborhood scale commercial or office uses. Retention of the existing NC/O designation is consistent with this policy.

Policy 1.3.3. The Town shall encourage the establishment of new commercial uses in areas so designated on the land use map near new residential neighborhoods with the type, scale and potential buffering taken into account.

As stated above, this area is experiencing significant residential development as evidenced by recent approvals in Stone Canyon and within Rancho Vistoso Neighborhood 10 and 11. Additionally, the location of the golf course on the north and west provides a significant buffer, making this property ideal for neighborhood scale commercial and office uses. This policy supports retention of the property as NC/O.

Goal 7.2 To encourage and maintain a range of housing opportunities.

Policy 7.2.1. The Town shall encourage the development of a variety of types of homes to accommodate the varied needs of residents, including single-family attached and detached, townhomes, small apartments (3-4 units), condominiums, active retirement communities and congregate housing...

Policy 7.2.2.: The Town shall encourage a variety of residential building types consistent with the General Plan and in accordance with the Town's zoning and subdivision design standards.

This goal and these policies support the development of a diverse range of housing opportunities. Additional medium density homes do not advance this goal; rather adds to the lack of diversity in housing within this area. An alternative to retaining neighborhood commercial may be consideration of a land use designation which provides variety in housing including townhomes, casitas, condominiums, or even estate lots which would offer some diversity in housing opportunities consistent with the General Plan policies and original planning for Rancho Vistoso.

Goal 1.1: To preserve Oro Valley's natural Sonoran Desert environment and the scenic resources that are an important part of the community's quality of life.

Development of this property, whether commercial or residential, will be required to conform to the Environmentally Sensitive Lands ordinance including comprehensive analysis and preservation of the wash corridors and native plant species which exist on the property.

Policy 1.2.1. The Town shall maintain Oro Valley's predominately low density character while considering needs of financial stability and infrastructure efficiency.

The proposed amendment meets a portion of this policy. Reduction of commercial does not advance financial stability.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Summary of Public Notice

Public notice has been provided:

- Notification of all property owners within 1,000 feet
- Homeowners Association mailing
- Advertisement in The Daily Territorial and Arizona Daily Star newspapers
- Post on property
- Post at Town Hall and on website

Two neighborhood meetings were held. The first meeting was held on April 11th, 2013. Approximately 50 residents and interested parties attended the meeting. A second neighborhood meeting was held on September 19th, 2013 with approximately 12 residents and interested parties attending the meeting. A number of issues were discussed at each meeting, including the following:

Open space
Type and price of homes
Access to subdivision and additional traffic
Setbacks and building heights
Larger lots (13,000+ sq. ft.) preferred
Traffic

The summary notes from both meetings are attached for your reference (Attachment 5). A letter from an interested party is provided as Attachment 6.

SUMMARY

The proposed amendment has been evaluated using the general plan amendment criteria and applicable General Plan goals and policies as well as neighborhood and outside agency input. Following is a summary of the factors for and against the proposal:

Factors For:

1. The proposal will provide continuity in residential land use and will be compatible with the surrounding area.
2. The proposed development will have a lesser impact (lighting, noise, building height, etc.) than commercial on the adjacent residential properties.
3. The proposed amendment appears to be supported by the current market demand for detached single-family residential development.
4. Single-family development of this parcel tentatively supported by some nearby residents, although larger lots are preferred.

Factors Against:

1. The existing commercial designation provides future neighborhood level commercial services and employment in proximity to existing residential areas.
2. The location is ideally suited for neighborhood scale commercial employment uses based on the arterial street frontage and buffering from the adjacent golf course.
3. Retention of the commercial designation will positively contribute to fiscal stability of the Town when the property is developed.
4. The amendment does not provide a variety of housing consistent with General Plan policies.

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5. New residential in the area will create future demand for neighborhood scale commercial / office uses in this area.
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RECOMMENDATION:

The proposed amendment is not in conformance with a number of the General Plan evaluation criteria and a number of General Plan Goals and Policies as outlined in the Discussion / Analysis section of this report. Retention of the NC/O designation will maintain the opportunity for neighborhood scale commercial and employment uses in proximity to a growing residential area. The location on a Major Arterial roadway, and adjacent to the golf course make this property ideal for commercial and employment development. The proposed medium density residential use does not contribute to housing diversity nor fiscal stability.

It is recommended that the Planning and Zoning Commission take the following action:

Recommend to Town Council denial of the requested amendment.

SUGGESTED MOTIONS:

As this first Planning and Zoning Commission meeting is a Public Hearing only, no action will be taken by the Commission. Therefore, no suggested motions have been provided.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Location Map
2. Application and Responses to Criteria
3. Current & Proposed General Plan Land Use
4. Area Commercial Land Inventory
5. Neighborhood Meeting Summary Notes
6. Interested Party Letter

Chad Daines, AICP Principal Planner



Major General Plan Amendment Planning and Zoning Commission Staff Report

CASE NUMBER: OV1113-02 Vistoso Highlands
MEETING DATE: November 7, 2013
AGENDA ITEM: 3
STAFF CONTACT: Chad Daines, Principal Planner
cdaines@orovalleyaz.gov (520) 229-4896

Applicant: Stacey Weeks of Norris Design
Request: From Neighborhood Commercial/ Office (NCO)
To Medium Density Residential (2.1 – 5.0 du/ac)
Location: Northwest corner of Rancho Vistoso Boulevard and Vistoso Highlands Drive
Recommendation: Recommend Denial of the requested amendment.

OVERVIEW:

The applicant proposes a Major General Plan Amendment from Neighborhood Commercial/ Office to Medium Density Residential for an 18 acre property located at the northwest corner of Rancho Vistoso Boulevard and Vistoso Highlands Drive (Attachment 1).

The applicant proposes to develop the property as a single-family residential development, with minimum 5,000 sq. ft. lots. The application and applicant responses to Code evaluation criteria are provided as Attachment 2. The Current and Proposed General Plan Land Use Maps are provided on Attachment 3.

The Planning and Zoning Commission held the first public hearing on the request on October 1, 2013. Three residents / interested parties spoke with regard to the proposed amendment. In summary, one resident did not support the proposed density and lot size and felt that the development should be consistent with the density and lot size to the north and west. Another resident expressed concern with making a decision based on the current market, rather than what was appropriate for the property. This resident also expressed concern with the safety of future residents adjacent to the golf course and the need to update the Town's Golf Course Overlay District. The staff report and draft minutes from the October 1st Planning and Zoning Commission meeting are provided as Attachment 4 and 5 respectively.

BACKGROUND

Land Use Context

	EXISTING LAND USE (Attachment 1)	GENERAL PLAN (Attachment 3)
SUBJECT PROPERTY	Vacant	Neighborhood Commercial / Office (NCO)
NORTH	Golf Course	Resort/ Golf Course
SOUTH	Single-family Residential Vistoso Resort Casitas & Parcel 10N	Medium Density Residential (2.1–5 du/ac)
EAST	Single-Family Residential Monterey @ Vistoso / Splendido	Medium Density Residential (2.1-5 du/ac)
WEST	Golf Course	Resort/ Golf Course

Approvals To Date

June 1987: Rancho Vistoso Planned Area Development (C-1) approved.

Existing General Plan Land Use Designations (Attachment 3)

The current Oro Valley General Plan designates the property Neighborhood Commercial / Office (NC/O), which is described as follows:

Neighborhood Commercial/ Office (NCO) - This designation denotes commercial and office areas located with good arterial access (i.e. at the intersections of arterial streets or along Oracle Road) that is close to residential areas. Within these areas, uses such as grocery stores, drugstores, and offices tend to serve the surrounding neighborhoods and are integrated with those neighborhoods. Offices include professional offices, tourism-related businesses, and services.

Proposed General Plan Land Use Designation (see Attachment 3)

Medium Density Residential (MDR; 2.1–5.0 du/ac) - This designation is where single-family detached, townhouse, or patio home development is suitable, ranging from 2.1 to 5.0 dwelling units per acre. These areas should be located close to schools, shopping and employment.

Existing Zoning

The property is currently zoned Community Commercial C-1 under the Rancho Vistoso Planned Area Development (PAD). The current zoning permits a variety of commercial, office and employment uses.

Density / Lot Size Character of the Area (see Attachment 6)

At the October 1, 2013 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, a resident requested the density be granted similar to Stone Canyon to the North and Vistoso Highlands to the west. The density and lot sizes of adjacent residential areas are provided for informational purposes within the below table.

	NAME OF DEVELOPMENT	DENSITY	MIN LOT SIZE	LOT SIZE RANGE
NORTH (of Golf Course)	Stone Canyon VI	.8 du/ac	17,000 sq. ft.	17,000 to 51,000 sq. ft.
SOUTH	Vistoso Resort Condo's Rancho Vistoso Parcel 10N	10 du/ac 4.1 du/ac	2,000 sq. ft. 5,000 sq. ft.	2,000 sq. ft. 5,000 – 9,000 sq. ft.
EAST	Monterey at Vistoso Splendito	4 du/ac 11 du/ac	5,400 sq. ft.	5,400 – 12,000 sq. ft.
WEST (of Golf Course)	Vistoso Highlands	2.1 du/ac	13,000 sq. ft.	13,000 – 21,000 sq. ft.

Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) Ordinance Applicability to General Plan Amendments (GPAs)

The property contains the following ESL conservation categories:

- Critical Resource Area (CRA): 95% open space requirement
- Resource Management Area (RMA) Tier 2: 25% open space requirement

The October 1st Planning and Zoning Commission staff report (Attachment 4) includes additional information with regard to the ESL Conservation Categories on the property.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:

General Plan Amendment Criteria, Section 22.2.D.3

General Plan Amendments are evaluated for consistency with the General Plan Amendment criteria in the Zoning Code. It is the burden of the applicant to present facts and other materials to support these criteria. The applicant's full response to each of the criteria is attached (Attachment 2). The October 1st Planning and Zoning Commission report is provided as Attachment 4 and contains a summary of the applicant's responses and staff's analysis of each criterion:

General Plan Vision, Goals and Policies Analysis

General Plan Amendments are also evaluated for consistency with the Vision, Goals and Policies of the General Plan. The October 1st Planning and Zoning Commission staff report is provided as Attachment 4 and contains a detailed analysis relative to the amendments consistency with the Vision and key Policies in the General Plan.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Summary of Public Notice

Public notice has been provided:

- Notification of all property owners within 1,000 feet
- Homeowners Association mailing
- Advertisement in The Daily Territorial and Arizona Daily Star newspapers
- Post on property
- Post at Town Hall and on website

Two neighborhood meetings were held. The first meeting was held on April 11th, 2013. Approximately 50 residents and interested parties attended the meeting. A second neighborhood meeting was held on September 19th, 2013 with approximately 12 residents and interested parties attending the meeting. A number of issues were discussed at each meeting, including the following:

Open space
Type and price of homes
Access to subdivision and additional traffic
Setbacks and building heights
Larger lots (13,000+ sq. ft.) preferred
Traffic

The summary notes from both meetings are attached for your reference (Attachment 7). Emails and letters from interested parties are provided as Attachment 8.

This request was considered at the October 1st Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. Three residents / interested parties spoke with regard to the proposed amendment. In summary, one resident did not support the proposed density and lot size and felt that the development should be consistent with the density to the north (.8 du/ac) and west (2.1 du/ac). Another resident expressed a concern with making a decision based on the market, rather than what is appropriate for the property. This resident also expressed concern with the safety of future residents adjacent to the golf course and the need to update the Town's Golf Course Overlay District.

SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the General Plan Amendment criteria and policy analysis. Also included are responses to public and Commission questions from the first public hearing.

At the October 1st Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, one resident felt the density should be consistent with Stone Canyon (.8 du/ac.) and Vistoso Highlands (2.1 du/ac.) to the north and west.

The applicant indicates that the property is not a viable commercial parcel as evidenced by the property being vacant. Beyond anecdotal statements, the applicant's narrative does not contain the level of analysis necessary to establish non-viability of this property for commercial use in staff's opinion.

The Commission requested staff provide clear justification for the retention of the property for a future neighborhood commercial use. Although it is the burden of the applicant to demonstrate that the criteria for amendment have been met to support a change, staff would offer the following comments with regard to retaining the existing NC/O General Plan designation.

- Over 400 new single-family residential units have been recently approved in the immediate vicinity. These 400 new units will be served directly by the Rancho Vistoso and Vistoso Highlands Drive intersection coming to and from their homes. This new residential development will directly support future commercial, office or employment development of the subject property. (see Attachment 9).
- The location of the property at the intersection of Vistoso Highlands and Rancho Vistoso Boulevard, the main arterial street through Rancho Vistoso, is ideal for neighborhood commercial services and employment uses. The adjacent golf course provides a significant buffer area between the future commercial and the existing residential areas to the west and north. The property location at a major street intersection and the existence of significant buffer areas to existing residences both meet General Plan policies regarding the location of future neighborhood commercial or employment use.
- The adjacent residential area will benefit from neighborhood commercial services and jobs in close proximity to residents. The proximate location of nearby neighborhood commercial uses is supported by several General Plan policies which are designed to improve quality of life of residents and reduce traffic. The nearest developed commercial center to this property is two miles away (Attachment 10)
- Retention of non-residential zoning in appropriate areas is supported by the General Plan. Caution should be exercised when considering current market conditions as a factor for or against a proposed land use change. Construction of employment and commercial land uses to support residential areas typically take a number of years after full residential development occurs. Decisions made on the basis of current market conditions may prove to be premature and short sighted, failing to account for the long term best interest of the community. The current strong market for production housing should not drive the decision to change from Neighborhood Commercial / Office to Medium Density Residential.
- It is normal and expected that this property has remained vacant for many years. Land price and efforts to market the property are important additional factors which influence development timeframe.
- Development of single-family homes on 5,000 sq. ft. lots is consistent with the existing development pattern and is the predominate housing option within the Rancho Vistoso development. Numerous opportunities exist for additional Medium Density Residential uses with Rancho Vistoso. Although there is some diversity of lot size and housing options in Rancho Vistoso, the predominant product is medium density detached single-family lots. Development of the property as estate lots, townhomes, or condominiums would offer some diversity in housing opportunities consistent with the General Plan policies.

FACTORS FOR / FACTORS AGAINST

The proposed amendment has been evaluated using the General Plan Amendment criteria and applicable General Plan goals and policies as well as neighborhood and outside agency input. Following is a summary of the factors for and against the proposal:

Factors For:

1. The proposal will be consistent and compatible with the surrounding area.
2. The proposed development will have a lesser impact (lighting and building height) than commercial on the adjacent residential properties.
3. The proposed amendment appears to be supported by the current market demand for detached single-family residential development.
4. Single-family development of this parcel tentatively supported by some nearby residents, although larger lots are preferred.

Factors Against:

1. The existing commercial designation provides future neighborhood level commercial services and employment opportunities in proximity to existing residential areas.
2. The location is ideally suited for neighborhood scale commercial and employment uses based on the arterial street frontage and buffering established by the adjacent golf course.
3. Retention of the commercial designation will likely positively contribute to fiscal stability of the Town when the property is developed.
4. The amendment does not further housing diversity consistent with General Plan policies.
5. New residential in the area will create future demand for neighborhood scale commercial / office uses in this area.
6. Will require increase in traffic/trips for services.

RECOMMENDATION:

The proposed amendment is not in conformance with a number of the General Plan evaluation criteria and a number of General Plan Goals and Policies as outlined in this report. Retention of the NC/O designation will maintain the opportunity for neighborhood scale commercial and employment uses in proximity to a growing residential area. The location on a Major Arterial roadway, and adjacent to the golf course make this property ideal for commercial and employment development.

It is recommended that the Planning and Zoning Commission take the following action:

Recommend Denial to the Town Council of the requested Major General Plan Amendment under OV1113-02 from NC/O to MDR.

SUGGESTED MOTIONS:

I move to recommend to Town Council Denial the requested amendment based on a finding that the application fails to meet the General Plan Amendment criteria and policies as identified in the Discussion/Analysis section of this report.

OR

I move to recommend to Town Council approval of the requested amendment based on a finding that the application meets the General Plan Amendment criteria and policies and _____.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Location Map
2. Application and Responses to Criteria
3. Current & Proposed General Plan Land Use
4. October 1st Planning and Zoning Commission Staff Report
5. Draft October 1st Planning and Zoning Commission Minutes
6. Density of Adjacent Areas
7. Neighborhood Meeting Summary Notes
8. Interested Parties Emails and Letter
9. New Residential Development in Area
10. Area Commercial Land Inventory

Chad Daines, AICP Principal Planner