



City of Phoenix

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

To: City of Phoenix Planning Commission **Date:** May 6, 2026

From: Racelle Escolar, AICP
Principal Planner

Subject: ITEM NO. 8 (Z-165-25-8) – SOUTHWEST CORNER OF 55TH AVENUE
AND SOUTHERN AVENUE

Rezoning Case No. Z-165-25-8 is a request to rezone 4.35 acres located at the southwest corner of 55th Avenue and Southern Avenue from GC (Golf Course District) to C-2 (Intermediate Commercial) to allow general retail and restaurant uses.

The Laveen Village Planning Committee (VPC) heard this request on April 13, 2026 and recommended denial as filed, approval with modifications and an additional stipulation, by a vote of 10-2. The Laveen VPC recommended approval of C-1 (Neighborhood Retail) zoning, rather than C-2. Stipulation No. 2 was modified to require the landscape plan, sign plan, and lighting plan be presented to the VPC for review and comment. Stipulation Nos. 4, 7, and 13 were modified to include three-inch caliper trees in the required landscape standards. Staff does not recommend the modification for Stipulation No. 7. The stipulation does not require a modification because the two-inch minimum caliper does not prevent the use of three-inch caliper trees in the parking areas. Additionally, the VPC added a stipulation requiring two-inch caliper trees to be planted within the street medians along Southern Avenue.

Since the VPC meeting, the Street Transportation Department has reviewed Stipulation No. 14 and recommends modifying the stipulation to allow tree placement flexibility within the medians.

Furthermore, staff has received an additional letter of opposition after the VPC meeting (see the attached enclosure).

Staff recommends approval, per the modified stipulations in CAPITAL/**BOLD** font below:

1. The development shall be in general conformance with the site plan date stamped March 19, 2026, as modified by the following stipulations and approved by the Planning and Development Department.
2. Building elevations, **LANDSCAPE PLAN, SIGN PLAN, AND LIGHTING PLAN** shall be presented for review and comment to the Laveen Village Planning Committee prior to preliminary site plan approval.
3. All street facing building elevations shall contain architectural features that reflect modern agrarian architecture including, but not limited to, detailing such as pitched roof elements, variation in window size, overhang canopies and exterior

accent materials such as metal, wood, and stone, as approved by the Planning and Development Department.

4. The required perimeter landscape setbacks, not adjacent to a street, shall be planted with a minimum 50% 2-inch caliper trees AND 50% 3-INCH CALIPER TREES, as approved by the Planning and Development Department.
5. A pedestrian pathway shall be provided along Cottonfields Lane to connect the proposed commercial development to the sidewalk, as approved by the Planning and Development Department and if approval is granted by the adjacent Homeowners Association (owner of the private street/tract).
6. Where pedestrian walkways cross a vehicular path, the pathway shall be constructed of decorative pavers, stamped or colored concrete, or other pavement treatments that visually contrast parking and drive aisle surfaces, as approved by the Planning and Development Department.
7. A minimum of 15% of uncovered surface parking lot areas shall be shaded, as approved by the Planning and Development Department. Shade may be achieved by structures or by minimum 2-inch caliper ~~OR 3-INCH CALIPER~~, drought tolerant, shade trees, or a combination thereof.
8. Bicycle parking shall be provided, consistent with Section 1307.H of the Phoenix Zoning Ordinance.
9. A minimum of two green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) elements for stormwater management shall be implemented, as approved or modified by the Planning and Development and/or Street Transportation departments. This includes but is not limited to stormwater harvesting basins, bioswales, permeable pavement, etc., per the Greater Phoenix Metro Green Infrastructure and Low Impact Development Details for Alternative Stormwater Management.
10. Prior to final site plan approval, documentation shall be provided that demonstrates a commitment to participate in the City of Phoenix Businesses Water Efficiency Program for a minimum of 10 years, or as approved by the Planning and Development Department.
11. A minimum of 10% of the required vehicle parking spaces shall include EV Ready infrastructure.
12. The south half of Southern Avenue shall be constructed to an Arterial CM cross-section, adjacent to the development.
13. A minimum 6-foot-wide detached sidewalk separated by a minimum 6-foot-wide landscape area shall be constructed on the south side of Southern Avenue, and planted as follows:

- a. Minimum 50% 2-inch caliper AND 50% 3-INCH CALIPER, single-trunk, large canopy, drought-tolerant, shade trees, planted 20 feet on center, or in equivalent groupings.
- b. Drought-tolerant shrubs, accents and vegetative groundcovers maintained to a maximum height of 3 feet (excluding accents), evenly distributed throughout the landscape area to achieve a minimum of 75% live coverage.

Where utility conflicts exist, the developer shall work with the Planning and Development Department on alternative design solutions consistent with a pedestrian environment.

14. STREET MEDIANS ALONG SOUTHERN AVENUE SHALL BE PLANTED WITH MINIMUM 2-INCH CALIPER, SINGLE-TRUNK, LARGE CANOPY, DROUGHT-TOLERANT, SHADE TREES-, **OR AS APPROVED BY THE STREET TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT.**
- ~~14.~~ Prior to final site plan approval, all mitigation improvements shall be constructed and/or funded as identified in the accepted Traffic Impact Analysis dated September 26, 2025.
- ~~15.~~ Existing irrigation facilities along Southern Avenue shall be relocated outside of City right-of-way, unless otherwise approved by the Street Transportation Department. Relocations that require additional dedications or land transfer require completion prior to obtaining plat and/or civil plan review approval.
- ~~16.~~ Replace unused driveways with sidewalk, curb, and gutter. Also, replace any broken or out-of-grade curb, gutter, sidewalk, and curb ramps on all streets and upgrade all off-site improvements to be in compliance with current ADA guidelines.
- ~~17.~~ All streets within and adjacent to the development shall be constructed with paving, curb, gutter, sidewalk, curb ramps, streetlights, median islands, landscaping and other incidentals, as per plans approved by the Planning and Development Department. All improvements shall comply with all ADA accessibility standards.
- ~~18.~~ If determined necessary by the Phoenix Archaeology Office, the applicant shall conduct Phase I data testing and submit an archaeological survey report of the development area for review and approval by the City Archaeologist prior to clearing and grubbing, landscape salvage, and/or grading approval.
- ~~19.~~ If Phase I data testing is required, and if, upon review of the results from the Phase I data testing, the City Archaeologist, in consultation with a qualified archaeologist, determines such data recovery excavations are necessary, the applicant shall conduct Phase II archaeological data recovery excavations.
- 20.

20. In the event archaeological materials are encountered during construction, the
21. developer shall immediately cease all ground-disturbing activities within a 33-foot radius of the discovery, notify the City Archaeologist, and allow time for the Archaeology Office to properly assess the materials.

24. Prior to final site plan approval, the landowner shall execute a Proposition 207
22. waiver of claims form. The waiver shall be recorded with the Maricopa County Recorder's Office and delivered to the City to be included in the rezoning application file for record.

Enclosure:
Correspondence (5 pages)

Opposition letter submitted
by Warren Foster at VPC meeting 4/13/26

Given the frequent accidents and traffic congestion described along Southern Avenue near Laveen, Arizona, particularly between 51st and 59th Street, there is a strong argument for installing additional traffic lights in this area. High traffic volumes, ongoing construction, and confusing road layouts create conditions that would benefit from improved traffic control. Traffic lights could help regulate the flow, reduce speeding, and offer safer crossing points, which together would likely decrease the risk of collisions. Evaluating accident data and gathering community input could further support whether new signals are needed, but the evidence suggests that such measures may be a prudent step toward safer roads. This was reviewed today 4/13/2026@2:48 PM

This now applies to rezoning = Z-Y65-25-8 55th Avenue and Southern in Laveen Arizona

Located at the South East corner of 55th Avenue and Southern. This is already a dangerous spot to launch retail opportunities and a Restaurant. Lights were proposed previously to the Golf Course and that was a No-Go.

There is already a Theatre and more commercial businesses planned on 59th, including a Gas station.

We are already having trouble, entering and exiting southern from the golf course and 55th. Now you are trying to pour more traffic into our neighborhood. Most of us bought our houses because of the Golf Course and the attractive neighborhood with parks, to live with kids and pets. The golf course is already gone; more houses are planned. We homeowners and renters **WHO LIVE HERE** must deal with this mess, which is being created by money hungry and power-hungry individuals who have total disregard for the safety and well-being of the residents, who voted them into office in the first place.

You are destroying the nice neighborhoods of Laveen with total disregard to safety, you already don't have enough police to start with, and that police station, that is planned does not change that fact. School buses come through these neighborhoods, impact the traffic and cause backups. Kids walk home from school and handy capped residents also use these streets. People walk their pets and kids run back and forth into parks.

Traffic lights are not correctly calibrated, literally no traffic control, the homelessness issue has not improved and once these stores are there, they will draw homeless and criminal elements which will impact our neighborhood.

Building businesses and houses at this time will be severely impacted by interest rates and supplying water and electricity to these areas.

Please, don't quote the saying, our water is guaranteed for 100 years, at what cost to the environment and the consumer. We are in a time of drought and climate change. At this point nothing can be guaranteed for mere 10 years with the way things are going. Planning and development has a mindset 20 years behind the times. This is one of the fastest

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growing counties around and it is time to put the brakes on and catch up with infrastructure and changes in your schools and in the mindset of residents to grow into a real community. Most of your residents don't exercise their rights to say what they want or don't want to the city officials, because they come from backgrounds where these rights are not common. You are using that to destroy Laveen and surrounding areas.

Just because someone has bought a piece of land and wants to use it for certain things, you don't have to give permission, First and foremost it is important to see, how it would impact an already stressed-out neighborhood.

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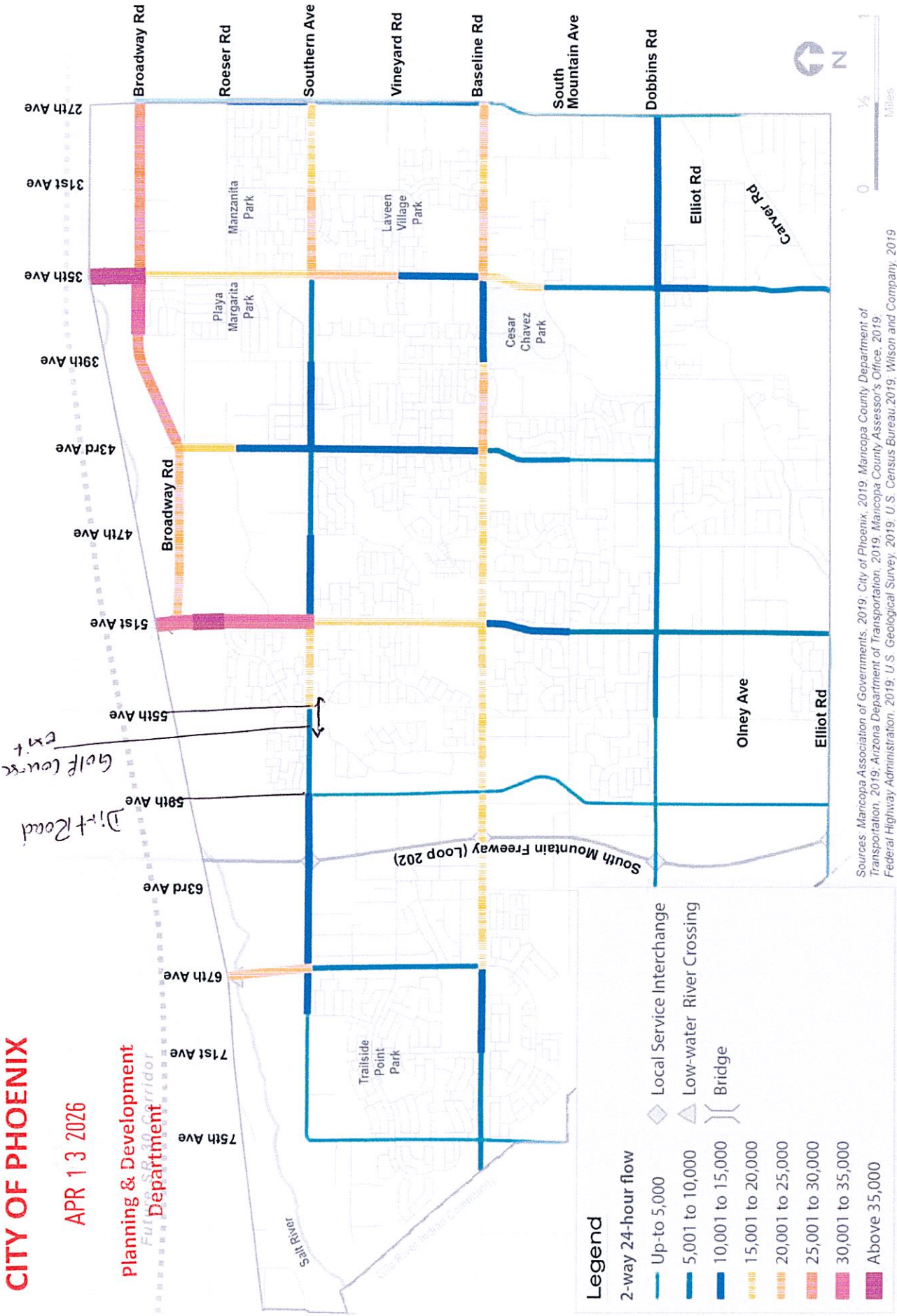
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Figure 2.9 Average Daily Traffic Volumes, 2018

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 Department





AI Overview

Several intersections along Baseline Road in Laveen, AZ, are considered high-risk or problematic due to high speeds, heavy traffic, and frequent accidents, particularly near 43rd, 51st, and 59th

Avenues. Facebook +2

Key High-Risk Areas on Baseline Rd (Laveen):

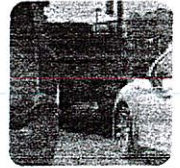
- Baseline Rd & 43rd Ave:** Identified as a high-risk area with frequent accidents, with residents noting dangerous, high-speed behavior.
- Baseline Rd & 51st Ave:** Known for severe accidents and residents reporting frequent reckless driving, often with high-speed, 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. congestion, and vehicles failing to yield to left-turning traffic.
- Baseline Rd & 59th Ave:** A major congestion point, with commuters advising avoidance during peak hours due to severe accidents and backups that can stretch to 67th Ave.
- 7th Ave & Baseline Rd:** Described by residents as a challenging intersection with high speeds and confusing, "weird" geometry. Facebook +5

Contributing Factors:

- Speeding:** Residents report vehicles treating the area like a "race track," with some vehicles reported at 65 mph in 40 mph zones.
- Blind Spots:** Specific turning lanes on Baseline are cited for having poor visibility.
- Reckless Driving:** Impatience, red-light running, and illegal, dangerous turns into school entrances are frequently mentioned.

Got citation for turning right on red in Laveen, AZ? -...

Feb 3, 2026 — New Traffic Sign at Baseline and 51st Ave...



Facebook · Living Laveen

Traffic Accident on Baseline and 43rd in Laveen -...

Nov 22, 2024 — Do not block the whole right lane of traffi...



Facebook · Living Laveen

What happened at 51st and baseline? - Facebook

Feb 6, 2026 — Michelle Lee there was one yesterday...



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AI Overview

Baseline Road and Southern Avenue in the Laveen area of Phoenix, Arizona, are major corridors in a region known for high-risk traffic, with multiple intersections in the vicinity identified as dangerous due to high-speed, heavy commuting, and commercial traffic.

Key Safety Issues in Laveen/South Mountain Area:

- High Crash Frequency: The Laveen South Mountain Transportation Study identified Baseline Road and Southern Avenue as part of the primary corridors experiencing the majority of crashes.
Dangerous Intersections: Key areas noted for severe, high-impact accidents include 51st Avenue and Baseline Road, 51st Avenue and Southern Avenue, and 67th Avenue and Baseline Road.
Common Causes: Accidents are often caused by red-light running, speeding (often over 60 mph in 40-45 mph zones), left-turn failures, and failure to yield.
Traffic Trends: The area is transitioning from rural to dense suburban, causing high congestion during peak commuting hours. The 67th Ave & Baseline intersection is undergoing upgrades to address increased traffic.
Right on Red Issues: Residents have reported issues with right-on-red restrictions in the area, particularly regarding visibility of signs.

Recommendations for Drivers:

Avoid peak traffic hours on Baseline Road

Laveen South Mountain Transportation Study - City o...

Safety. f The majority of all crashes occurred along thre...
City of Phoenix (.gov)



Got citation for turning right on red in Laveen, AZ?

Feb 3, 2026 — I just saw someone get pulled over...
Facebook · Mary Torres



What happened at 51st and baseline? - Facebook

Feb 6, 2026 — Michelle Lee there was one yesterday...
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