



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 RZ26-01 (Sunsites Unit #2 – Justin Street)
DATE: March 24, 2026

Docket RZ26-01 (Sunsites Unit #2 – Justin Street)

The applicants request rezoning APN 117-02-314D from SR-43 (Single-Household Residential, one dwelling unit per 43,000-square feet) to SR-174 (Single-Household Residential, one dwelling unit per 174,000 square feet). The property is located on the southeast corner of Justin Street and Cochise Stronghold Road about 5 miles west of Highway 191, in Sunsites Unit #2.

I. DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT PARCEL AND SURROUNDING USES

Applicants: Michael and Susan Drougas
Location: Corner of Justin Street and Cochise Stronghold Road
APN: 117-02-314D (formerly APNs 117-02-314C, 313, 312, and 309)
Parcel Size: 7.6 acres
Current Zoning: SR-43
Proposed Zoning: SR-174
Growth Area: D – Rural Areas
Plan Designation: Rural
Area Plan: Mid-Sulphur Springs Valley
Existing Use: Undeveloped
Proposed Use: Residential

Surrounding Zoning and Land Uses:

North	SR-43	Undeveloped
South	SR-43	Residential
East	SR-43	Residential
West	RU-4	Undeveloped

II. PARCEL HISTORY

- 1961 – Arizona Sunsites Unit #2 platted in 1961
- 2026 – Cistern, Septic System, Electric Panel, Loafing Shed

- No active code compliance actions

III. NATURE OF REQUEST

The applicant seeks rezoning from SR-43 to SR-174 to enable property development, including a residence, horse pastures, up to two loafing sheds, and a storage shop for hay and vehicle parking. The SR-174 zoning designation would allow the applicant to utilize opt-out permits.

Mandatory Compliance

Section 2.63.080 of the zoning regulations require zoning district boundaries be in accordance with Comprehensive Plan designations. In this case, the proposed rezone to SR-174 is consistent with rural Plan designations. The area plan designation is Agriculture/Green Space (Mid-Sulphur Springs Valley).

Compliance with Rezoning Criteria

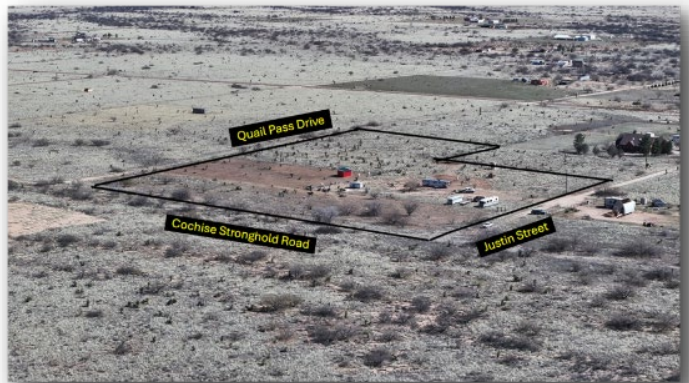
Section 2.63.080 of the zoning regulations provides fifteen (15) criteria for evaluating rezoning requests:

1. Adequate Land Use/Concept Plan: Complies

The applicant has provided a concept plan illustrating the existing structures, one loafing shed, a cistern, a septic system, fencing, and an electric panel. All proposed structures include a single-family dwelling, two additional loafing sheds, two temporary recreational vehicles, a shop, and the plan shows where the horse pastures will be located.

2. Compliance with Applicable Site Development Standards: Complies

The property totals approximately 7.59 acres and will be subject to site development standards in Sections 2.24 and 2.51 of the zoning regulations if successfully rezoned to SR-174, including setbacks, height, distances between structures, lot coverage, and animal keeping regulations.



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 SR and RU zoning classifications.

4. Limiting Creation of Nonconforming Uses: Complies

Rezoning the property retains the existing SR zoning district and does not result in the creation of nonconforming uses.

5. Compatibility with Existing Development: Complies

The area is largely undeveloped, featuring scattered single-family residences, local maintained and county-maintained roads, and minimal infrastructure. The county has approved numerous requests to downzone properties of four or more acres to SR-174 in Sunsites and throughout the county, enabling

owners to construct residences under the owner-builder program. The applicant proposes rural residential land use, which is compatible with the existing and surrounding development.

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 applicant plans to use an existing water tank and a private septic system for wastewater management. Fire protection will be provided by the Sunsites-Pearce Fire District, electricity by the Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative, and waste disposal by C. Enter LLC.

8. **Traffic Circulation: Complies**

The county classifies Palm Road as a Minor Access Local Road, but the property accesses via Justin Street, which lacks an assigned road classification and is not county-maintained. No county right-of-way (ROW) permit is required.

9. **Development Along Major Streets: Not Applicable**

Property access is from Justin Street, 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**

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

13. **Public Input: Complies**

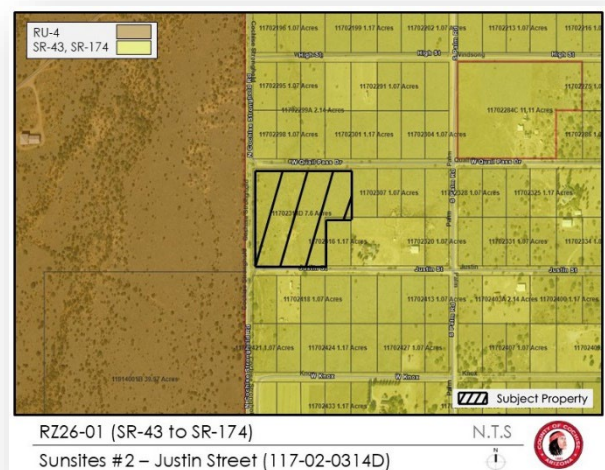
Applications to downzone property are not subject to Citizen Review requirements identified in the zoning regulations.

14. **Hazardous Materials: Not Applicable**

The use of hazardous materials is not proposed.

15. **Planning Policies: Complies**

A rezone to SR-174 is consistent with 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.



IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The applicant requests a downzone from SR-43 to SR-174 to develop the 7.60-acre site for residential land uses, potentially utilizing the owner-builder program for future structures. The county continues to receive requests to downzone properties to SR-174 and RU-4, and staff supports such requests in areas lacking adequate infrastructure. The county adopted the owner-builder amendment to encourage ingenuity by individual homeowners in the interest of personal preference, allowing the use of alternate building materials and methods.



Factors in Favor of Approval

1. Comply with nine of the applicable factors used to evaluate rezoning requests.
2. Proposed use is compatible with developing rural residential growth pattern.
3. Downzone reduces the number of principal dwellings allowed.
4. Response in support received from one adjacent property owner

Factors Against Approval

None Identified

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the factors in favor of approval, the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval of Docket RZ26-01 without special conditions (9-0) during its regular meeting on March 11, 2026.

Staff also recommends approval of Docket RZ26-01 without special conditions.