

# Signal Butte Rd. & Williams Field Rd.

Minor General Plan Amendment,  
Rezone, and Preliminary Plat Amendment

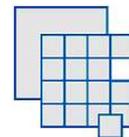
## Project Narrative

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*Submitted by:*

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*On behalf of:*

**Signal Butte 24, LLC**

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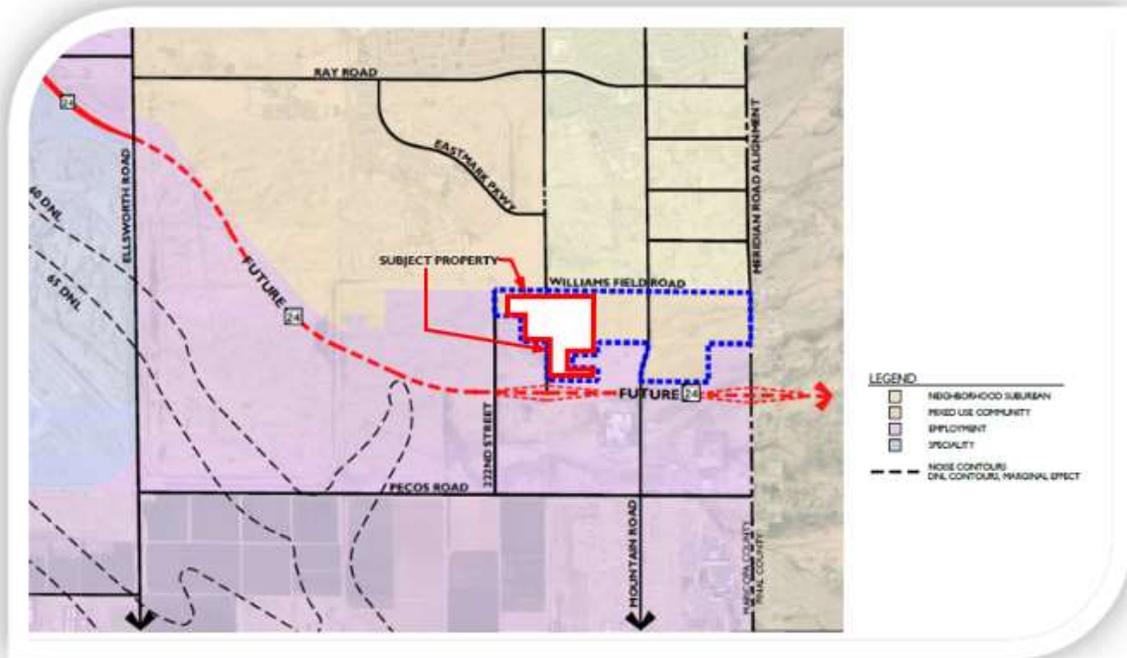
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## 1. Introduction

Pew & Lake, PLC, on behalf of Signal Butte 24, LLC (successor to Freedom Communities, LLC), is pleased to submit this narrative statement in support of a General Plan Minor Amendment, and Rezoning for the approximately 89 acres and Preliminary Plat Amendment for Destination Gateway. The Property is located at the southwest and southeast corners of Signal Butte Road and Williams Field Road in Mesa (the "Property").

*Figure 1 – Project Location*



Proposed is a Mixed Use Activity District that is located at a future major gateway into Mesa upon completion of the State Route 24 at Signal Butte Road. The land use plan preserves intact approximately 157 acres of the Destination at Gateway single-family community that is a part of the Property, but which abuts the Property's eastern boundary. The adjacent property, combined with this request, will provide for buffers and transitions designed to create a blend of compatible land uses.

The Property's existing General Plan Character Area and zoning were approved by the City Council on June 18, 2018 (Ordinance No. 5450 and Resolution 1171). The proposed rezoning will remove the 89 acre Property from the PAD for the single-family community and will convert and expand the commercial portion of the project to accommodate a Mixed Use Activity district to allow a mix of potential regional commercial, community commercial, employment, and residential uses.

All portions of the Property will comply with the City of Mesa’s Zoning Ordinance and Design Guidelines for the proposed land uses. These areas will be subject to the City’s review during the future Site Plan Review and Design Review processes for the respective parcels.

**Community Vision Guidelines for Adjacent Property** – The adjacent land to the east of the Property will continue under the existing single-family zoning (RS-7 PAD, RS-6 PAD, and RSL-4.5 PAD). The approved Community Vision Guidelines for those properties will only apply to those residentially zoned properties. New architectural, landscape, and site design character will be established for the Property under this application during Site Plan Review. All applicable design features will be addressed at that time, including, but not limited to entry monumentation and landscaping at primary intersections and entries, wall plan, buffers to the surrounding uses. Furthermore, buffers and vehicular and pedestrian connectivity between compatible uses internal to the Property will be incorporated into the master site plan during Site Plan Review.

**Preliminary Plat Amendment** – The subject application also is seeking to amend the Destination at Gateway approved in 2018 with the rezoning of the 89 acres, the balance of the Destination at Gateway Preliminary Plat needs to be amended to clean up the western portion of the balance of the residential plat. The Amended Preliminary Plat will only impact the residential lots east of the 110<sup>th</sup> Street alignment. The Property west of the 110<sup>th</sup> Street alignment (89-acre GC Property) will have the Preliminary Plat removed from the Property. The Amended Plat seeks to clean up the western edge of the Property. Most of the Platted Property east of 110<sup>th</sup> Street remains the same.

## 2. Subject Parcels

The Property includes the approximately 89 acres located at the southwest and southeast corners of Signal Butte Road and Williams Field Road (APNs 304-34-028, 304-34-031, 312-07-962, 304-34-021W, 304-34-021U, and part of 304-34-021N). The parcel numbers and their respective acreage are depicted in Table 1 below.

*Table 1 – Proposed Parcels and Acreage*

<b>Proposed Parcels</b>	<b>Gross Acres</b>	<b>Net Acres</b>
Parcel 1	9.42	8.92
Parcel 2	24.73	24.73
Parcel 10	16.10	16.10
Parcel 11	14.85	14.85
Parcel 12	4.47	4.47
Parcel 13	9.93	9.93
Parcel 14	4.98	4.98
Parcel 15	4.48	4.48
<b>Total GC CUP</b>	<b>88.96</b>	<b>88.46</b>

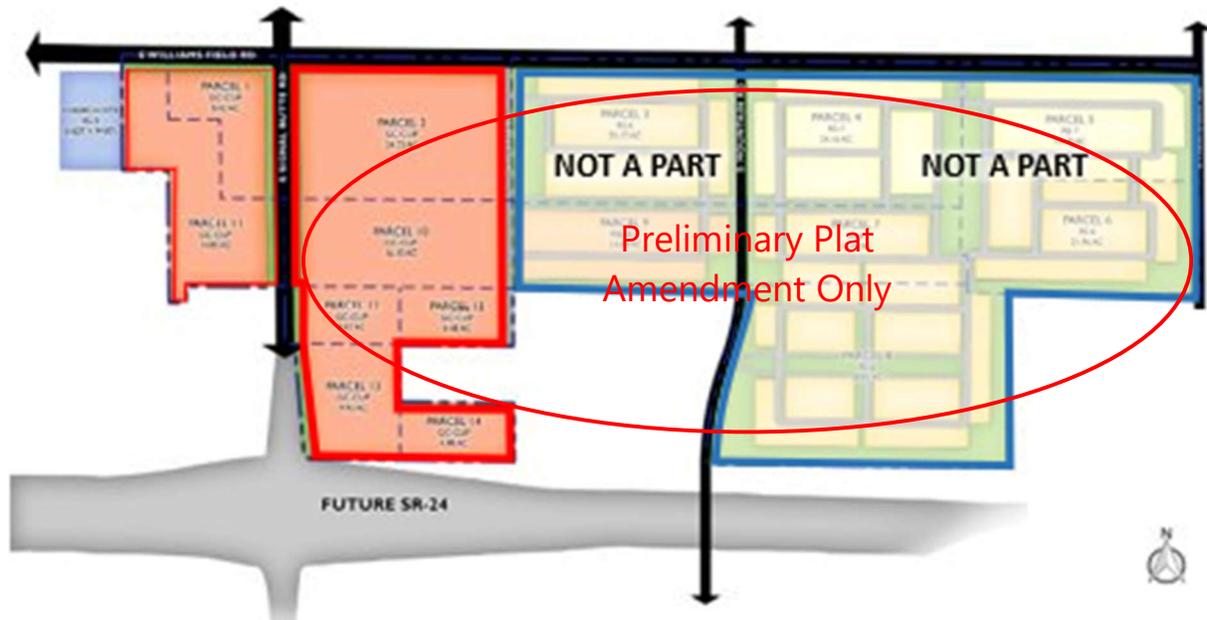
### 3. Development Requests

Requests for a General Plan Minor Amendment, Rezoning (Conventional), and Preliminary Plat are concurrently being made to the City of Mesa. The parcels where a rezoning is requested are shown in Table 2 and Figure 2 below:

*Table 2 – Proposed General Plan and Zoning Designations*

<b>Proposed Parcels</b>	<b>General Plan</b>	<b>Proposed Zoning</b>
Parcel 1	Mixed Use Activity	GC CUP
Parcel 2	Mixed Use Activity	GC CUP
Parcel 10	Mixed Use Activity	GC CUP
Parcel 11	Mixed Use Activity	GC CUP
Parcel 12	Mixed Use Activity	GC CUP
Parcel 13	Mixed Use Activity	GC CUP
Parcel 14	Mixed Use Activity	GC CUP
Parcel 15	Mixed Use Activity	GC CUP
Total	Mixed Use Activity	GC CUP

Figure 2 – Proposed Development and Adjacent Property

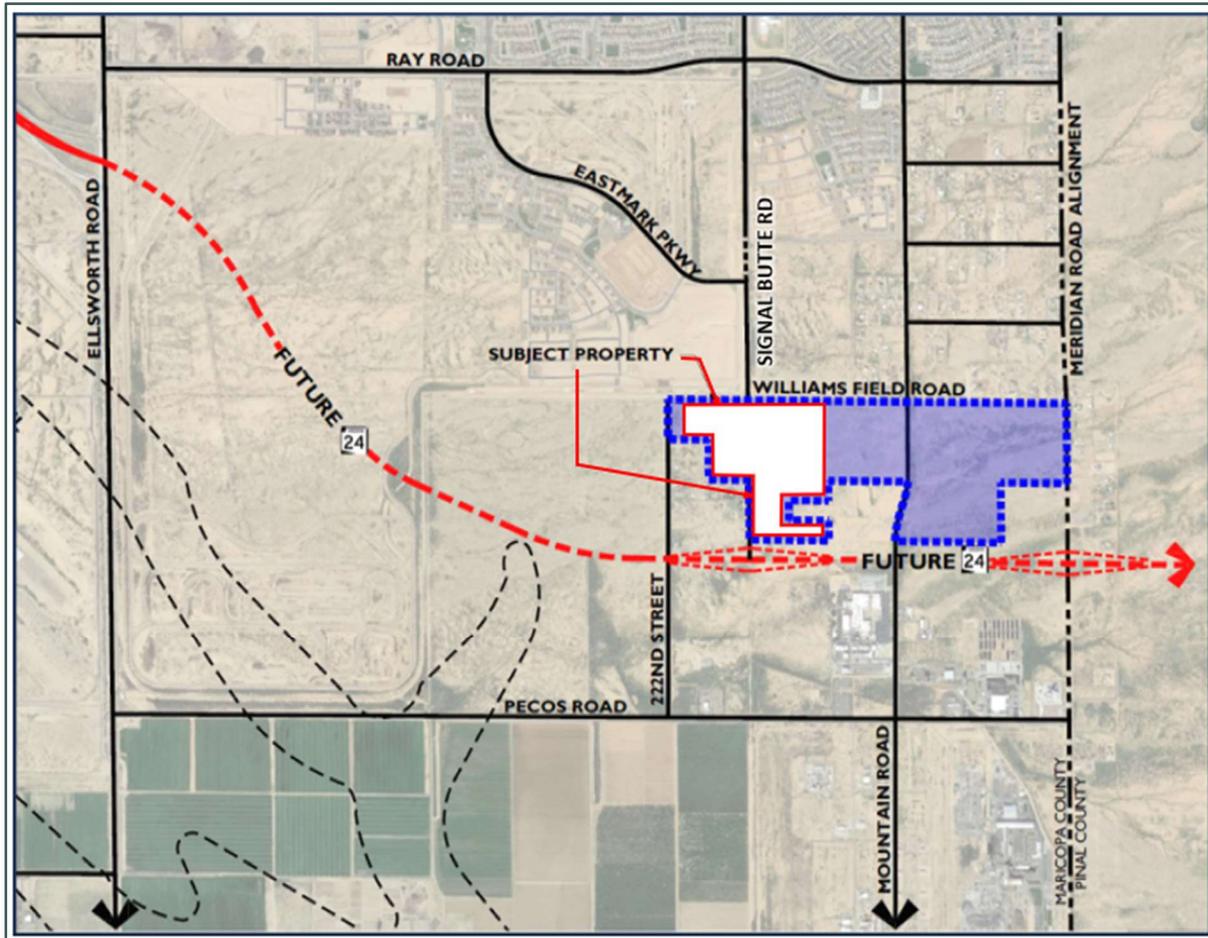


It is understood that additional land use processes will be also be necessary prior to development of the Property. For example, any commercial or multi-family residential development will require Site Plan Review and Design Review, subject to the applicable requirements in the Mesa Zoning Ordinance and new Quality Design Guidelines. Also, Subdivision Technical Review will be required after approval of the Preliminary Plat.

#### 4. Existing and Surrounding Conditions

The subject parcels are currently vacant. The overall Property is surrounded by either gradually developing residential uses directly to the north near the western portion of the project area (e.g. Eastmark and Cadance) and the Destination at Gateway single-family community abutting the Property's eastern boundary. The Property is also bound to the west by unincorporated property once used as the GM proving grounds. Directly to the south is the future Williams Gateway Freeway ("SR 24").

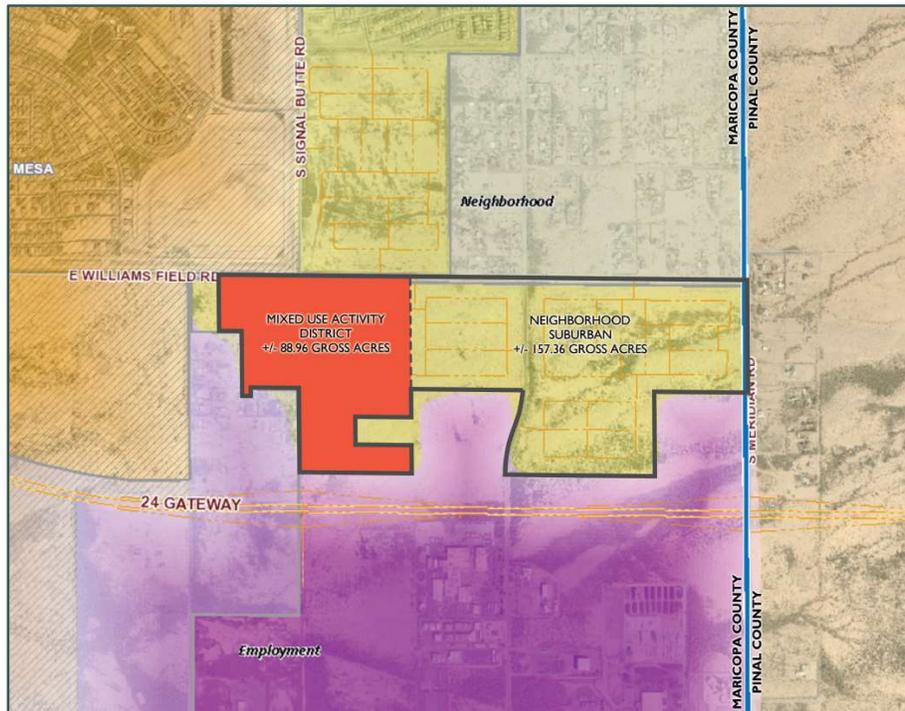
Figure 3 – Site Aerial



## 5. General Plan Character Area and Zoning

The existing General Plan Character Area for the Property is Neighborhood Suburban. Proposed is to amend the General Plan designation for the Property to Mixed Use Activity District. The proposed land uses are consistent with this designation (see Figure 5 below).

Figure 4 – Proposed General Plan Character Area Map



## 6. Compliance with the General Plan Character Area and Zoning

### a. Justification for Proposed General Plan Land Uses and Zoning

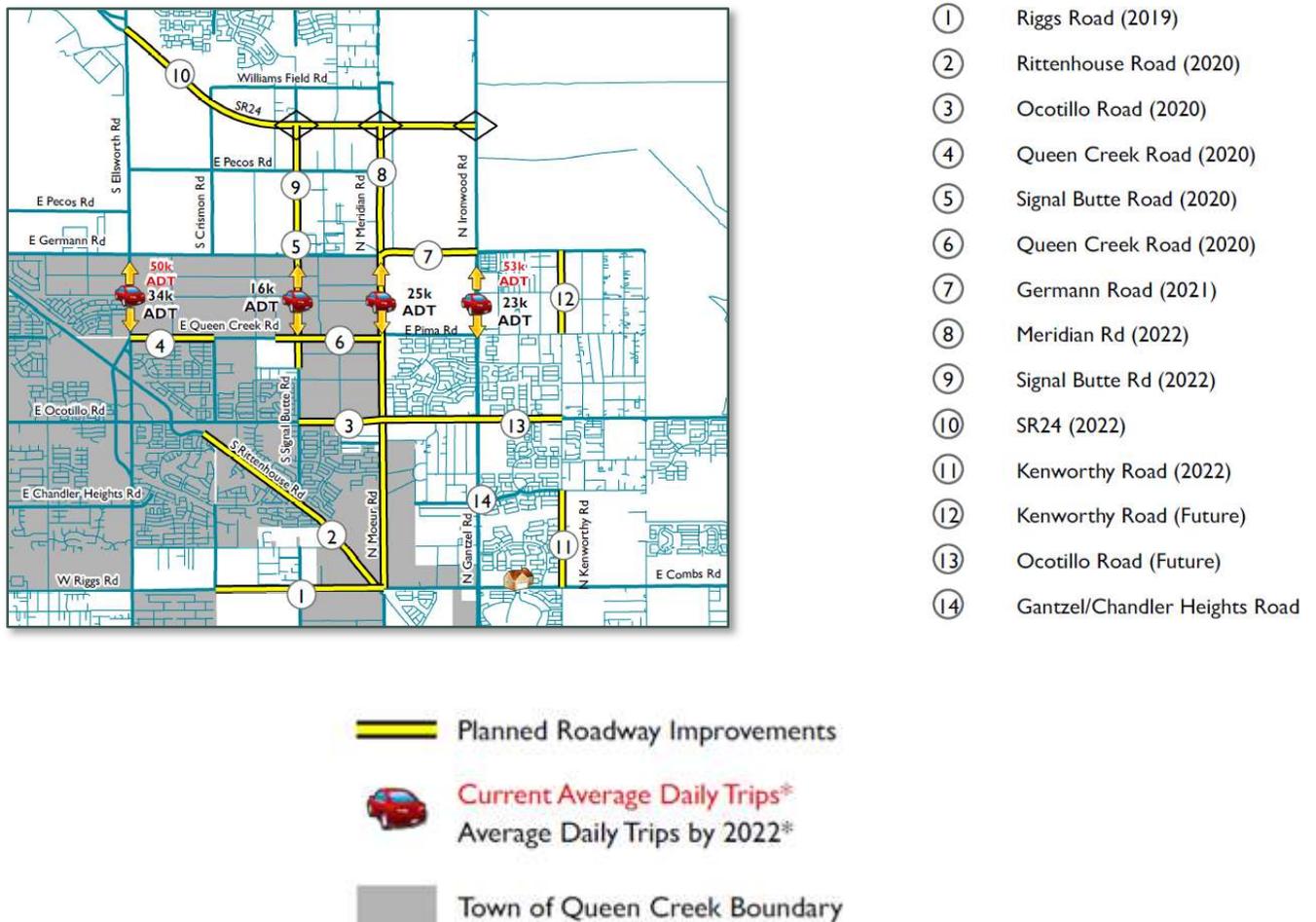
The proposed request for the Property grew out of significant events that have transpired in the past year relating to traffic improvements and major planning policy changes by Queen Creek, in conjunction with Mesa, Maricopa County, the State Land Department, and Apache Junction.

When the previous PAD zoning was originally submitted for approval, the information available on transportation planning, future traffic patterns, and development in the vicinity was limited, conceptual in nature, and relatively uncertain. Also, at the time the prior PAD was being approved, Signal Butte did not connect as far south as Santan Valley, and no plans had been published to that effect. Only Ellsworth Road and Ironwood Road had direct access to those communities to the south.

Since the original Planning and Zoning Board and City Council approvals in March to June 2018, significant policy changes affecting the Property have occurred. Specifically, Queen Creek has committed funding for upcoming roadway capital improvements designed to alleviate traffic conditions on its arterial streets. With the intent to provide alternative routes for traffic from Santan Valley heading toward Mesa's freeways, improvements are planned between now and 2022 to improve and expand 4 arterial road connections to

the SR 24 future alignment, including Ellsworth Road, Signal Butte Road, Meridian Road, and Ironwood Road. These improvement plans were presented to the community in Queen Creek in January 2019 at the “Queen Creek Development Economic Forum. A July 15, 2019 article noted that Queen Creek partnered with Mesa to extend Signal Butte Road and Meridian Road to from Combs Road to the SR 24 (July 15, 2019, “Signal Butte Extension to Offer Regional Connectivity,” *Queen Creek Independent*, queencreekindependent.com). Figure 6 below summarizes these capital improvements, which is based on traffic studies in Queen Creek.

**Figure 5 – Planned Road Improvements to Future SR 24**



Another key change was also announced in July 2019 – Queen Creek approved the annexation of the State Trust Land located east of Meridian Road and south of the SR 24, which is nearby the Property. Similarly, Apache Junction has been approved by the State Land Department to annex the area north of the SR and east of Meridian Road next to the abutting Destination PAD area (Dyer, Richard “Annexation of State Trust Land Bridging Gap Between Queen Creek, Apache Junction,” *Queen Creek Independent*, September 2,

2019, queencreekindependent.com). This news is evidence that the areas surrounding the Property are planned for growth sooner than later.

When the property owner learned about these recent updates and plans to accelerate funding of Signal Butte Roads connection to the SR 24 by 2022, it became apparent that Signal Butte Road will end up becoming a key point in the region's transformation. Inasmuch as Signal Butte will become principal gateway into Mesa with more traffic than was previously known, the effects of increased visibility on Signal Butte Road and the Property resulted in what ultimately became the requests proposed in this application.

Accordingly, proposed on the Property is a mix of regional commercial and other uses on Signal Butte Road between Williams Field Road and the SR-24, with landscaping, the 110<sup>th</sup> Street improvements, and possible multi-residence uses to buffer it from the surrounding properties to the east. Also, the properties that will become the northeast corner of Signal Butte Road and the SR-24 need additional acreage to establish a sustainable development that will address the impacts of the freeway expansion and additional visitors to the area. As submitted, the proposed requests respond to the dramatic events anticipated at Signal Butte Road.

#### **b. Compliance with the General Plan Vision, Objectives, and Guidelines**

The Property is compatible with the proposed Mixed Use Activity District and the abutting Neo-Traditional Neighborhoods Character Area Sub-type of Mesa's General Plan. In addition, the Property is consistent with the General Plan vision, goals, and policies, as follows:

- Mixed Use Activity Districts are typically over 25 acres and have a significant commercial component to the mixed use program that is designed to attract customers from a large radius. Regional-scale districts are typically larger than 60 acres and will include as one of the primary zoning districts the GC category.

**The Property in question is approximately 89 acres, and GC is the proposed underlying zoning. The predominant uses anticipated are regional commercial uses, particularly high quality auto dealerships, and other commercial uses, such as retail/commercial/office opportunities to service the surrounding neighborhoods and region.**

- The mixed use district may include other uses such as residential.

**To establish the zoning framework for the site design and opportunities for an additional mix of uses, a CUP is included with this request. This will enable the Property to include the right fit of residential uses at the appropriate intensity to bring various benefits to the community. Some of these benefits include buffering to surrounding uses, promoting economic development, and providing a unique component of the mixed-use activity center concept that is compatible with the adjacent neo-traditional community.**

- Provide for a “strong and viable center of commercial activity that attract people” from the larger region.

**GC zoning is requested to provide for proposed regional commercial uses, a major auto dealership, and other types of compatible uses. The primary uses proposed on the Property are designed to serve a population in the greater region, in addition to the immediate neighborhoods. Under the proposed zoning and uses contemplated on the Property, it will draw from not only Mesa residents, but potential consumers from Gilbert, Queen Creek, and likely Santan Valley residents that are anticipated to use the SR 24 at this future gateway into Mesa.**

**Any proposed development on the GC CUP properties will comply with the procedures for Site Plan Review and Design Review, which standards have been prepared with the intent to provide for orderly and thoughtfully programmed development concepts that will bring about the desired commercial activity in GC zoning. These processes will provide public processes that will enable the City and stakeholders to review for compliance with all applicable development standards, guidelines, and policies.**

- Typically located along an arterial at a freeway interchange.

**The proposed development is located at the intersection of the alignment of the SR-24 freeway and two arterial roads – Signal Butte Road and Williams Field Road, which makes it an ideal location for a regional destination for the broader area.**

The proposed designation is compatible with the adjacent Neo-Traditional Neighborhood forms and guidelines, as follows:

- *Small, neighborhood scale office, retail, restaurants, services are included in appropriate locations, such as along arterials or at the intersection of arterials and collector streets.*
  - The proposed commercial parcels are appropriately sized to develop as a variety of both regional and buffering neighborhood scale land uses that provide services and benefits to the surrounding community. The Property is strategically located (consistent with the General Plan’s goals) at the intersection of two arterials and at an arterial-freeway location.
  - The proximity of residential uses to the commercial locations, when combined with the existing multi-modal circulation system along the arterial streets, will provide ease of access to a variety of commercial uses that will service the surrounding community. This will promote active lifestyles given the mix of uses in close proximity to one another, which will reduce the neighborhood’s dependency on the automobile and take vehicles off the street for recreational purposes, employment, and day-to-day needs.
  - The proposed commercial uses will be consistent with the compatible variety of residence uses on the surrounding properties, which will be designed with buffers and pedestrian connectivity to the commercial use.
- *Building Community and Fostering Social Interaction: Design new developments with anchors or focal points, such as schools, parks or shopping areas that are designed and located to facilitate meetings and interactions.*

The proposed zoning will provide development opportunities for shopping areas and a commercial anchor at an appropriate focal point in the region. The proposed land uses will facilitate gathering and interaction among members of the community and provide needed services for surrounding neighborhoods.

*Promote a Safe, Clean and Healthy Living Environment by:*

- *Encouraging the creation and maintenance of neighborhood associations (formal or informal);*
- *Maintaining streets, sidewalks, street lighting, etc. to ensure roadways, paths and trails are safe; improve lighting where needed;*
- *Locating and designing public spaces so that there is a high degree of natural surveillance;*

- The provision of outdoor amenities for all ages and recreational facilities; and
- Maintaining attractive, well-kept public spaces in neighborhoods.

Any future residential and nonresidential uses will be professionally managed by a single-owner entity or by the respective businesses and property management. Landscaping, open space amenities, architecture, lighting, and driveway improvements will meet City standards, which will allow for the efficient provision of infrastructure and services.

## 7. Existing and Proposed Zoning

The Property is currently zoned RM-2, RSL 2.5, RSL 4.5, RS-6, RS-7, RS-9 and LC, all with a PAD Overlay for the Destination at Gateway PAD. The General Plan Minor Amendment, Rezoning, and Preliminary Plat requests will encompass a further enhancement and refinement of the original zoning approved by the Mesa City Council for the Property on Signal Butte Road between the SR 24 interchange and Williams Field Road. For this area, the Property will be removed from the single-family, Destination at Gateway PAD and will carry forward the first step in implementing the development of the Property with GC CUP zoning. Figures 7 and 8 below depict the existing and proposed zoning.

Figure 6 – Existing Zoning

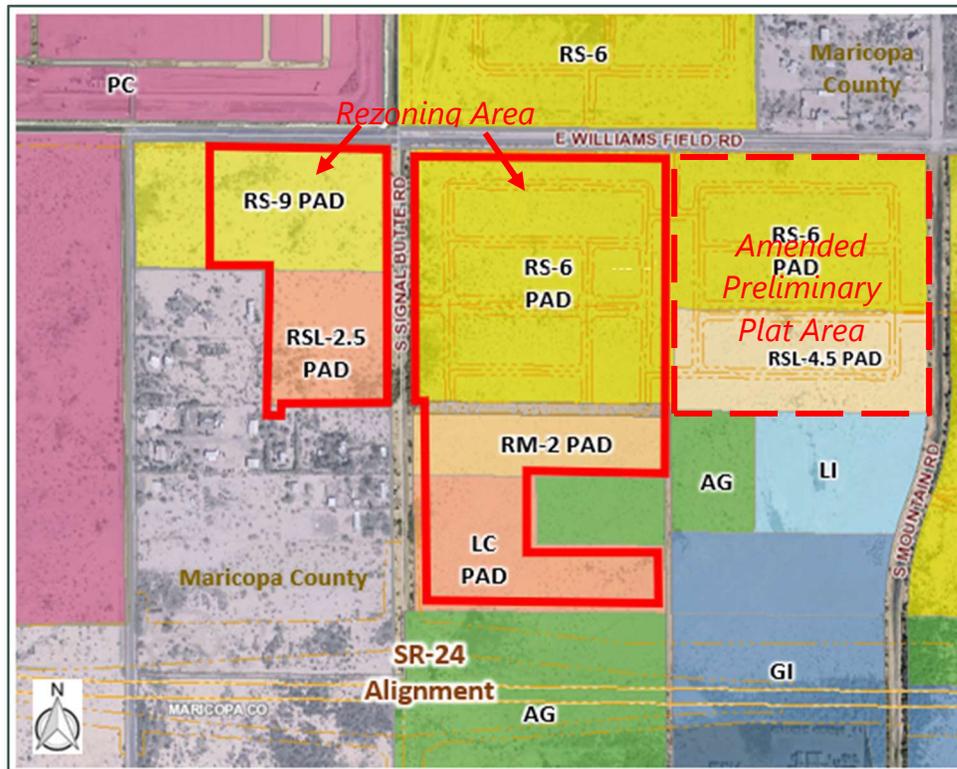
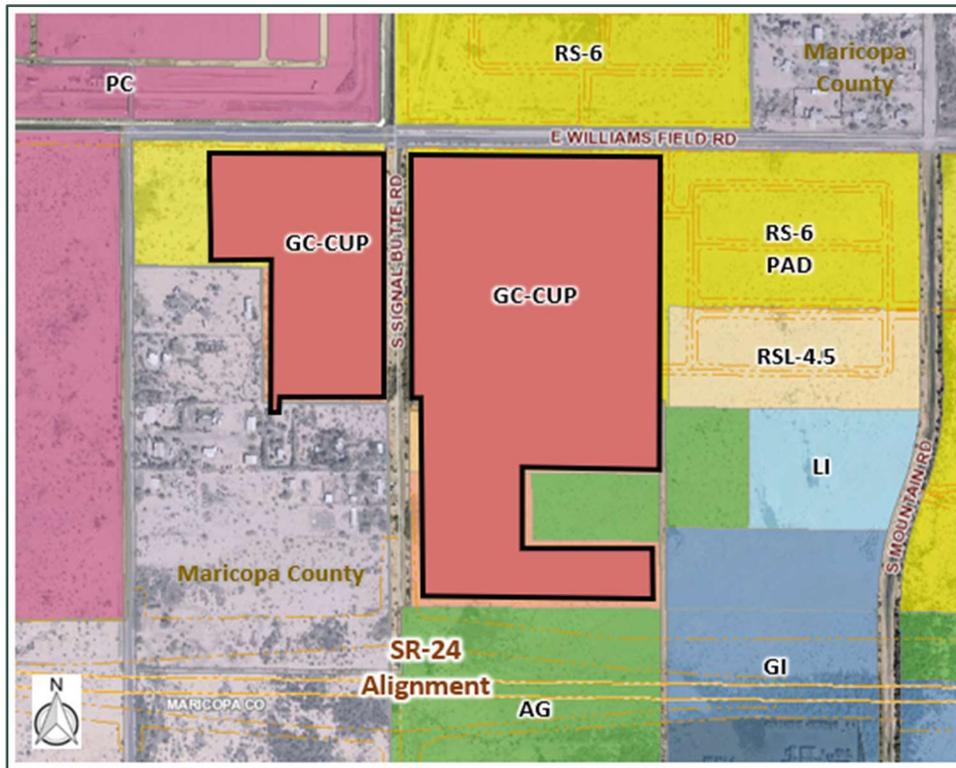


Figure 7 – Proposed Zoning



## 8. Compliance with CUP Criteria

Table 11-6-2 and Section 11-31-31 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance outline criteria in which a Council Use Permit (CUP) is required to allow multi-residential uses in commercial zoning where 100% of the ground floor of each building will be for residential uses. The intent is to provide for City review to preserve the integrity of the commercial uses and any residential use's compatibility in a mixed-use development. The proposed development will comply with the criteria as follows:

- a. Compliance with the General Plan, related policies, and surrounding uses.

**Previous sections of this narrative indicate how the proposed development will implement the goals and policies of the General Plan. The proposed development will provide regional commercial uses that will attract residents and promote economic sustainability and delivery of community services to Mesa residents. Proposed a blend of land uses designed to benefit the surrounding neighborhoods. The proposed residential uses will provide a compatible horizontal mixed use element with transitions, buffers, and connections to compatible uses within the mixed-use context.**

- b. A plan of operation is required to ensure compliance with city regulations.

**The ownership of the proposed commercially zoned Property will provide for property maintenance, and future review processes will comply with this standard. Project operations will comply with all applicable zoning, building, and fire safety regulations and FAA requirements. Typically, either the single business owner or a professional management entity will provide for ongoing operations and maintenance of commercial and multi-family properties. Details on compliance with this requirement will be addressed in the Site Plan Review process.**

- c. A “good neighbor” policy promotes “ongoing compatibility with adjacent uses” and “assure” viability of the commercial uses.

**Generally, Good neighbor policies are aimed at providing a program, or medium, for coordination and resolution of specified negative effects a project may have on surrounding uses. In this case, the GC zoned properties are compatible with the surrounding uses and regional gateway into Mesa at the proposed SR 24 alignment. Given the unity in ownership and commitment to professional management of the Property, the private requirements will address the relationship between the residential and nonresidential uses on the Property.**

**Furthermore, the project will comply with any Airport Overlay requirements and will provide public notice of any potential impacts on the community. The applicant received a letter dated March 16, 2020 from Anthony Bianchi, Planning Manager of the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Authority. It included recommendations that involve providing notice of the airport activity in the vicinity of the project and required review consistent with FAA regulations. The applicant will comply with the recommendations to help ensure compatibility with the nearby airport.**

- d. Evidence and documentation demonstrating substantial conformance with all current City development standards, including, but not limited to, landscaping, parking, screen walls, signage, and design guidelines.

**As noted in this narrative, the proposed development will comply with the Zoning Ordinance, Design Standards, and engineering standards and details.**

## 9. Phasing

The development phasing of the parcels in this application will be based upon unknown future real estate market conditions and the timing of City of Mesa approvals. Like the previous approval, the Property will continue to be developed in a several phases, subject to City of Mesa approval. Each "Parcel" delineated on the Site Plan is conceptually a phase, the order of which has not yet been determined.

## 10. Public Utilities and Infrastructure

The proposed development will comply with all applicable City of Mesa regulations and standards regarding right-of-way and infrastructure improvements. Utilities in the Property's vicinity include City of Mesa for water, sewer, police, fire, and waste disposal. The Property is in the Southwest Gas service area for natural gas, and in the SRP electric supply service area, and based on a preliminary analysis, there is adequate capacity to service the proposed development. Water and sewer connections will tie into the lines planned for the approved Property and will developed with each phase.

Proposed drainage for the project will comply with the City of Mesa standards for onsite and offsite drainage and retention and will be designed in conjunction with each phase. The Property falls within FEMA Zone "X" on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). The submitted drainage report for Parcel 15 indicates that the proposed development will retain runoff generated onsite from a 100-year, 2-hour storm event, as well as from any proposed offsite improvements. The volume of retention will accommodate any runoff from onsite stormwater.

## 11. Conclusion

The proposed request is a promising opportunity for the City and its neighborhoods. This application addresses significant steps in the progress of development in the region by proposing regional commercial uses and other compatible uses along Signal Butte Road between the SR 24 alignment and William's Field Road. The proposed development

opportunities on the Property fulfill the purposes of the General Plan by providing benefits to the City of Mesa through economic development and by providing jobs, services, and diverse housing with amenities that will enrich the lifestyle of residents in the community.