

June 21, 2024



TO: City of Boise Planning and Zoning Commissioners  
via Sebrina Mortensen, [smortensen@cityofboise.org](mailto:smortensen@cityofboise.org)

RE: ZOA23-00010 Testimony

Commissioners and Ms. Mortensen,

BVNA would like to thank Brad Hillgren of High Rhodes Investment company for the engagement he has provided over the last few years as he contemplated changes to the Harris Ranch Specific Plan SP-01, hereinafter SP or SP-01. These meetings date back to 2020, and there have been no less than 5 meetings with the board and neighbors since then. Mr. Hillgren has provided his email address so neighbors can share their thoughts on what would make the Town Center viable and any other expectations for the development.

BVNA has communicated with its members and shared information at its monthly meetings, so the neighborhood was aware of the application. Much of our effort has been to explain to our neighbors that there are benefits and challenges with a specific plan. The SP essentially acts as criteria and provides options for the developer to move the project forward in a pre-determined way but also provides guardrails so the neighborhood knows the extent of “what is possible”. The challenge is that these guidelines don’t provide a clearly defined project proposal to review. When reviewing the amendments, one must consider the what-ifs and try to ensure that different outcomes are considered. We have worked diligently to help the neighborhood understand the pros and cons and that the SP comes with a bit of uncertainty. With this in mind, *and the knowledge that we likely will not get another opportunity to effect change or provide testimony*, we provide our position on the amendment.

The BVNA Board has reviewed the proposal and has voted to support it, conditionally as noted below.

As we understand it, the requested changes are:

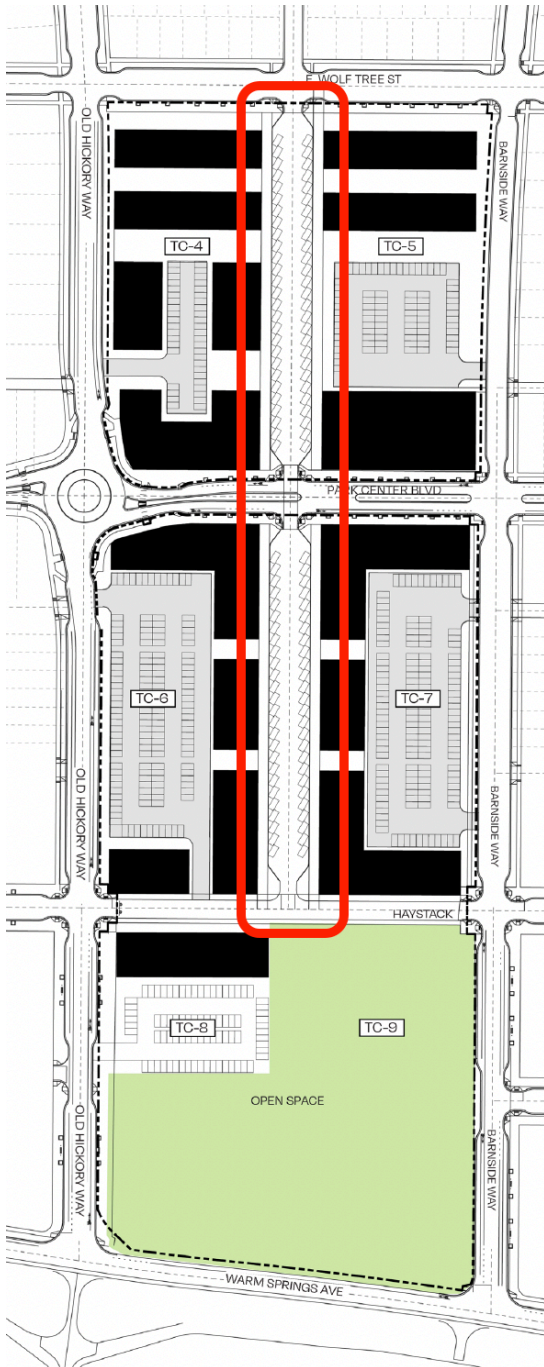
1. The addition of 60° head-in diagonal parking on the perimeter of the property on all frontages except for Warm Springs (none), Parkcenter (parallel), and Wolf Tree (parallel)
2. A direct connection to the greenbelt
3. Redistribution of “public spaces” from the prior Village Green block throughout the project via a “spine” to the north from the Village Green. This redistribution eliminates a north-south vehicular drive aisle with parking, as shown in the current SP.
4. Updated street sections, use tables, and block prototypes
5. Protected bike lanes where they can be provided

### **BVNA’s Basis of “Conditional Support”**

The items below correspond with the list above where we are providing comments.

#### **1. Diagonal Parking/Street Frontage/ROW Improvements**

- A. BVNA has issues with some of the dimensional aspects shown on several street sections at the property frontages, such as 30” car overhangs not being provided in some locations. Additionally, 8’-6” wide planters have been reduced to 4’ on Barnside Way and Old Hickory Way and we feel the current wider planters should be conditioned to remain.



We expect that standards will be addressed by ACHD to achieve dimensional compliance, but the planter strip reduction *should be opposed*.

B. We also prefer diagonal parking along Parkcenter to calm traffic and provide convenient (read as “easy to use”) angled parking. While Mr. Hillgren originally proposed angled parking here, we understand ACHD has rejected it, which we feel is short-sighted and we urge you to take the position that city staff should express a contrary vision to ACHD that includes diagonal parking to improve user experience.

## 2. “Enhanced Access” to the Greenbelt

BVNA endorses the idea of an enhanced pedestrian connection between the Village Green and Greenbelt, providing safe and convenient access for pedestrians and cyclists.

## 3. “Redistribution of ‘public spaces’ / Village Green Design Criteria

A. BVNA has had numerous discussions about the “village green”, the “public spaces” and the “green spaces” - labels often used interchangeably, causing confusion about “what the Village Green will be” as there are no design standards established for it.

BVNA wholeheartedly supports the elimination of the north-south drive aisle that bisects the property north of the Village Green as shown to the left outlined in red. Mr. Hillgren has provided imagery with his application that will serve as design inspiration, suggesting the nature of these spaces. Making this a “pedestrian promenade” and eliminating the auto-centric core is applauded. Our support is conditioned on the inclusion of landscape nodes, seating areas, water features, and other public space amenities and a reasonable minimization of hardscape for all these spaces due to the nature of this “gathering space” and to ensure a positive experience.

B. Mr. Hillgren has expressed a willingness to buffer the Village Green from Warm Springs vehicle noise and traffic by moving building(s) to the south to create an “edge”. BVNA applauds this direction and believes it will make the Village Green a more pleasant space to frequent. The Village Green has always been graphically expressed as a highly landscaped space, with a single building (likely a restaurant) to anchor it. While we do not prefer the addition of additional building footage on this block, the use of buildings as a buffer and the extension of community/gathering spaces

throughout the project to the North (achieved by eliminating the automobile spine) is a direction we support as outlined in A, above.

#### **4. General Angled Parking Considerations**

We also feel there is an opportunity to provide even safer parking than proposed. The angled parking is a huge win but there is an opportunity to go one step further by modifying it to back-in angled parking. BVNA feels that back-in angled parking can improve safety and traffic operations. The most common issue identified with back-in angled parking is the *brief* learning curve that comes with this new configuration. We strongly urge consideration of back-in angled parking as a project requirement to achieve more efficient and safer conditions for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists.

To reiterate, BVNA conditionally supports the project with inclusion of the recommended minor changes we have noted above. We have enjoyed a collaborative relationship with Mr. Hillgren and his engagement is noteworthy. We feel our considerations improve an already great foundation for this development and will ensure a high quality, feature-rich neighborhood asset for the Barber Valley community.

Thank you for your consideration of our viewpoints.

#### **Barber Valley Neighborhood Association Board**

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