



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: SU25-32 (Middlemarch Road Guest Lodging)
DATE: February 11, 2026

Docket SU25-32 (Middlemarch Road Guest Lodging)

A Special Use Authorization request to allow guest lodging.

I. DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT PARCEL AND SURROUNDING USES

Applicant: Michael Dewsbury
Location: Northeast Corner of Middlemarch Road and Peaceful Drive
APN: 121-51-031
Property Size: 36 acres
Zoning: RU-4
Plan Designation: Rural
Growth Area: D – Rural Areas
Existing Use: Undeveloped
Proposed Use: Guest Lodging

Surrounding Zoning and Uses

North	RU-4	Rural Residential, State Trust Land
South	RU-4	Rural Residential
East	RU-4	Rural Residential, State Trust Land
West	RU-4	Undeveloped, Low Density Residential

II. SITE HISTORY

The site is undeveloped.

III. SPECIAL USE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST

A Special Use Authorization request to allow guest lodging. Up to nine (9) dry campsites are proposed with a 2,000 square foot recreational building providing bathroom and shower facilities and available food, drink, and merchandise. Business season is expected to be October through May with services available on weekends and during special events.

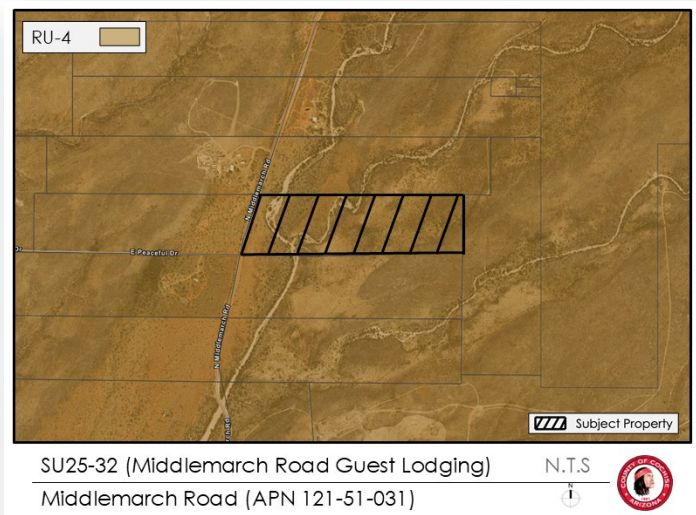
IV. ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS – COMPLIANCE WITH SPECIAL USE FACTORS

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, eight (8) factors apply to this special use request with all applicable factors complying with conditions:

1. Compliance with Duly Adopted Plans: Complies

The subject property is designated *Rural* by the Comprehensive Plan and falls within *Growth Area D (Rural Areas)*. The property's RU-4 zoning will not be changed if the special use is approved, maintaining consistency with current Plan designations. The area is characterized by large tracts of land with rural residential development on parcels approaching 40 acres and is within a few miles of the Dragoon Mountains. The property itself totals about 36 acres and is located within Tombstone Territory Ranches, a 37 lot development created via land survey in 1972. These properties have retained their original parcel configuration and have direct access to Middlemarch Road, a County-maintained road with 80' dedicated right-of-way (ROW).



2. Compliance with the Zoning District Purpose: Complies

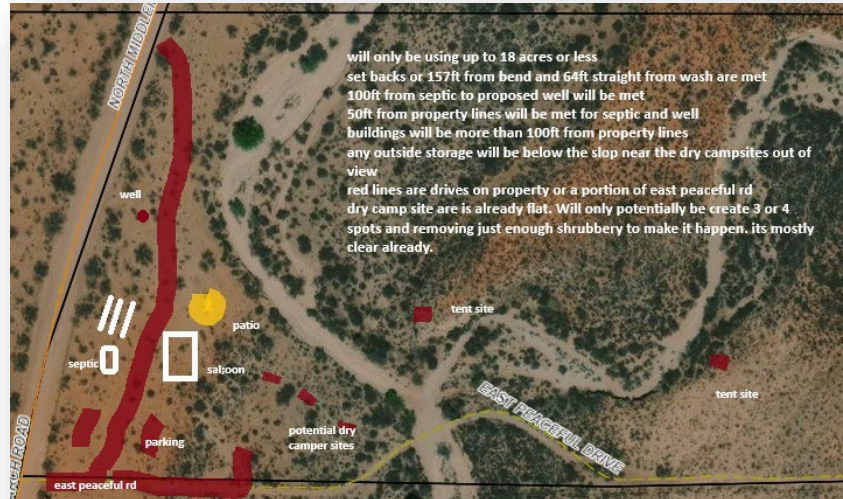
Rural districts allow non-residential activities that provide services serving local needs, recreational support services, and are generally compatible with rural living. These zoning districts, which range in site area from 2 acres to 36 acres, allow residential and non-residential uses compatible with an area's rural character. Rural zoning districts encourage land uses compatible with rural living and, in some instances, more intense non-residential uses provided they are developed with a sensitivity to the character of rural areas and natural environment and harmonious with existing development. Guest lodging is allowed in Rural districts with Special Use approval and, along with similar requests for recreational vehicle parks, continue to be a common special use request within the County. The Zoning Regulations define guest lodging as:

A building or group of buildings furnishing rooms or an area for accommodation for overnight or short-term lodging such as a hotel or motel, resorts, guest ranches, group camps, and campgrounds and may include recreational facilities, restaurants, meeting rooms, or similar facilities. This definition does not include Recreational Vehicle Parks or Bed and Breakfast land uses.

The applicant proposes dry campsites with a 2,000 square foot saloon-type structure to be used for gathering space. Up to nine campsites are allowed based on zoning district and property size (one dwelling per four acres). Food, beverages, and merchandise would be available. Alcohol sales requires the legal establishment of a restaurant since bars and taverns require special use approval irrespective of the proposed guest lodging use. Guests could presumably bring their own food and beverages and the availability of legal beverages on the site is up to the applicant but retail sales requires liquor license approval by the Board of Supervisors.

3. Development Along Major Streets: Not Applicable

This factor encourages reduction in the number of access points along major thoroughfares, arterial streets, and county collector roads by using frontage roads, shared access, no access easements, and other measures. The subject property has direct access to Middlemarch Road, an 80' dedicated public easement maintained by the County. This road does not have an official County functional classification but functions as a rural local for area residents and perhaps a collector given its access to the Drought Mountains and amount of non-residential traffic generated by visitors. A County ROW permit is typically required for new driveways accessing County maintained roads and evaluated on the basis of driveway width and location.



4. Traffic Circulation: Complies

This Special Use Authorization factor stipulates:

1. The request is consistent with the preservation of the functions of surrounding streets as defined in the County Comprehensive Plan.
2. The request does not result in the use of any residential street for non-residential traffic.
3. Consideration of future circulation needs in the surrounding area has been considered through right-of-way dedication and off-site improvements if warranted.

With a limit of nine guest units, the proposed special use will not create traffic loads that require a functional classification assignment for Middlemarch Road. Additionally, given the existing 80' roadway dedication, the proposed special use will not utilize residential streets or require additional ROW or off-site improvements.

5. Adequate Services and Infrastructure: Complies

The site is located within the Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC) service area but the applicant indicates the use of solar to power the site. Water will be provided by private well or hauling water to the site. Trash receptacles will be on-site and a septic system is proposed. The nearest fire station is located in Tombstone about 11 miles to the south (7 San Diego Street) and St. David Fire District Station 28 is located about 22 miles north (515 Drought Vista Lane).

6. Significant Site Development Standards: Complies

Applicable development standards identified in Section 2.15 of the Zoning Regulations (*RU Districts*) apply to the proposed special use, including building setbacks, structure height, and site coverage as well as other applicable standards such as County Floodplain Regulations and adopted building codes.

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 mailed notices to property owners within 1,500' on December 9, 2025, receiving no responses as of application submittal.

8. Hazardous Materials: Not Applicable

The use or storage of hazardous materials are not proposed.

9. Off-Site Impacts: Complies

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:** Two spaces are required for each guest unit and off-site parking is not proposed. The property is located within Growth Area D which does not require interior driveway improvements.
- **Noise:** Staff recommends quiet hours between 10pm and 6am to preserve rural character and limit potential impacts on nearby residents due to noise. The application submittal indicates guest gatherings, possible events involving live music, and the use of all-terrain vehicles by guests. There are seven residentially developed properties within ½ mile of the subject property.
- **Lighting and Signs:** Outdoor lighting is regulated by Section 2.45 of the Zoning Regulations which governs overall brightness and requires shield fixtures for both residential and non-residential uses. New signs are subject to Section 2.54 and may require a permit depending on location and size.
- **Landscaping:** Landscaping is not required for properties in Growth Areas C and D. The property consists of 36 acres and has significant vegetation through most of the property along Middlemarch Road has relatively little vegetation. Staff encourages retaining native vegetation where possible.
- **Odors:** Although significant impacts due to odors is unlikely, Staff recommends a condition to limit potential nuisances caused by odors. This is a common recommended condition for guest lodging and recreational vehicle park sites in Rural zoning districts.
- **Traffic:** The site plan shows access to the site from Middlemarch Road, which is not hard surfaced but is maintained by the County. There are several residences using Middlemarch Road to access Highway 80 with most being within 2 miles of the highway. Significant through traffic is generated due to direct access to the Dragoon Mountains as noted in the applicant's submittal.

10. Water Conservation: Applicable

The project site is not located within an Active Management Area (AMA) and is roughly two miles north of the Sierra Vista Sub-Watershed boundary. County-wide water conservation requirements identified in Section 2.51.170 of the zoning regulations will apply to this project and be determined at permitting. The applicant proposes either private well or hauled water and intends to use efficient fixtures and recycled water, estimating annual water consumption of 60k gallons.



V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Staff mailed notices to property owners within 1,500', published legal notice, and posted the property January 20-21, 2026.

VI. WAIVERS

The applicant has not requested any waivers.

VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The applicant requests special use authorization to allow up to nine (9) guest lodging sites with a building providing gathering space and bathroom/shower facilities and ancillary sales of food, beverages, and merchandise. As submitted, the special use request complies or partially complies with all eight (8) applicable factors identified in the Zoning Regulations to evaluate special use authorization requests.

Factors in Favor of Approval

1. Complies with all eight (8) applicable factors.
2. No opposition from nearby property owners.

Factors Against Approval

None identified.

VIII. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the factors in favor of approval, staff recommends approval of Docket SU25-32 to allow guest lodging with the following conditions:

1. A County right-of-way permit is required.
2. Guest lodging is limited to nine (9) camp sites.
3. Quiet hours are observed from 10pm to 6am seven days per week.
4. Guest areas shall be kept in sanitary condition. Temporary refuse and animal waste receptacles shall be appropriately sized and designed to avoid creating an attractive nuisance for wildlife or pests.
5. Within 30 days of approval of the Special Use, the applicant shall provide the County a signed Acceptance of Conditions form and a Waiver of Claims form arising from ARS Section 12-1134. Prior to operation of the Special Use, the applicant shall apply for a building/use permit for the project within 12 months of approval. The building/use permit shall include a site plan in substantial conformance with the approved special use concept plan, the completed Special Use permit questionnaire and application, and appropriate fees. A permit must be issued within 18 months of approval or within time limits specified by the Planning and Zoning Commission.
6. It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain any additional permits, or meet any additional Conditions, that may apply to the proposed use pursuant to other federal, state, or local laws or regulations.
7. Any changes to the approved Special Use will be considered a Modification to this Special Use and may require re-hearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Sample Motion

I move to approve Docket SU25-32 with conditions recommended by staff, the factors in favor of approval constituting the findings of fact.