



## Minutes of the Development Review Commission REGULAR MEETING July 25, 2023

Minutes of the **Regular Meeting** of the Development Review Commission, of the City of Tempe, was held in Council Chambers  
31 East Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona

**Present:**

Chair Michael DiDomenico  
Vice Chair Andrew Johnson  
Commissioner Don Cassano  
Commissioner Michelle Schwartz  
Commissioner Linda Spears  
Commissioner Joe Forte  
Alt Commissioner Rhiannon Corbett

**City Staff Present:**

Jeff Tamulevich, Director – Community Development  
Ryan Levesque, Deputy Director, Community Development  
Steve Abrahamson, Principal Planner  
Mailen Pankiewicz, Principal Planner  
Ambika Adhikari, Principal Planner  
Jacob Payne, Senior Planner  
Lily Drosos, Planner II  
Joanna Barry, Administrative Assistant II

**Absent:**

Commissioner Barbara Lloyd  
Alt Commissioner Charles Redman  
Alt Commissioner Robert Miller

**Hearing convened at 6:00 p.m. and was called to order by Chair DiDomenico**

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**Consideration of Meeting Minutes:**

- 1) Development Review Commission – Study Session 5/23/23  
Development Review Commission – Regular Meeting 5/23/23

**Motion:** Motion made by Commissioner Cassano to approve Study Session Meeting minutes and Regular Meeting minutes for May 23, 2023 and seconded by Commissioner Spears.

**Ayes:** Chair DiDomenico, Vice Chair Johnson, Commissioners Cassano, Spears, Forte, and Corbett

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** Commissioner Schwartz

**Absent:** Commissioner Lloyd

**Vote:** Motion passes 6-0

Development Review Commission – Study Session 6/13/2023

Development Review Commission – Regular Meeting 6/13/2023

**Motion:** Motion made by Commissioner Spears to approve Study Session Meeting minutes and Regular Meeting minutes for June 13, 2023 and seconded by Vice Chair Johnson.

**Ayes:** Chair DiDomenico, Vice Chair Johnson, Commissioners Spears and Forte

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** Commissioners Cassano, Schwartz, and Corbett

**Absent:** Commissioner Lloyd

**Vote:** Motion passes 4-0

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Development Review Commission – Regular Meeting 6/27/2023

**Motion:** Motion made by Commissioner Cassano to approve Study Session Meeting minutes and Regular Meeting minutes for June 27, 2023 and seconded by Commissioner Spears.

**Ayes:** Chair DiDomenico, Vice Chair Johnson, Commissioners Cassano, Schwartz, Spears, and Forte

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** Commissioner Corbett

**Absent:** Commissioner Lloyd

**Vote:** Motion passes 6-0

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The following items were considered for **Consent Agenda**:

- 2) Request a Use Permit Standard for front, side and rear yard setbacks for **VALENTINE-FRANCES**, located at 1309 North Frances Street. The applicant is JCL Design Build (**PL220116**)
- 3) Request a Use Permit to allow a massage establishment for **RADIANT BEING LLC**, located at 9655 South Priest Drive, Suite 102. The applicant is Radiant Being LLC. (**PL230126**)

**Motion:** Motion made by Vice Chair Johnson to approve the Consent Agenda and seconded by Commissioner Spears.

**Ayes:** Chair DiDomenico, Vice Chair Johnson, Commissioners Cassano, Schwartz, Spears, Forte, and Corbett

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Commissioner Lloyd

**Vote:** Motion passes 7-0

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The following items were considered for **Public Hearing**:

- 4) Second hearing and recommendation on an update to the General Plan including its 26 elements with one additional element proposed, "Climate Change and Extreme Heat," and the 17 maps within the document for **TEMPE TOMORROW – GENERAL PLAN 2050**. The applicant is the City of Tempe. (**PL230107**)

**PRESENTATION BY STAFF:**

Ambika Adhikari, Principal Planner, updated the Commission on the changes that were made in the July 14, 2023 draft of the General Plan 2050. He provided a synopsis of the comments staff has received since the introductory hearing of June 27, 2023. He updated the Commission about how the revised draft dated July 14, 2023 addresses the public comments and DRC guidance made at the 1<sup>st</sup> DRC hearing, and other comments made subsequent to the meeting. He stated that as several individuals were requesting for conflicting goals, staff has provided a balanced resolution in the draft.

Jacob Payne, Senior Planner, briefly went over the land use map. He emphasized that the land use is different from zoning. The General Plan land use map shows the projected land uses for the City for the next 30 years. It does not change zoning on a site. However, it provides a basis for decision on future rezoning applications. The General Plan deals only with use and density ranges. Standards like actual density, building height, and parking are decided by the underlying zoning or Planned Area Development approval. He noted that one of the more substantial changes was the addition of the mixed-use, low moderate category, allowing up to 25 du/ac. He proceeded to show the areas in the map that have been included in this designation.

Mr. Adhikari noted that there had been some concerns about not having adequate water supply for future growth in Tempe. He introduced Craig Caggiano, Deputy Municipal Utilities Director, to address these concerns.

Mr. Caggiano gave an overview of the City Tempe's water planning process. He stated the City is required by the Arizona Department of Water Resources to proactively plan to meet current and future water needs throughout the water service area and to prove the ability to meet those demands. Tempe is a designated provider of water resources for the Phoenix active management area, Tempe is required to proactively plan to meet future water demands. Tempe has sufficient water to meet demands now and in the future.

Chair DiDomenico stated he appreciates the amount of work staff has put into the General Plan. He noted that staff has addressed every concern that the Commission had from the June 27, 2023 DRC meeting. He asked Mr. Adhikari to remind everyone why the City does this process every ten years. Mr. Adhikari advised that it is required in order to comply with Arizona Statute. For the population size of the city, Tempe is required to update the General Plan every ten years. General Plan 2040 was adopted in December 2013 and was ratified by the public in May 2014. The current draft will need to be adopted by December 2023 and ratified before May 2024. Since there is already an election scheduled in March 2024 the City has planned for that ratification date for the General Plan 2050.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

David Doiron

- Too much height and density.
- The plan looks like it is developer driven
- The MAG projections of populations should be questioned

Robert Miller

- General Plan references open spaces but does not state where it will be or how it will be addressed.
- References walkable environments, but that concept will only work in certain parts of the City and not others.
- Plan speaks to a desire to avoid gentrification yet market rate developments in downtown Tempe are not affordable or workplace housing alternatives.

Shereen Lerner

- Need to recognize that Tempe sits on several major archeological sites.
- Needs to be more historic preservation.
- Need more open space.
- Density needs to be reduced further.

Anne Till

- Appreciates the addition of the 25 du/ac category but would like to see Danelle Plaza reduced to that amount.
- Growth should be spread out south of Baseline.
- High-density does not mean affordability.
- Should be more Cultural Resource Area designations.

Jason Adams

- A lot of the City is still zoned single-family, which will not meet future housing demands.
- Appreciates concerns about high-rises and noted there are options for a middle ground such as duplexes, triplexes, with stores below them. This would also alleviate vehicle use.

Darlene Justus

- Hayden Road and Scottsdale Road north of the 202 need to be higher density.
- Likes the emphasis on desert preserves in the plan

Lisa Zyriek

- Too much density proposed, it will put a strain on City services.
- Need to value the desires of the six neighborhoods that have created Character Area Plans.

Donald Zyriek

- Too much density.
- Will create more wear and tear on already deteriorating roadways.
- Will put a strain on City services.

Kate Bologitz

- Member of the Bicycle Action Group; they fully support the circulation chapter and enhanced cycling and pedestrian strategies outline in the General Plan.
- Concerned about the land use revisions that reduce density which is detrimental to a robust multi-modal transportation policy.
- Higher density in appropriate locations promotes sustainability.

Karyn Gitlis

- Need to focus on historic preservation.
- Needs to have even more Cultural Resource Area designations.

Robert Moore

- Read a letter from Yucca Tap Room regarding Danelle Plaza RFP process and background.

Trevor Mazewski

- Need more density, walkability, and transit options.
- The down zonings are negative changes that should be reversed.

Jack Ketcham

- Needs more density, disappointed to see reductions to initial proposals made in the revised plan.
- There is a housing crisis where 50% of renters are considered "housing stressed" as 30% of their income goes towards housing cost. People are being priced out from living in Tempe.
- Some areas that are commercial (strip malls, parking lots) should be mixed-use.

Philip Yates

- No more high-rises.
- More parks needed.

Efrain Mcloughlin

- Keep lower density changes on Southern Avenue, Baseline Road, and Rural Road.
- City sewer system cannot handle higher density.
- Street diets need to be removed as they make it harder for emergency vehicles.

Thomas Zaworski

- This plan is a rezoning of the City that the developers will use to get what they can.
- High-density will not make people use mass transit.

Jonan Anderson

- Works in Tempe and would like to settle down here but feels defeated by the exclusionary zoning presented in the recent updates to the General Plan.
- There are no "starter homes" like townhomes for the middle income people.
- Chair DiDomenico asked what area of town he lives in now and was advised Mitchell Park. He stated he previously lived in Riverside.

Roberta Neil Miller

- Keep density that is in the 2040 General Plan.
- Danelle Plaza needs to be preserved, not converted into developer high-rises.

Merrill Darcy

- 65 du/ac in certain areas is overkill.
- There should be a cap on growth limits.

Katie Jensen Ord

- Too much density and high buildings have a negative impact on the character and architecture of the City.
- Concerned about easements and sidewalk space.
- Need more affordable options.

Marlene Begay

- Resident quality of life should be put before developers and high density.
- Need to revisit Danelle Plaza proposed density.
- High density will affect traffic as the transit system does not work for everyone.
- Cable/ fiber issues in Tempe will be increased due to high density.

Dan Hawker

- Against public transit, nobody uses it.
- Need to address homeless problems.

Elizabeth Stewart

- High rise residential development along Broadway and Southern from Priest to the 101 and along Mill, Rural and McClintock from Apache to Elliot will negatively impact existing neighborhoods and add to the existing heat island.
- The 2050 Plan should require mandatory green building code standards for all new commercial and multi-family buildings like Scottsdale did, not merely encourage them.
- The 2050 Plan should maintain the existing 25 residential u/acre at Mill and Southern and protect Danelle Plaza's long time live music venues and other small businesses from high-rise development. The Plan should focus on integrating open spaces and supporting the Plaza's existing local arts and live music scene.

David Sokolowski

- Lives in Tempe but was told by a neighborhood chair that if he cannot afford to live in Tempe then he should leave. It is a shame to think that there are teachers who might actually leave the city. The chairs of the neighborhoods will not represent renters and there are efforts to remove the density from Danelle plaza, the one property in his neighborhood that Tempe can guarantee will include affordable housing.
- Increased density will help solve the housing crisis. High rise buildings save land.
- The majority of Tempe residents want a community that is more affordable and inclusive, more walkable, and sustainable.
- Tempe has lost most of its affordable housing and by 2030 there will be nothing left.
- We need a plan that has a balanced approach, it should consider the need for housing in all neighborhoods, and it should guide our growth in a way that is inclusive and equitable for everyone.

#### **RESPONSE FROM STAFF:**

Mr. Adhikari stated staff appreciates the comments that have been received. They have varied comments from those who want less density to those who would like more. The draft General Plan has attempted to balance all of these concerns. Mr. Adhikari advised the Commission of the population growth in Tempe since 1880 to the present day. The data shows that growth and changes have been here for a long time. Tempe's economy has become more robust, and standards of living have improved. The plan does not invite growth, but it provides policies and schemes

to manage future growth appropriately to help maintain and improve the quality of life. Some of the challenges about traffic and congestion are also due to the fact that Tempe sits at the crossroads of a large and growing metropolis of about five million people, and that Tempe is a university town with one of the largest universities in the country.

Vice Chair Johnson stated he appreciates the comments that have been provided from the public. He noted that one comment referenced the area between McClintock and the Indian Bend Wash. He asked if there were any opportunities to increase density in that area. Mr. Adhikari stated that this area is designated as mixed use/industrial but additional density could be accommodated at that location. He noted that for high density sites the City considers transportation aspects as well.

Chair DiDomenico referenced the northwest corner of Baseline Road and Kyrene Avenue. This is a fairly large parcel, but the General Plan illustrates relatively low density for that location and where it borders. Mr. Adhikari stated this parcel was discussed and noted one side can take a little more density. However, the people living there should not be priced out. Chair DiDomenico noted the General Plan 2050 is a living document even after it goes through the DRC process and asked that staff revisit that site.

Commissioner Schwartz referenced a public comment about the 20-minute city being removed and wanted to clarify that it still remains an initiative as part of the plan. Mr. Adhikari stated that the City values that initiative and that all of the transportation and traffic programs that the City support and promote a twenty-minute city concept. The concept will help reduce the citywide volume of traffic as residents can find daily amenities close to where they live.

**COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION FROM THE COMMISSION:**

Commissioner Spears stated that she appreciates the efforts from both the staff and public on this process. She would like for the General Plan to go back to the original maps that had the higher density. Having more units available will help to address the affordable housing issue. She also noted that development projects go through the DRC as a recommending body to the City Council and are posted and advertised and encouraged members of the public to attend and speak about any of their concerns.

Commissioner Cassano thanked the members of the public for their comments and noted that they do not go unnoticed or unheard.

Chair DiDomenico suggested to the members of the public that when they express their concerns to the City Council that they provide specific location and concerns that they have. He noted staff has made many changes to the General Plan 2050 since May 2023 and will continue to do so if they really know what they are working with.

**Motion:** Motion made by Commissioner Spears to approve PL230107 and seconded by Vice Chair Johnson.

**Ayes:** Chair DiDomenico, Vice Chair Johnson, Commissioners Cassano, Schwartz, Spears, Forte, and Corbett

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Commissioner Lloyd

**Vote:** Motion passes 7-0

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**Staff Announcements: None**

**There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.**

Prepared by: Joanna Barry, Administrative Assistant II  
Reviewed by: Mailen Pankiewicz, Principal Planner