



Development Services

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Cochise County Planning and Zoning Commission
FROM: Matthew Taylor, AICP, Planning Manager
FOR: Christine McLachlan, AICP, Director
SUBJECT: Docket RZ25-13 (Morris Ranch Road)
DATE: September 10, 2025

Docket RZ25-13 (Morris Ranch Road)

The applicants request rezoning APN 202-81-169 from SR-8 (Single-Household Residential District, one dwelling per 8,000 square feet) to RU-10 (Rural District, one dwelling per 10 acres). The property is located at 3123 E. Morris Ranch Road near Willcox.

I. DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT PARCEL AND SURROUNDING USES

Applicant: Ryan and Desiree Gerth
Location: 3123 Morris Ranch Road
APN: 202-81-169
Parcel Size: 39 acres
Current Zoning: SR-8
Proposed Zoning: RU-10
Growth Area: D – Rural Areas
Plan Designation: Rural
Area Plan: None
Existing Use: Residential
Proposed Use: Residential

Surrounding Zoning and Land Uses:

North	SR-8	Single Family Residence
South	SR-8	Single Family Residences
East	SR-8	Single Family Residences
West	SR-8	Single Family Residences

II. PARCEL HISTORY

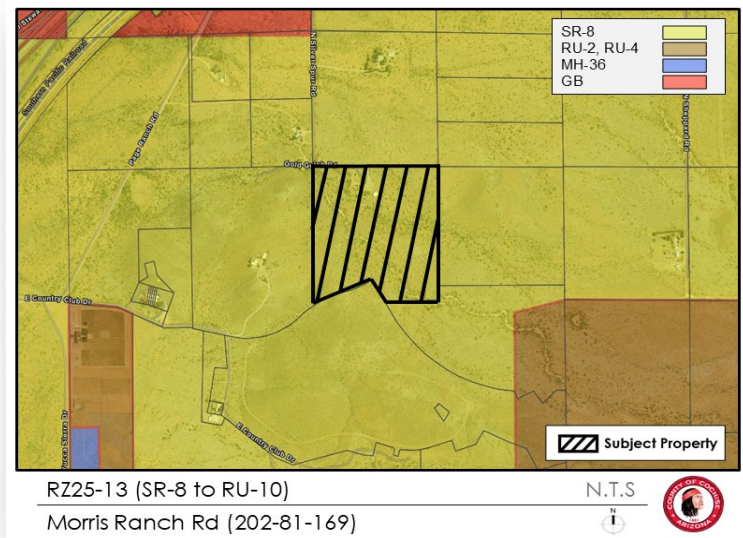
- 1980-1983: Single family residence, private well, septic system, and accessory structures
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III. NATURE OF REQUEST

The applicants request rezoning from SR-8 to RU-10 to preserve their property's existing rural landscape. Additionally, due to State licensing requirements, the applicant must rezone to a rural zoning district to store wine they produce at another location on-site within an existing 2,100 square foot accessory building.

Mandatory Compliance

Section 2.63.080 of the zoning regulations requires zoning district boundaries be in accordance with Comprehensive Plan designations. In this case, the proposed rezone to RU-10 is consistent with rural land use designations.



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 showing all existing structures. No new structures are proposed. The site currently has a primary dwelling, private well, septic system, small vineyard, and multiple accessory structures.

2. Compliance with Applicable Site Development Standards: Complies

The property totals about 39 acres and will be subject to site development standards found in Section 2.15 of the zoning regulations if rezoned to RU-10, including setbacks, height, distances between structures, and lot coverage. Development standards in RU zoning districts are less stringent than in SR districts, and all existing improvements on the property appear to comply with applicable standards in both zoning districts.

3. Adjacent Districts Remain Capable of Development: Complies

The requested downzone does not prevent surrounding properties, which range from 10 acres to more than 40 acres, from being developed in a manner consistent with their SR zoning district classifications.

4. Limiting Creation of Nonconforming Uses: Complies

Rezoning the property to RU-10 will not result in the creation of nonconforming uses.

5. Compatibility with Existing Development: Complies

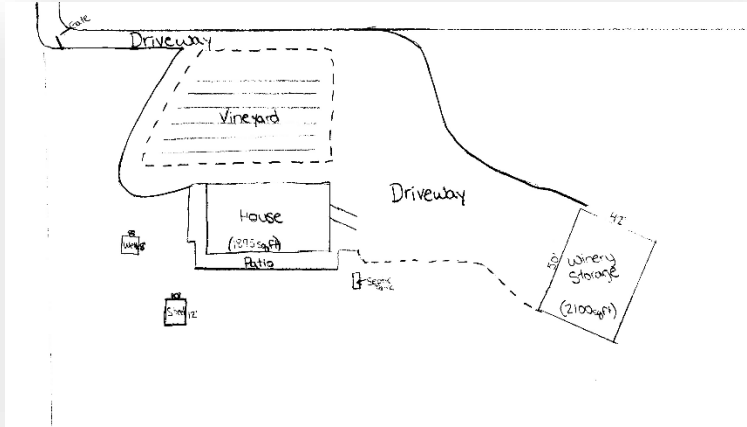
The area is rural residential in character with sporadic single family residences on parcels consisting of 10 or more acres.

6. Rezoning to More Intense Districts: Not Applicable

The applicant is not requesting a rezone to a more intense zoning district. The rezone is a downzone that reduces allowed residential density from one dwelling per 8,000 square feet to one dwelling per 10 acres.

7. Adequate Services and Infrastructure: Complies

The property has legal access via Morris Ranch Road aka Gold Gulch Road. The site is served by a private well and septic system with power provided by Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC). The applicants are not proposed any new or additional principal uses.



8. Traffic Circulation: Complies

The property takes access from Morris Ranch Road aka Gold Gulch Road, an unimproved road not in county maintenance, and does not propose any new driveways.

9. Development Along Major Streets: Not Applicable

The parcel does not have frontage along any major streets. The nearest road in county maintenance is Page Ranch Road, a Rural Local road located more than ¼ mile north of the subject property. The closest major improved roadway is Haskell Avenue about ¾ mile west of the subject property which is designated as a Rural Major Collector. A county right-of-way (ROW) permit is not required as no new driveways are proposed.

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 from high density residential to rural does not involve mandatory conservation improvements to reduce anticipated water consumption although the property is located within the Douglas Active Management Area (AMA).

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 August 15-20, 2025.

14. Hazardous Materials: Not Applicable

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

proposed.

15. Planning Policies: Complies

Downzoning to RU-10 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. Given the topography and natural features in the area, residential development in accordance with SR-8 zoning is highly unlikely. Downzones to residential or rural districts with site area requirements of 4 or more acres would be appropriate and encouraged.



IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The applicants request a downzone of their property to RU-10 to preserve its existing rural character and large parcel size. There is an existing accessory structure on the property the applicants intend to use for storage of wine produced off-site (State licensing prohibits wine storage on residentially zoned parcels), and they wish to expand agricultural operations on their property in the future.

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 allowed residential density.
4. No opposition from nearby property owners.

Factors Against Approval

None identified.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the factors in favor of approval, Staff recommends forwarding Docket RZ25-13 to the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation of approval, rezoning tax parcel 202-81-169 from SR-8 (Single-Household Residential District, one dwelling per 8,000 square feet) to RU-10 (Rural District, one dwelling per 10 acres) without special conditions.

Sample Motion

I move to recommend approval of Docket RZ25-13 to the Board of Supervisors without special conditions, rezoning tax parcel 202-81-169 from SR-8 to RU-10, the factors in favor of approval constituting the findings of fact.