



Development Services

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Cochise County Planning and Zoning Commission
FROM: Matthew Taylor, AICP, Planner II
FOR: Christine McLachlan, AICP, Planning Division Manager
SUBJECT: SU24-22 (Marguerite Road Shooting Range)
DATE: January 8, 2025

Docket SU24-22 (Marguerite Road Shooting Range)

A Special Use Authorization request to allow an outdoor shooting range for public use. The undeveloped property is located along Marguerite Road west of Hamilton Road near Willcox (APNs 202-01-013, 202-01-014, 202-01-018) and zoned RU-4 (Rural District, one dwelling per 4 acres).

I. DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT PARCEL AND SURROUNDING USES

Applicant: Robert Todd
Location: Approximate northwest corner of Marguerite and Atwood Roads, approximate southwest corner of Majestic Drive and Calle Gonzalez Road
APN: 202-01-013, 202-01-014, 202-01-018
Property Size: ~400 acres
Zoning: RU-4 (Rural District, one dwelling per 4 acres)
Plan Designation: Rural
Growth Area: D – Rural Areas
Existing Use: Grazing
Proposed Use: Outdoor Shooting Range

Surrounding Zoning and Uses

North	RU-4	Undeveloped
South	RU-4	Undeveloped
East	SR-43	Feed Lot
West	RU-4	State Trust Land

II. SITE HISTORY

- No active code compliance actions

III. SPECIAL USE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST

The applicant requests special use approval for an outdoor shooting range for small and large caliber firearms. Site development will be phased with improvements including multiple ranges with shade canopies, an office, and restrooms.

IV. ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS – COMPLIANCE WITH SPECIAL USE FACTORS

Section 2.48.160 of the Zoning Regulations identifies ten (10) factors to evaluate Special Use applications. These factors determine the suitability of a special use request, whether to recommend approval, and to determine if conditions and/or modifications are needed to mitigate potentially negative impacts on surrounding properties. With the information provided, nine (9) factors apply to this special use request with eight (8) factors complying with conditions:

1. Compliance with Duly Adopted Plans: Complies

Comprehensive Plan designations for the property are Rural and Growth Area D (Rural Areas). These land use categories are characterized by sparsely populated areas with large lot sizes and large expanses of private and public lands. Agricultural uses are common as are developed or undeveloped recreational resources. The applicant is not requesting a rezone or Comprehensive Plan amendment, preserving existing land use designation and zoning category. The area is characterized by low density residential development on parcels of 4 acres to more than 40 acres. The nearest single family residences are located about ½ mile to the east and ¾ mile to the north.

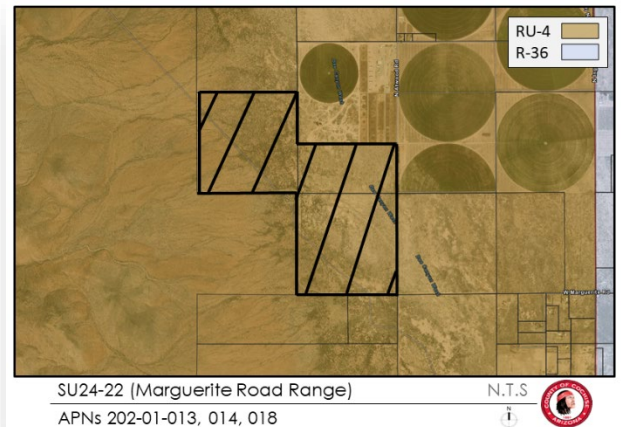
2. Compliance with the Zoning District Purpose: Complies

Rural districts allow non-residential activities that provide services serving local needs, recreational support services, and are compatible with rural living. These zoning districts, which range in site area from 2 acres to 36 acres, allow residential and non-residential uses compatible with an area's rural character. Outdoor firearms, skeet, archery, and trap shooting ranges are authorized in rural zoning districts with special use authorization approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Uses that preserve agricultural character and provide recreational support services are consistent with rural zoning as are more intense uses if they are, or through conditions can be, sensitive to the general character of rural districts, natural environment, and harmonious with existing development.

3. Development Along Major Streets: Not Applicable

The intent of this factor is to consider limiting the number of access points on major thoroughfares, arterials, or collectors by using frontage roads, shared access, and no access easements. Incorporating such measures promotes fewer road cuts to avoid potentially unsafe traffic conflicts, hazardous traffic congestion, and roadway obstruction caused by traffic.

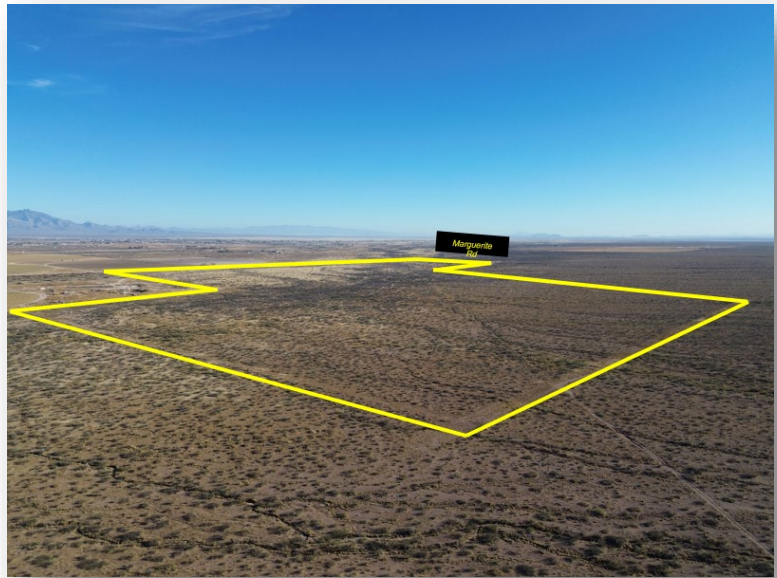
The property has access from Atwood Road and Majestic Drive which are local public roads, but Marguerite Road will serve as sole access to the proposed range. Marguerite Road is designated by the county as a Rural Local road and is hard surfaced a distance of one mile from Old Fort Grant Road west to Hamilton Road. Road classification and county maintenance continues to Davis Ranch Road, a distance of about 1¼ miles from Old Fort Grant Road. Marguerite Road terminates at the subject property ¼ mile west of Davis Ranch Road. The property does not have direct access from any county maintained roads.



parcels to avoid development conflicts caused by interior parcel lines, creating a single parcel of about 400 acres.

7. Public Input: Complies

Section 2.48.160 of the Zoning Regulations states, "If public concerns have been raised, it is fair to ask if the applicant has made a reasonable effort to address these concerns through the Citizen Review Process." The applicant sent letters to property owners within one mile November 5, 2024, receiving no responses in opposition.



8. Hazardous Materials: Complies w/Conditions

Hazardous or dangerous materials are not proposed for this special use. Staff recommends the applicant to keep range activity records and follow applicable best management practices published by the *Environmental Protection Agency* (EPA) to mitigate potential soil contamination caused by lead ammunition. Practices include the use of berms or traps, sifting and screening soils, recycling lead and brass, controlling stormwater runoff, and soil pH monitoring.

9. Off-Site Impacts: Complies with Conditions

This factor is intended to ensure adequate measures have been taken to mitigate off-site impacts such as noise, outdoor lighting, odors, smoke, traffic, and dust. See also Section 6 (Significant Site Development Standards):

- **Parking:** The applicant's site plan identifies on-site parking areas for range visitors. The property is located in Growth Area D which does not require internal driveway improvements though the applicant proposes watering to reduce dust.
- **Noise:** Firearms can create significant noise but may not be significant enough to create nuisances for area residents given limited residential development in the area (nearest residence is about ½ mile east). Staff recommends limiting range use to daylight hours.
- **Lighting and Signs:** The property is not currently served by electricity. Future permanent or temporary lighting is regulated by Section 2.45 of the zoning regulations which governs overall brightness and requires shielded fixtures. New signs are subject to Section 2.54 of the zoning regulations (6' maximum height, 32 maximum square feet for on-premise signs).
- **Landscaping:** Landscaping is not required for properties located in Growth Area D. The property consists of about 400 acres and will remain heavily vegetated near most property lines.
- **Odors and Smoke:** Odors created by discharging firearms that are significant enough to create nuisances for area residents are unlikely given the remoteness of the project site and limited residential development in the area.

- Traffic: The applicant's site plan demonstrates visitor traffic accessing the range from Marguerite Road, a rural local road. Range traffic could be significant, creating potential conflicts with residential traffic and creating dust.

10. Water Conservation: Complies

County water conservation requirements apply to non-residential uses and properties, potentially including this project. Section 2.51.170 of the zoning regulations requires water saving strategies and applicable water conservation regulations and policies identified in the zoning regulations and comprehensive plan will be identified at permitting. The property is not located within an active management area but this designation may be instituted in the Willcox Basin by the Arizona Department of Water Resources in the future. This designation could prohibit private well availability.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Staff published legal notice, mailed notification letters to property owners within one mile, and posted the property 11-20 December 2024.

VI. WAIVERS

None.

VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The applicant requests special use authorization approval for an outdoor shooting range on three parcels totaling approximately 400 acres located about four miles west of the City of Willcox. Development is proposed to be phased, beginning with land clearing to establish small and large caliber ranges, followed by building shade structures, and finishing with an office and restroom facilities. This range will be accessible to the public.

Factors in Favor of Approval

1. Complies with eight (8) of nine (9) applicable factors.
2. Support from an adjacent property owner.
3. The site is located in a rural area with few residences.
4. Creates new recreational and training location to individuals and organizations.

Factors Against Approval

1. Range access is from a rural local road with several single family residences (Marguerite Road).

VIII. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the factors in favor of approval, staff recommends approval of Docket SU24-22 to allow an outdoor shooting range subject to the following conditions*:

1. Range officers shall be on-site during business hours.
2. Range operations are limited to daylight hours.
3. Range rules and emergency contact information shall be publicly accessible prior to opening and permanently posted on-site.
4. Applicant and/or range officers shall incorporate best management practices from Arizona State Lands

Department, Bureau of Land Management, and other public or private entities to prevent discharged ammunition from exiting range boundaries by incorporating berms, standoff distances, and other measures into individual ranges and overall site design.

5. Implement dust control on Marguerite Road between Davis Ranch Road and the subject property using two-inch gravel. Dust control shall also be used for on-site driveways and parking areas.
6. Utilize City of Willcox subscription fire suppression services until an on-site water supply is available.
7. Use EPA best management practices to mitigate potential soil contamination (https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/epa_bmp.pdf). A Soil Contamination Mitigation Plan shall be provided to the county at permitting.
8. Combine tax parcels 202-01-013, 014, 018 into a single tax parcel.

**Standard conditions related to condition acceptance, permitting timeframes, and special use modifications apply and have not been modified by this request.*

Sample Motion

Madam Chair, I move to approve Docket SU24-22 to allow an outdoor shooting range with conditions recommended by staff, the factors in favor of approval constituting the findings of fact.
