



# PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

---

**Date** August 17, 2023

**To** Planning and Zoning Commission

**From** Lorie Dever  
Planning Manager

**Subject** Vistancia Major Planned Community District Amendment

## PROPOSAL

---

The applicant is seeking to increase the overall maximum dwelling units from 10,500 to 12,000 and allocating those additional units to the Commercial Core area, known as Five North at Vistancia.

## APPLICATION INFORMATION

---

**Case Numbers** Amendment to the Vistancia Planned Community District (Z01-10A.16)

**Applicant** William Lally of Tiffany & Bosco, P.A.

**Request(s)** Amend the Vistancia Planned Community District (PCD) to increase the overall maximum dwelling units from 10,500 to 12,000 and allocating those additional units to the Commercial Core (Village D). Additionally, remove the option to potentially build two additional golf courses somewhere within the Northpoint Village.

## LOCATION AND CONTEXT

---

### SUBJECT SITE

Vistancia is a 7,100 acre master planned community within northern planning area of the City of Peoria, southwest of Lake Pleasant Regional Park. Within the community itself, Vistancia has been separated into eight Development Units, which have been arranged and branded into five distinct communities as shown within **Exhibit 2 Village Context Map**.

The focus for this major amendment is the area known as the Commercial Core, which is also interchangeably referred to as *Five North at Vistancia*. While the Commercial Core is approximately 442 acres in size, the area more specifically impacted by the amendment is situated south of the southeast corner of El Mirage Road and Lone Mountain Parkway. (**Exhibit 3 Vicinity Map**)

Recently construction on the grocery anchored commercial center, which is now known as *Vistancia Point*, has begun at the southeast corner of El Mirage Road and Lone Mountain

Parkway. For purposes of the Vistancia PCD document and this amendment, the *Vistancia Point* commercial center is located within the Commercial Core; however, is not a part of the request. **(Exhibit 4 Context Map)** Likewise, Parcel D-3a located at the northeast corner of the same intersection is also not a part of the request, but located within the Commercial Core designation.

### CONTEXT

Contextually, the Commercial Core is located in the southeastern portion of the Vistancia Master Planned Community, with regional access from Loop 303 via interchanges at Lone Mountain Parkway, Jomax Road, and Happy Valley Road. Immediate access into the Commercial Core area is from Lone Mountain Parkway along the northern boundary of the focus area, El Mirage Road along with western boundary, and a future connection to Vistancia Boulevard through Arizona State Trust Land to the south.

The *Village at Vistancia* surrounds the Commercial Core to the west and north of the focus area as shown in **Exhibit 4**. Arizona State Trust Land, which is managed by the Arizona State Land Department, is situated along the eastern and southern boundary of the focus area. To the southwest, at the intersection of Vistancia Boulevard and El Mirage Road is the Safeway anchored commercial center known as *Vistancia Marketplace*.

### APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL

---

Over the twenty-five year lifespan of the Vistancia Community, the Commercial Core has always been planned with a mix of uses including retail, office, and residential among others. Throughout this timeframe, the Vistancia Master Developer has continually made refinements to the vision and overall plan to be “responsive to regional influences, evolving market conditions and other factors, which affect the evolution of the community” as noted within the Applicant’s Narrative. **(Exhibit 7)** While most of these refinements have been minor in nature, there have been major amendments from time to time as well.

With this request, the Master Developer is looking to once again balance or “right-size” the community based on their analysis of successful similarly sized mixed-use projects. As a result, the Applicant is seeking to increase the maximum dwelling unit count within Vistancia from 10,500 to 12,000 units, and allocating those additional units into the *Five North at Vistancia* area. The Applicant’s justification and data to support the increase in residential units in enclosed within **Exhibit 7 Project Narrative**. No modifications to the mix of uses or existing development standards such as building height, setbacks and such are proposed with this amendment.

Independent and unrelated to the above, the Master Developer is utilizing this opportunity to formally remove the reservation (or “option”) within the Vistancia PCD document which allows potential development of two golf courses within the Northpointe area. In the Narrative, Vistancia indicates they have tried to be a responsible steward of water by adopting practices to mitigate water usage; however, acknowledge that physical development of these potential golf facilities would negatively impact the water use within the City. Therefore, the Master Developer desires to formally extinguish their “option” to develop the golf courses, and instead, the area would retain its existing underlying land use classifications.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

### ZONING HISTORY AND PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

- The land comprising the Vistancia master planned community was originally part of two separate entitlements known as Lakeland Village (Vistancia South) and White Peak Ranch (Vistancia North).
- Vistancia South was originally zoned under Maricopa County's jurisdiction in 1998 and amended in 2000. The property was annexed and zoned into the City of Peoria in 2001.
- Vistancia North was annexed into the City of Peoria in 1997, and rezoned to White Peak Ranch Planned Community District (PCD) in 2001. It was renamed to Vistancia North PCD in 2006.
- In 2012, the applicant requested and received approval by City Council to consolidate the *Vistancia North PCD* and the *Vistancia South PCD* into one document known as "Vistancia Planned Community District" (Case Z01-10A.11). In doing so, the maximum number of residential units allowed within the entire community was reduced from 17,334 to 10,500.
- In 2015, the Vistancia Master Developer requested a major amendment (Case Z01-10A.14), which was approved by City Council. With that approval, Parcels D1 through D4 were removed from the Commercial Core area and placed into the adjacent "The Village at Vistancia". Additionally, Parcels D1 through D4 were re-designated from mixed-use and instead developed into single-family residential homes in 2022. Parcel D-3a, located at the northeast corner of El Mirage Road and Lone Mountain Parkway was retained within the Core and remains vacant today.
- In December 2022, the Planning and Zoning Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit for a grocery anchored gas station within the future commercial center now known as *Vistancia Point*. Construction on the commercial center commenced earlier this year.

### MAXIMUM RESIDENTIAL UNIT INCREASE - COMMERCIAL CORE ALLOCATION

With this amendment, the Vistancia Master Developer is looking to "right-size" the community based on their analysis of successful similarly sized mixed-use projects. (**Exhibit 7**) As a result, the Applicant is seeking to increase the maximum dwelling unit count within Vistancia from 10,500 to 12,000 units, and allocating those additional units into the *Five North at Vistancia* area. Currently, there are 400 units allocated to the Five North area out of the total 10,500 allowed within the overall community. If approved, this amendment would increase that total allocation to 1,900 units.

### **Land Use and Intensity**

As multifamily is an allowed "use" within the existing Vistancia PCD, no modifications to the *mix* of uses within the Commercial Core area are proposed. Staff further finds that the existing development standards that specifically regulate intensity of the "use" within the document remain the same. More specifically, these standards have been in place for considerable time with maximum building height remaining at eight-five (85) feet, and maximum density not to exceed seventy-five (75) units per acre. Therefore, staff finds no change to the composition or intensity of those uses occurring with this amendment.

### Character Compatibility

For rezoning applications for master planned communities, it is typical for the entitlement documents (in this case PCD) to identify the development parameters, along with establishing the project's vision and character through stated design principles. These design principles, or goals may even be illustrated within the rezoning document using vignettes or conceptual renderings; however, full implementation of those guidelines do not occur until later in the development process, such as during the site plan or preliminary plat phase, when actual projects materialize.

During the outreach meetings, the Applicant conveyed that they understood words alone could not adequately express the desired level of execution for the proposed residential units within Five North. Therefore, along with stating their intent that the planned units would be "market rate, luxury, lifestyle focused multi-family residential units, with luxury amenities for the future residents", they presented conceptual illustrations to help demonstrate what the units could look like. **(Exhibit 10)** While these graphical representations are often helpful to gain perspective in conversation, it is important to remember that regardless of the dwelling unit count, any proposed residential projects within the Commercial Core would be required to demonstrate compliance with the established character of the Core and elevated design standards already in place within the Vistancia PCD. As these requirements have been in place for considerable time, no change in character compatibility is expected due to this amendment.

### Balance of Uses

With regard to the increase in total allocated residential units within the Commercial Core, there are two main aspects for consideration:

- 1) Does the total number of proposed residential units yield the correct balance of uses, and in particular with residential, is that composition commensurate to the envisioned character of Five North at Vistancia; and
- 2) Is the percentage or total number residential units being contemplated more, less, or about the same number in comparison with other successful "mixed-use" projects?

Within the Vistancia PCD, it identifies that the "(l)and use composition shall focus on creating an integrated cohesive development, focusing on character and balance, to create a sense of place and successful composition of land uses. Additionally, the Vistancia PCD identifies a maximum residential density of 75 du/ac, which is intended to "accommodate higher intensity commercial, employment, industrial, as well as high density residential uses (typically intended to serve a regional market area within a ten-mile radius)." Given the desired level of density / intensity, regional presence, and high-end execution expected within the Core, re-evaluation of the total number of units becomes valid, especially considering the community's location strategically between two regionally significant employers. Furthermore, re-evaluating the residential composition within the Core has further merit when considering the total number of units for Vistancia was originally approved at 17,334.

In preparation for the proposed amendment, the Applicant identified they commissioned a study to analyze the components of successful "mixed-use" projects which are both similarly sized and geographically comparable to the Five North area. From that analysis, three were selected and included within their project narrative: Kierland Commons, San Tan Village and Cooley Station. This type of benchmarking is a consistent method used industry-wide to set general

parameters for acreage and types of components in mixed-use centers. With that said, this information was then paired in combination with survey results from Vistancia residents, and given to design members from some of those projects to evaluate the possibilities for similar experiences in the Core area based on the opportunities and constraints of the actual site in question. The results of this exercise formed the Applicant's conceptual layout and "main street" concept presented to residents at the outreach meetings. **(Exhibit 10)**

At 1,900 dwelling units, staff finds the percentage of residential being proposed is in alignment with similar mixed-use centers. Further, the anticipated location of the higher-density residential units is centrally located within Five North, immediately adjacent to the "main-street" area, which promotes walk-ability and easier access to goods and services for these future residents. Given these dynamics, staff finds the proposed location of the high-density residential remains consistent with the goals and objectives identified within the Vistancia PCD. Additionally, medium-density residential has been conceptually identified along El Mirage Road. While there are a range of housing product types within this category, most have strong single-family like characteristics. As such, the resulting development would be expected to look more traditional in appearance while still providing an appropriate buffer and transition into the higher intensity areas within the Core. At the same time, it still retains acceptable proximity to the nearby goods and services. Therefore, staff finds the increase in total residential units to 12,000, and allocation of those additional 1,500 in the Commercial Core appropriate and consistent with Vistancia's stated objectives for the Commercial Core.

### ***GOLF COURSE "OPTION" REMOVAL***

---

As noted above, the Master Developer is utilizing this opportunity to formally remove the reservation (or "option") within the Vistancia PCD document which allowed the potential development of two golf courses within the Northpointe area. These type of amenity "options" were popular in the early 2000's within larger projects as a means to provide some flexibility to developers to customize amenities and land uses as the community was being developed over time. Given the size of the communities in question and the time span over which they developed, these types of "options" were no longer as favored by the City and the development community. Instead, more nimble implementation mechanisms such as Recreational Amendment Master Plans (RAMPs) were instituted to allow amenities to be better tailored to the environmental conditions and character of the community or development unit in question.

Secondly, and more importantly, development and operation of a golf course requires significant water resources. Potentially having to allocate significant water resources for large turf areas, even if it could be through reclaimed or "gray water", is not consistent with the City's sustainability and water conservation efforts to ensure our ability to serve existing residents and future generations. Furthermore, the removal of this "option" does not impact natural water courses (washes), nor in any way reduce the amount of proposed open space within the community. Instead, with the extinguishing of this option, the total amount of open space is projected to increase by approximately 469 acres, resulting in about thirty seven (37) percent of the total community designated as existing or planned open space. For comparison purposes, the City typically require up to twenty (20) percent as "open space" within a community; therefore, this modification would result in further surpassing the city standard. Given these factors, staff concurs with the extinguishing of the golf course option as proposed.

***INFRASTRUCTURE***

---

**CIRCULATION**

A Master Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) for Vistancia was originally approved and continues to be updated as needed to reflect existing conditions and projected growth. With that said, it is important to note that it is City policy not to build roadways to their ultimate lane configuration at the time of initial construction, nor does the City allow for premature expansion or widening of a road to its ultimate design configuration unless it reaches a certain ADT (average daily trips). This policy is meant to balance concerns regarding traffic congestion against increased roadway maintenance costs to residents when widening occurs. Similarly, the City does not install traffic signals until they meet traffic signal warrants. As such, additional signals, lane reconfiguring and widening of roadways immediately surrounding the Core area have been planned for some time, when the roadways are projected to reach those ADT thresholds. This is currently evidenced by residents in their daily travels along Lone Mountain Parkway as widening adjacent to the Core area is nearing completion.

Currently there is an existing signalized intersection at Lone Mountain and El Mirage Road. An additional signal is planned along at Lone Mountain Parkway at the intersection with Revel Way, along with two sign controlled intersections at Espial Avenue and Desert Cactus Lane. Future signals are also planned along El Mirage Road and the Ridgeline Road and Westward Skies Drive intersections. In reviewing the TIA and supplemental data for the projected Phase 1 development within the Commercial Core, Traffic Division staff finds there is adequate access, level of service, and capacity to accommodate the project.

**WATER / SEWER**

Water and sewer facilities exist adjacent to the site and have available capacity to serve the property.

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

There are no anticipated inordinate impacts to public safety due to this proposal, as is further discussed in the Support/Opposition section below.

***SCHOOL DISTRICT INFORMATION***

---

This property is within the Peoria Unified School District (PUSD) boundary. Students residing within Vistancia attend Vistancia Elementary School and Lake Pleasant Elementary School, and Liberty High School, respectively. PUSD has participated in the review of this project and has been in communication with the Applicant regarding the proposal and school facilities in the area.

PUSD has provided a letter to the City noting the developer's long standing support of public education by providing school sites and other positive contributions. It goes on to acknowledge PUSD is experiencing some overcrowding in area schools; however, believe they will be able to provide quality educational opportunities for new residents. **(Exhibit 9)**

### ***COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT***

---

Given the expected level of interest for this request, the Applicant embarked on a robust and significant outreach process using a variety of platforms that far exceeded the City's typical citizen outreach requirements as summarized in **Exhibit 10 Citizen Participation Report**.

#### ***Applicant Outreach Efforts***

##### **Informal Open House**

An informal open house meeting was held in person on May 1, 2023 at 6:00pm at the Vistancia Mountain Vista Club Gymnasium located at 29701 N Sunrise Point Bldg. A, Peoria AZ 85383. The format was general "walk-around" with boards and team members at multiple stations to answer questions and discuss the plans. Over three hundred (300) attendees participated in the event, which included members of the Development team, City staff, along with the Mayor and Councilman Shafer.

Notice of the event included press articles, email to all Vistancia residents, social media and through a project website. Subsequent to the open house being held, the Applicant's project website ([www.Zoningvist.com](http://www.Zoningvist.com)) was updated with images from the boards displayed at the meeting, along with FAQs to common questions received from residents.

##### **Small-Groups**

Prior to the neighborhood meeting, the Vistancia Development team offered to meet with small-groups of residents seeking clarification to their questions. Two meetings were held on June 15, 2023 and June 29, 2023.

##### **Neighborhood Meeting**

On June 7, 2023 at 6:00pm, the Applicant held the city required neighborhood meeting at the same location as before. Meeting format was formal presentation, followed by a question and answer session. Over four hundred (400) attendees participated in the event, which included members of the Development team, City staff, along with Councilman Shafer. Notification methods included:

- Postcard to all property owners within Vistancia;
- Postcard to property owners outside of Vistancia within 1,320 feet of community boundary, and all HOAs within a mile of the site;
- Two signs were posted along El Mirage Road, at Ridgeline Road alignment and Westward Skies Drive alignment;
- Three E-blasts were sent out to Vistancia owners on May 11<sup>th</sup>, May 18<sup>th</sup> and June 1<sup>st</sup>;
- Project Website updated with meeting dates;
- Email sent to subscribers on the project website; and
- Social media posts were deployed through HOA Facebook pages.

Similar comments of support and opposition to the request were noted at both meetings, which is also consistent with written correspondence received by the City. See the Support/Opposition section below for more information.

Subsequent to the neighborhood meeting being held, a copy of the Applicant's powerpoint presentation was made available on the project website.

### Public Hearing Notification

In accordance with the Peoria Zoning Ordinance, both signs were updated with the public hearing information (meeting dates, meeting time and location). Additionally, the Applicant updated their project website with this information as well.

### City Noticing Efforts

#### Notice of Application

As required pursuant to Section 21-315 of the Peoria Zoning Ordinance, the city mailed out a *Notice of Application* to all property owners within 1,320 feet of the site and registered HOAs within one (1) mile.

#### Public Hearing Notification

- As required by Peoria Zoning Ordinance, the city placed a legal ad in the Peoria Times at least 15 days prior to the Public Hearing.
- On July 31, 2023, an email with the public hearing information was sent to all interested parties who had provided written correspondence to the city.
- *Notice of Hearing* was mailed out to the property owners and HOAs as required by the Zoning Ordinance. Additionally, the Applicant requested and paid for additional expense to have postcard be sent to balance of Vistancia property owners as a courtesy.

### Support / Opposition

There has been significant interest in this request in the form of emails, phone calls and an online petition. **(Exhibits 11 and 12)** Below is a summary of the correspondence received at the time of this report, along with staff's comments, which are noted in *italics*.

- A petition was delivered to the City on June 6, 2023, and contained approximately 335 signatures in opposition to the request.

*This petition was housed on an online platform with unrestricted access for signature and comment, which was reflected in the wide range of locations identified for the signees. Of the 335 names, only 32% of the signees identified as Vistancia residents, whereas 68% identified outside of Vistancia, including those from outside of Arizona. Of the approximate 108 signees identifying as Vistancia residents, 29 signees also submitted written letter of correspondence to the City.*

- Letters of Support: Staff has received 216 letters from residents and business owners.

*Of the total, 84 letters of support are included within the Applicant's Citizen Participation Plan. Subsequently, an additional 132 were received, which are included within Exhibit 12 Correspondence. Noted reasons included support for housing diversity within the community, support of desired commercial, retail and restaurants within the main street concept area, along with expected high-end level of execution on the multi-family product.*

- Letters of Opposition: Staff has received 142 letters from residents. Eight (8) letters are included in the Citizen Participation Plan, and the remaining 134 are within Exhibit 12. Noted topics of concerns included the type of housing proposed, quality of life, crime, property values, school capacity and adequacy of infrastructure. More specifically:
  - Housing type is not compatible with vision and character of Vistancia community. Concerned that the multifamily component will be low-income housing, and desire for units to be limited to condominiums.

*The Developer has identified the multifamily units planned in Five North will be “market rate, luxury, lifestyle focused multi-family residential units, with luxury amenities for the future residents”.*

*Within the existing Vistancia PCD, multifamily residential is already an allowed use within the Five North area, and was specifically identified as a potential key component in delivering the envisioned “vibrant and dynamic lifestyle community” originally envisioned. More specifically, the current Vistancia PCD allows residential developments to be up to eighty-five (85) in height within the Core, which supports a range of multifamily housing types. Since there is no proposed change to the mix of allowed uses, the residential maximum height or maximum density allowed within the Commercial Core, the additional multifamily residential units are consistent with the existing character and vision for this area.*

*With regard to restricting multifamily units to condominiums, the city is specifically prohibited from doing so by federal and state laws. This would also be contrary to the goals and policies within the voter approved 2040 General Plan which specifically encourages offering a robust range of housing options throughout Peoria.*

- Proposal will reduce property values and increase crime.

*With regard to property values, potential loss or increase in a property’s value is often swayed by an individual’s perception. Published data has shown that when a multifamily project goes into a community, there is a reported rise in property values near the multifamily project, which is contrary to the claim being made. As this is a subjective assertion that cannot be verified, it was excluded by staff determining the merit of the request.*

*Likewise, a perceived increase in crime due to the presence of multifamily residential is biased-based and not necessarily reflective of actual statistics. More specifically, as part of their review, the Peoria Police Department evaluated present and past service call data using similarly sized single-family and multifamily number of dwellings in close geographic proximity to each other. Based on the data, no significant difference in calls between the two types of uses were found. Because of the subjective nature of this assertion, it was excluded by staff in determining the merit of the request.*

*The City is currently working with the Vistancia Master Developer on a meaningful solution to address resident concerns regarding response times within the community. Discussion on this item is still continuing at the time of writing this report; therefore, staff and the Developer will provide a status update during the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.*

- Additional residential units will further exacerbate overcrowded schools.

*Under the Arizona Constitution and State Law, cities like Peoria are not authorized to address school issues such as student capacity, funding, number of schools, school size, and other related matters. Those are specifically the delegated responsibility of the State through the school districts and their elected governing boards to address.*

*While schools are completely separate and distinct entities, the City recognizes that it is in the best interests of our current and future residents to work closely with our school districts so that our plans for growth can be as consistent as possible. Hence, the City does everything possible within its legal authority to assist in the resolution of issues associated with the impact of residential growth on the schools in our City. Ultimately, however, it is the school districts who are responsible for making those final decisions.*

*In the letter from Peoria Unified School District, the District acknowledges they are currently experiencing some overcrowding issues in area schools; however, “they believe that in the future they will be able to provide quality educational opportunities for the new residents”. In separate communication to staff, the Vistancia Master Developer has identified they are pursuing all options to locate a high school in the Commercial Core area, and that they continue to collaborate with PUSD to identify a high school site should funding become available for construction.*

- Lack of infrastructure to support growth – in particular with regard to water and traffic.

*For major rezoning applications, master reports for water, wastewater and drainage are submitted and reviewed by staff in conformance with Peoria’s Engineering standards. Given the age of the Vistancia community, these reports have been refined and updated from time to time as the community has continued to build out. City staff has reviewed the requested increase in residential units in relation to the master documents and identified there are existing water and sewer facilities adjacent to the Commercial Core area and they have available capacity to serve the property.*

*Likewise, a Master Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) for the community was originally approved and continues to be updated as needed to reflect existing conditions and projected growth. In reviewing the TIA and supplemental data for the projected Phase 1 development within the Commercial Core, Traffic Division staff finds there is adequate access, level of service, and capacity to accommodate the project.*

- Desire for developer to keep option and build additional golf courses in Northpoint.

*As discussed in depth within staff’s analysis of the request, allocating significant water resources for large turf areas is not consistent with the City’s sustainability and water conservation efforts to ensure our ability to serve existing residents and future generations. With removal of the golf course option, the total amount of open space within the Vistancia community is projected to increase to approximately thirty seven (37) percent, which is significantly more than the city standard.*

*Any development within the “option” area would be responsible for providing amenities for their residents along with expanding the community’s path and trail network in accordance with Vistancia’s existing standards. As such, staff finds*

## VISTANCIA MAJOR PCD AMENDMENT Z01-10A.16

---

*extinguishing the golf course “option” better aligns the PCD with the City’s water policies while still allowing Vistancia to continue providing high-level and robust amenities to existing and future residents.*

### ***KEY FINDINGS***

---

1. The Vistancia Planned Community District (PCD) has envisioned the Commercial Core (“Village D”) as a mix of integrated land uses, including retail, hospitality, office/medical, employment and residential.
2. Multi-family residential is an allowed use within the Commercial Core area;
3. The increase in units provides an appropriate balance that is consistent with similar successful mixed use centers, while retaining the existing composition, intensity and character within the Vistancia Commercial Core;
4. There is adequate infrastructure to support the request; and
5. Extinguishing the golf course “option” better aligns with the City’s water policies while still allowing Vistancia to continue providing high-level and robust amenities to residents;

### ***RECOMMENDATION***

---

Staff recommends that the Planning and Zoning Commission take the following action:

- 1) **Recommend approval of Rezoning Case Z01-10A.16 to the City Council, subject to the attached Conditions of Approval in Exhibit 1.**

### ***STAFF CONTACT***

---

Lorie Dever  
Planning Manager  
623-773-5168  
Lorie.Dever@peoriaaz.gov