



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, Development Services Director
SUBJECT: Docket RZ25-15 (Patte Road)
DATE: January 6, 2026

Docket RZ25-15 (Moonbeam Drive)

The applicants request rezoning approximately 900 acres from R-36 (Residential District, one dwelling per 36,000 square feet) to RU-4 (Rural District, one dwelling per 4 acres). The property is generally located along Patte Road east of Willcox.

I. DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT PARCEL AND SURROUNDING USES

Applicant: Adapture Renewables Inc.
Location: Patte Road
APNs: 203-16-007, 203-19-018A, 203-19-036C, 202-44-017, 202-86-002, and portions of 202-44-012 and 202-67-002
Parcel Size: 900 acres
Current Zoning: R-36
Proposed Zoning: RU-4
Growth Area: D – Rural Areas
Plan Designation: Rural
Area Plan: None
Existing Use: Grazing
Proposed Use: Solar Energy Power Plant (requires Special Use Authorization approval)

Surrounding Zoning and Land Uses:

North	R-36, RU-4	Undeveloped
South	R-36, RU-4	Residential
East	R-36, RU-4	Undeveloped
West	R-36, RU-4, GB	Undeveloped

II. PARCEL HISTORY

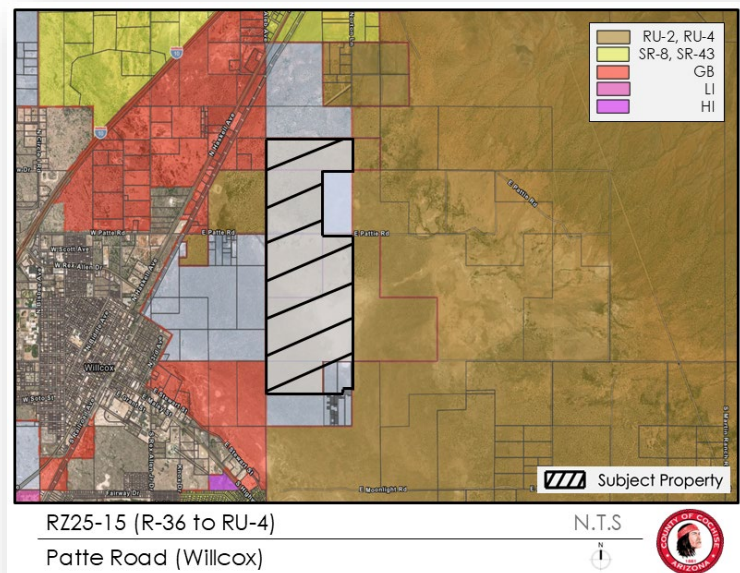
There is no permit history for these properties though some of the parcels have existing well sites.

III. NATURE OF REQUEST

The applicant requests rezoning from R-36 to RU-4, intending to seek Special Use Authorization for a future solar energy power plant. Solar facilities are not permitted in Residential zoning districts and require Special Use Authorization in all Rural districts. The rezoning area totals about 995 acres and the entire project site will exceed 1,400 acres.

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 RU-4 is consistent with rural Comprehensive Plan 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 has not provided a concept plan demonstrating future rural land uses for the subject properties. A solar energy power plant is planned for the site and the applicant has provided a map demonstrating the scale of that project. Solar energy projects require Special Use Authorization approval in Rural zoning districts, and a more detailed land use plan will be required at that time.

2. Compliance with Applicable Site Development Standards: Complies

Rural and residential land uses are subject to site development standards found in Section 2.15 of the zoning regulations if the property is successfully rezoned to RU-4, including setbacks, height, distances between structures, and lot coverage. Future solar energy power plant development requires special use approval, and additional development-related standards identified in Section 2.51.220 of the zoning regulations will apply to that project.

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 R-36, RU-4, and GB zoning classifications.

4. Limiting Creation of Nonconforming Uses: Complies

Rezoning the property to RU-4 will not result in the creation of nonconforming uses.

5. Compatibility with Existing Development: Complies

The area is generally undeveloped with few single family residences, unimproved roads, and little infrastructure. The county has approved multiple requests to downzone properties consisting of four or more acres to RU-4 throughout the county, mostly for residential development. The subject properties are not adjacent to any lands with existing residential uses with most being owned by the property owners

or held in State Trust with active grazing leases.

6. Rezoning to More Intense Districts: Not Applicable

A rezone from R-36 to RU-4 does not constitute a rezone to a more intense district.

7. Adequate Services and Infrastructure: Complies

The property is located within Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC) and current property access is generally provided by Patte Road.

8. Traffic Circulation: Complies

The property is accessible via Patte Road, an unimproved local road not in county maintenance. Required improvements will be evaluated during the Special Use review and approval process.

9. Development Along Major Streets: Not Applicable

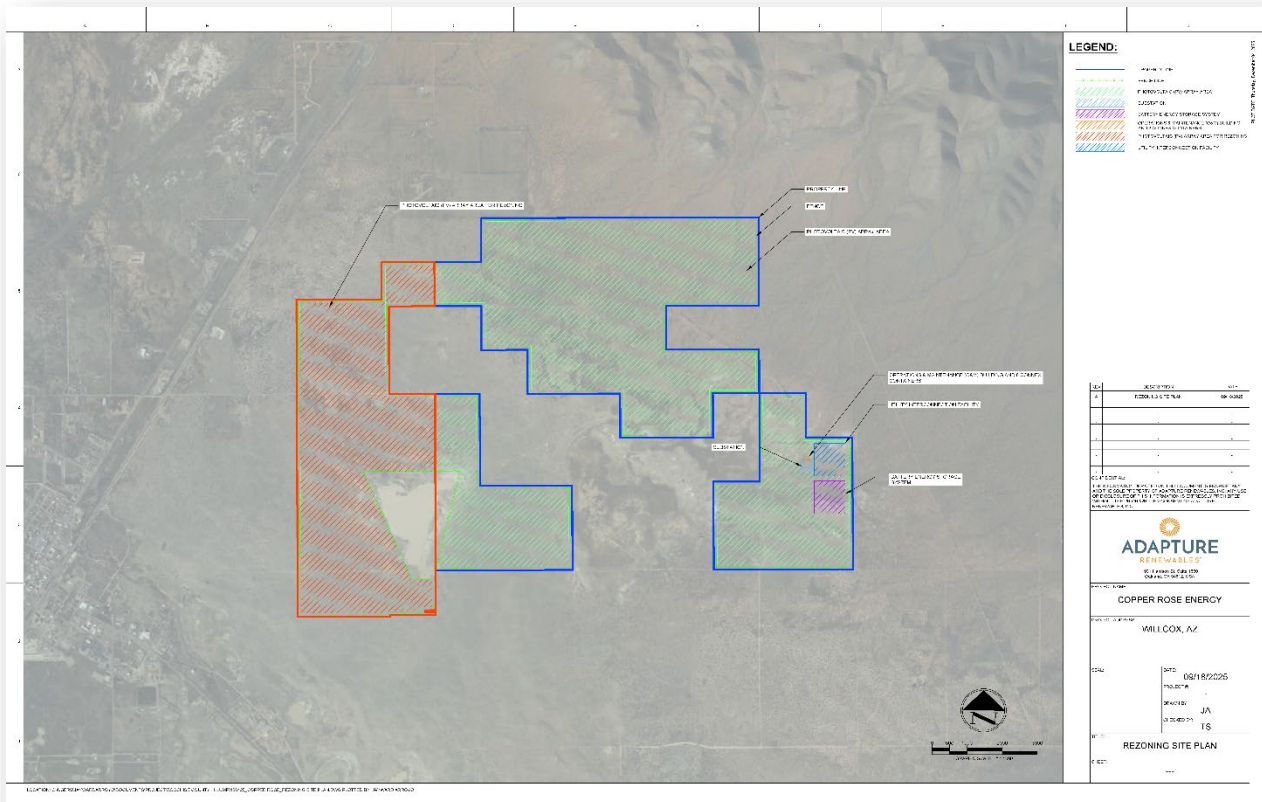
Property access is from Patte Road, which is unimproved and functions as a local road.

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

The property is located within the Willcox Active Management Area (AMA) which may involve an additional layer of water-related regulations by the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR). 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 by about $\frac{3}{4}$ (approximately 1,200 to 250), which suggests an overall reduction in water consumption. However, should the properties receive Special Use approval for a solar energy power plant, water consumption will be evaluated at permitting. Solar facilities typically use very little water relative to agricultural, residential, and other non-residential uses and, given that much of the land area is currently used for grazing, future solar development will likely result in a net reduction of water use from current levels.



13. Public Input: Complies

Applications to downzone property are not subject to Citizen Review requirements identified in the zoning regulations. Staff published legal notice, posted the property, and mailed notification letters to property owners within 300' between 17-21 November 2025, and has not received any responses to date. Owners of the subject properties also own a majority of properties within the notification area.

14. Hazardous Materials: Not Applicable

The use of hazardous materials is not proposed under the downzone. If the project site receives Special Use approval in the future, development will be subject to County permitting requirements for solar energy sites as well as any applicable State or federal requirements.

15. Planning Policies: Complies

A rezone to RU-4 is consistent with Rural Comprehensive Plan designations. The county typically supports downzones to less intense zoning districts that reduce impacts on limited infrastructure or services or reduce residential densities. Based on gross acreage, R-36 would allow up to 1,200 residences while downzoning the property to RU-4 would reduce the number of allowed dwellings to about 250.

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The applicant requests a downzone of about 900 acres from R-36 to RU-4, intending to file a future Special Use Authorization request for a solar energy power plant. While downzoning property does not require the applicant to complete the Citizen Review process, the Special Use application process for a solar energy site does require Citizen Review. Should the solar project not ultimately move forward, the result of the downzone to RU-4 decreases the number of allowed dwellings but simultaneously increases the number of permitted uses of the

property (and the number of uses allowed with special use approval); however, land use approval through the special use process to allow the solar facility is expected. The property is currently used for grazing and undeveloped and there are no adjacent residential uses.

Factors in Favor of Approval

1. Complies with nine (9) applicable factors used to evaluate rezoning requests.
2. Adjacent to properties with RU-4 zoning.
3. Reduces the number of allowed dwellings.
4. No opposition from nearby property owners.

Factors Against Approval

None identified

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the factors in favor of approval, the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval of Docket RZ25-15 without special conditions (7-2) during its regular meeting on December 10, 2025.

Staff also recommends approval of Docket RZ25-15 without special conditions.

Sample Motion

I move to approve Docket RZ25-15 without special conditions, rezoning tax parcels 203-16-007, 203-19-018A, 203-19-036C, 202-44-017, 202-86-002, and portions of tax parcels 202-44-012 and 202-67-002 from R-36 to RU-4, the factors in favor constituting the findings of fact.
