

# Avondale drafting sports-entertainment district to allow PIR expansion

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Avondale is drafting a proposed sports and entertainment zoning district that would allow [Phoenix International Raceway](#) to expand near the racetrack.

PIR, which hosts [NASCAR races](#) in Avondale twice a year, needs the city to create the appropriate zoning so it can develop its property into a major regional and national destination.

Development options include [restaurant](#) and entertainment venues, hotels and resorts and racing-related light-industrial facilities, such as those used for the research, development and testing of racing vehicles.

"The tremendous growth of NASCAR has created opportunities for development around racetracks in other markets around the country," PIR President Bryan Sperber said Tuesday. "With that in mind, we want to be prepared, zoning-wise, in case any opportunities for development are ever presented at Phoenix International Raceway."

The City Council has authorized staff to draft a new mixed-use zoning district for areas with large-scale, sport-related uses. The area that fits that description is PIR.

City planners say PIR needs flexibility to react to development opportunities. Planned-area-development zoning is too rigid because it requires developers to lay out specific plans, while the new zoning district would allow for a more market-driven approach.

There are no immediate plans on the table.

The city anticipates PIR developing its property "very, very long-term in the future," Tracy Stevens, Avondale's planning manager, said Tuesday.

"So we're just kind of preplanning ahead so at the time that they are ready to expand and add a little bit more development on the site, there's a proper zoning district for them to do that in," Stevens said.

Once the ordinance is drafted, likely in October, the language will be placed online and sent out to those on the Planning Department's interested-parties list, Stevens said. Residents can request to be on the list by going to the Development Services Department and then the Planning Division at [www.avondale.org](http://www.avondale.org).

"We do a lot of public participation before these ordinances get approved," Stevens said.

<http://www.azcentral.com/community/swvalley/articles/2010/09/03/20100903avondale-pir-expansion.html#>

The Planning Commission probably will hold the first public hearing in November. The panel will review the zoning ordinance and make a recommendation to the council, which has the final say.

"Once it is adopted, it would become part of our overall zoning ordinance and it would be available for use by the development community," Stevens said.

When PIR decides to develop its property, it would then apply for rezoning under the ordinance.

PIR is within the city's Estrella Foothills planning area, which is about 13 square miles bound by Lower Buckeye Road on the north, Estrella Mountain Regional Park on the south, Litchfield Road on the west and 107th Avenue on the east.

The city must balance development with the surrounding area, which includes Tres Rios, a wildlife sanctuary and natural riparian area where the Salt, Gila and Agua Fria rivers meet.

Avondale also must consider the proposed Arizona 801 alignment, which will bisect the foothills area, though nobody knows when or where the route will be built. Arizona 801 would connect Maricopa County 85 where it runs north and south and Loop 303 to the proposed South Mountain Freeway.

The northern route would be just south of Broadway Road, while the southern route would run along the Gila River, which would likely be a boost to any PIR development plans.

The city opposes an 801 northern alignment.

## **PHOENIX INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY**



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