

**EARL, CURLEY & LAGARDE, P.C.**

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

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Phoenix, Arizona 85012

February 20, 2009

**RE: GPA-DSTV-1-09-2; American Express Desert Ridge Specific Plan Amendment**

Dear Property Owner, Neighborhood Association President or Village Planning Committee Member:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that we have recently filed a request to amend the Desert Ridge Specific Plan to allow the American Express campus property, located south of Loop 101 in Superblock 6, to be developed out at a Floor to Area Ratio (FAR)<sup>1</sup> of up to .35 to accommodate the future needs of American Express. The current FAR is .25. This amendment has been crafted to not adversely affect the allowable FAR on the other properties in Superblock 6. Additional details on the request are set forth in the paragraphs below.

You are being notified in accordance with the amendment procedures of the Desert Ridge Specific Plan because you are either 1) an owner inside the boundaries of the Desert Ridge Specific Plan or 2) an owner within 600 feet of the perimeter boundary of the Desert Ridge Specific Plan or 3) a registered association on file with the City or 4) a member of the Desert View Village Planning Committee. No action is required of you as a result of receiving this letter. This letter is simply for your information.

Please be advised that a neighborhood meeting has been scheduled to allow you the opportunity to hear and discuss the details of this request as follows:

Neighborhood Meeting Date & Time: **Monday March 16, 2009 @ 6:00 PM**  
Location: Paradise Valley Community Center  
Multi Purpose Room  
17402 North 40<sup>th</sup> Street  
Phoenix, Arizona

***Meetings and hearings before the Desert View Village Planning Committee (VPC), Planning Commission (PC) and City Council (CC) have also been scheduled. Please refer to the City's notices for these hearings enclosed with this same mailing.***

Desert Ridge is now a very successful and mature master planned community that is home to some of the best parks, open spaces and residential, hotel, retail, cultural, and business uses in the state. In the late 1990's, when American Express was looking for a large parcel in northeast Phoenix to consolidate its scattered leasehold office space into a new regional headquarters operation, the Master Developer of Desert Ridge (Northeast Phoenix Partners), the City of Phoenix and the Arizona State Land Department ("ASLD") were instrumental in working with American Express to locate on the 95 gross acre parcel at

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<sup>1</sup> FAR denotes the ratio of floor area of a building to the area of the parcel on which the building is located. For example, a building consisting of 35,000 square feet on a land parcel of 100,000 square feet would have a FAR of .35 (35,000 ÷ 100,000 = .35).

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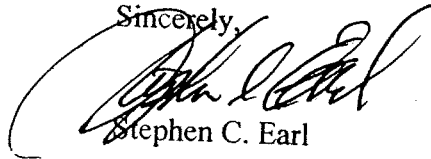
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the southwest corner of 56<sup>th</sup> street and Mayo Boulevard in Superblock 6. At that time, American Express made a point of including in its lease documents the ability to request this increase in FAR.

In 2001, American Express constructed the first phase of its Desert Ridge regional campus, including an office building of 191,631 sq. feet known as OB1 and the Central Services Building (CSB) of 178,268 sq. feet. Currently, American Express is constructing the second office building (OB2), which is slated for occupancy in the first quarter of 2010. American Express entered the Phoenix marketplace in 1960 with the opening of a travel office. In 1971, the company expanded its presence through the creation of a western regional operations center, and today employs nearly 7,500 people in the fields of technologies, finance and card services at multiple locations in the greater Phoenix area. Since 2006, American Express has been evaluating its long-term campus needs on its parcel in Desert Ridge. Based on that long range analysis, American Express has determined that it needs to utilize the authorization under its long term land lease and CC& R's to seek this amendment to the Specific Plan to increase the FAR from the current limit of .25 F.A.R. up to .35 F.A.R. Approval of this amendment will give American Express the flexibility it needs to accommodate future growth and remain in Desert Ridge, without changing the allowable FAR for the other parcel(s) in Superblock 6.

You are also invited to contact me or our Planning Consultant, Gary King, at (602) 265-0094 to learn more about this request.

Sincerely,



Stephen C. Earl

SCE/GVK