



Development Services

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Cochise County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Matthew Taylor, AICP, Planning Manager
FOR: Sharon Gilman, County Administrator
THROUGH: Christine McLachlan, AICP, Director
SUBJECT: Docket RZ25-03 (Sunsites Unit #2 – Towner Street)
DATE: July 22, 2025

Docket RZ25-03 (Sunsites Unit #2 – Towner Street)

The applicant requests rezoning APN 117-05-054B from SR-43 (Single-Household Residential, one dwelling per 43,000 square feet) and NB (Neighborhood Business District) to SR-174 (Single-Household Residential District, one dwelling per 4 acres). The parcel is located along Towner and Spruce Streets between Palm and Skyline Roads in Sunsites.

I. DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT PARCEL AND SURROUNDING USES

Applicant: Jeff Thiede
Location: Sunsites Unit #2
APN: 117-05-054B
Parcel Size: 6.3 acres
Current Zoning: SR-43 and NB
Proposed Zoning: SR-174
Growth Area: D – Rural Areas
Plan Designation: Medium Density Residential
Area Plan: Mid-Sulphur Springs Valley
Existing Use: Undeveloped
Proposed Use: Single Family Residence

Surrounding Zoning and Land Uses:

North	NB	Undeveloped, Single Family Residences
South	SR-43	Undeveloped, Single Family Residences
East	NB, SR-43	Undeveloped
West	SR-43	Undeveloped

II. PARCEL HISTORY

- 1961 – Arizona Sunsites Unit #2 platted in 1961
 - 2024 – Well permit (#WEL24-00003)
 - 2025 – *Docket RZ23-24* (rezone request to RU-4; denied by BOS on January 28th)
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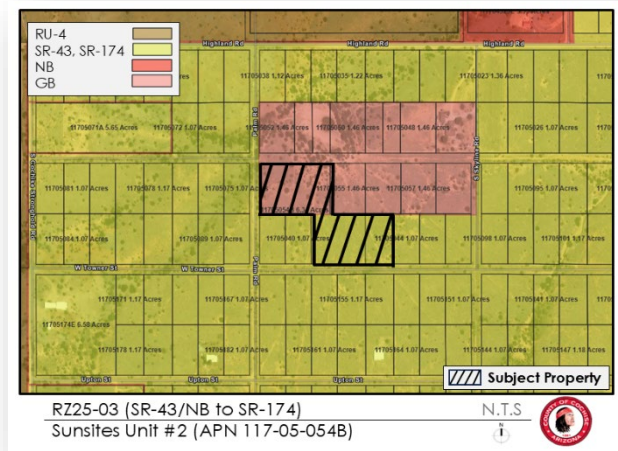
- No active code compliance actions

III. NATURE OF REQUEST

The applicant requests rezoning from SR-43 and NB to SR-174 to construct a residence and out buildings utilizing the county's owner-builder program.

Mandatory Compliance

Section 2.63.080 of the zoning regulations requires zoning district boundaries be in accordance with comprehensive or area plan designations. In this case, the proposed rezone to SR-174 is consistent with Comprehensive Plan designations. The area plan designation is Medium Density Residential.



Compliance with Rezoning Criteria

Section 2.63.080 of the zoning regulations provides fifteen (15) criteria for evaluating rezoning requests:

1. Adequate Land Use/Concept Plan: Complies

The applicant provided a concept plan demonstrating an intent to develop the property with a permanent residence and accessory structures.

2. Compliance with Applicable Site Development Standards: Complies

The property totals about 6.3 acres and will be subject to site development standards found in Section 2.24 of the zoning regulations if rezoned to SR-174, including setbacks, height, distances between structures, and lot coverage.

3. Adjacent Districts Remain Capable of Development: Complies

The requested downzone does not prevent surrounding properties from being developed in a manner consistent with their zoning district classifications.

4. Limiting Creation of Nonconforming Uses: Complies

Rezoning the property to SR-174 will not result in the creation of nonconforming uses.

5. Compatibility with Existing Development: Complies

The area is generally undeveloped with sporadic single family residences, unimproved roads, and limited infrastructure. The prevailing development pattern within Sunsites is low density residential with a rural character, and the applicant intends to develop his property in this manner. The county has approved multiple requests to downzone properties consisting of four or more acres to RU-4 and SR-174, allowing property owners to build a residence in accordance with the owner-builder program.

With recent Board of Supervisors approval of an amendment to the Zoning Regulations, SR district accessory use standards now offer more flexibility that encourage owner-builder participants to pursue SR-174 in lieu of RU-4. Housing types allowed in SR districts are a better fit with established residences in Sunsites Unit #2. The amendment allows accessory structures to be built prior to the principal structure, i.e., the residence, and for accessory structures to be larger than the residence.

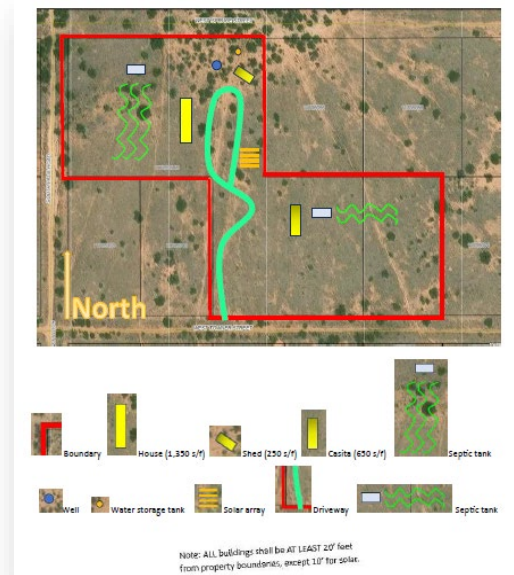
Staff has historically encouraged rezones to SR-174 (site-built and factory-built residences only) due to concerns about manufactured housing by some residents, but the SR zoning district's previous restrictive accessory structure standards encouraged the pursuit of RU-4 for many applicants even if they did not intend to place a manufactured home on their property.

6. Rezoning to More Intense Districts: Not Applicable

A rezone to a more intense zoning district is not proposed. The applicant requests downzoning the subject property to SR-174, reducing allowed residential density.

7. Adequate Services and Infrastructure: Complies

The property is located within the Sunsites-Pearce Fire District and Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC) service areas, and the future residence will be served by a private well and septic system. The applicant proposes participating in the county's owner-builder program, which requires a minimum site area of four acres and zoning classification requiring a minimum of four acres. The county adopted the owner-builder amendment to encourage ingenuity by individual home owners in the interest of personal preference, allowing the use of alternate building materials and methods.



8. Traffic Circulation: Complies

The property is currently accessible Towner Street, which is an unimproved public right-of-way (ROW) not maintained by the county. The driveway does not require a county ROW permit.

9. Development Along Major Streets: Not Applicable

The parcel fronts unimproved local roads not maintained by the county (Towner and Spruce Streets).

10. Infill Compatibility: Not Applicable

This factor applies to rezoning requests to General Business (GB), Light Industry (LI), or Heavy Industry (HI) zoning districts.

11. Unique Topographic Features: Not Applicable

This factor applies to rezoning requests to more intense business or industrial zoning districts.

12. Water Conservation: Not Applicable

County-wide water conservation requirements identified in Section 2.51.170 of the zoning regulations apply to non-residential uses and properties. This proposed downzone reduces the number of allowed principal dwellings which suggests an overall reduction in water consumption.

13. Public Input: Complies

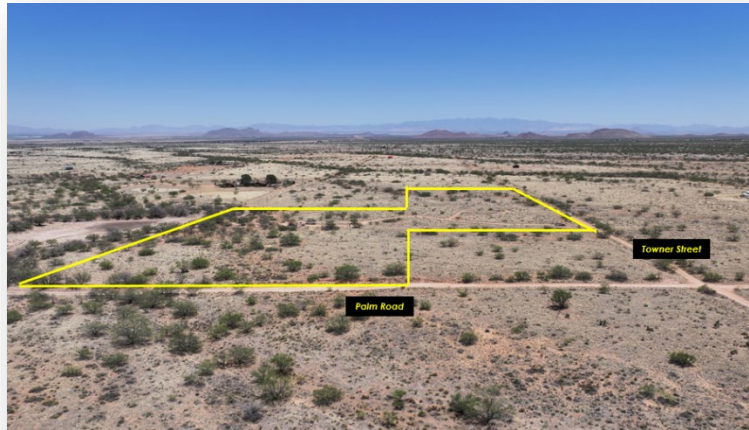
Applications to downzone property are not subject to Citizen Review requirements identified in the zoning regulations. Staff posted the property, mailed notification letters, and published legal notice June 13-18, 2025.

14. Hazardous Materials: Not Applicable

The applicant proposes a rural residential land use. The use of hazardous materials is not proposed.

15. Planning Policies: Complies

Downzoning to SR-174 is consistent with Comprehensive Plan designations. The county generally supports downzones to less intense zoning districts that reduce residential densities and impacts to limited infrastructure or services.



IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The applicant is requesting a downzone to build a residence and accessory structures using the county's owner builder program. The county continues to receive requests to downzone properties to SR-174 and RU-4, and staff is supportive of such requests in areas absent adequate infrastructure. The county adopted the owner-builder amendment to encourage ingenuity by individual home owners in the interest of personal preference, allowing the use of alternate building materials and methods.

Factors in Favor of Approval

1. Complies with all nine applicable factors used to evaluate rezoning requests.
2. Proposed use is compatible with established rural residential growth pattern.
3. Downzone reduces the number of allowed principal dwellings.

Factors Against Approval

None identified.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the factors in favor, the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval without special conditions (7-0) during their July 9, 2025, regular meeting.

Based on the factors in favor, staff also recommends approval without special conditions.

Sample Motion

I move to approve Docket RZ25-03 without special conditions, rezoning tax parcel 117-05-054B from SR-43 and NB to SR-174, the factors in favor of approval constituting the findings of fact.