



City Council Staff Report

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| Date | May 18, 2026 | |
| Case No. | ZON25-00635 | |
| Project Name | Ascension | |
| Request | Rezone 40± acres from Agricultural (AG) to Single Residence-15 with a Planning Area Development Overlay (RS-15-PAD) for a 47-lot single residence development | |
| Project Location | Located at the northeast corner of East Brown Road and North 32 nd Street | |
| Parcel No(s) | 141-13-003B | |
| Project Area | 40± acres | |
| Council District | District 1 | |
| Existing Zoning | Agricultural | |
| General Plan Designation | Rural Residential | |
| Applicant | Baylee Lopez, Wood, Patel & Associates | |
| Owner | Brown Road Citrus, LLC | |
| Staff Planner | Emily Johnson, Planner II | |
| Proposition 207 Waiver Signed | Yes | |

Recommendation

Staff find that the Proposed Project is consistent with the Mesa 2050 General Plan and the criteria in Chapter 22 regarding Planned Area Development (PAD) overlays.

Staff recommends approval with conditions.

Planning & Zoning Board Recommendation:

On April 22, 2026, the Planning and Zoning Board **voted (6-0)** to recommend that City Council approve the Proposed Project with the following modifications:

- The Planning and Zoning Board voted to modify the PAD table to restrict primary structures on lots 40 through 47 to a single story in height. Staff has added this as a condition of approval to their recommendation.
- At the applicant's request, the Planning and Zoning Board voted to recommend removal of the Staff recommended Condition of Approval No.1. That condition would require removal of one lot to meet the maximum density of 1.24 dwelling units per acre - per the Citrus Subarea Plan - resulting in a 46-lot single residence development. The Planning and Zoning Board recommended the project with a maximum density of 1.27 dwelling units per acre - resulting in a 47-lot single residence development.

Project Overview

Request:

The applicant is requesting approval for a rezoning for 40± acres from AG to RS-15 with a PAD overlay, for a 47-unit single-family residential development (Proposed Project).

Concurrent Applications:

- **Preliminary Plat:** A separate Preliminary Plat application, to be approved by the Planning Director, is required for the Proposed Project (SUB26-00140).

Site Context

General Plan:

- The Placetype for the Proposed Project is Rural Residential with a Sustain Growth Strategy. Rural Residential areas with a Sustain Growth Strategy should generally remain in their current condition. Improvements and minor changes that are consistent with the area's current form and character may occur over time.
- Single-family residential is a principal land use in the Rural Residential Placetype which is characterized by large lot, single-family residential developments, and agricultural uses.
- The Proposed Project includes a request for a rezone to the RS-15 District. This is not listed as zoning district consistent with the Rural Residential Placetype. Per the Consistency Review process identified in the General Plan, a rezoning may be found consistent with the

General Plan despite using a zoning district that deviates from those listed for the site's Placetype provided only minor deviations from the Placetype are proposed. Minor deviations are those that further the goals of the General Plan and specifically includes a zoning district that is in the same base zoning district groups as defined in the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO), as those listed for the Placetype as a minor deviation.

- The Zoning Districts listed in the Rural Residential Placetype include RS-90, 43, and 35. RS-15 is within the same base zoning district group.
- The Proposed Project is consistent with the Rural Residential Placetype and furthers the implementation of, and is not contrary to, the Vision, Guiding Principles, Strategies, and applicable elements of the Mesa 2050 General Plan.
- The Proposed Project is consistent with the Placetype's Land Use and Density/Intensity as it includes single-family, detached homes on large lots with a density below 1.3 dwelling units per acre (du/ac).
- The Proposed Project furthers the implementation of the General Plan and is within the same base zoning district group as those listed in the General Plan, it is consistent with the Rural Residential Placetype and qualifies as a minor deviation.
- The Proposed Project is consistent with the Sustain Growth Strategy as it provides targeted infill consistent with the area's current form and character with citrus trees and other large-leaf varieties, and elevated site walls and entry features.
- The Urban Design Characteristics of the General Plan are met by including the amenity and pocket park spaces, which are oriented to terminate vistas and provide a focal point for the neighborhood, and by the pedestrian paths that connect the development to the open space within the Proposed Project and with the broader neighborhood.
- Supporting General Plan Strategies:
 - N5. Improve street and open space network connectivity within neighborhoods and to local amenities.
 - LU1. Promote a balance of land uses to enhance the quality of life for current and future generations.
 - LU2. Create opportunities for placemaking in neighborhoods that reinforce their unique character and sense of place.
 - LU3. Encourage infill and redevelopment to meet the community's strategic needs.
 - LU4. Create design and development standards that improve the City's visual quality, urban form, and function to enhance the quality of life for current and future generations.

Per the General Plan, Sub-Area Plans, including the Citrus Sub-Area Plan, are highly actionable and outline goals and initiatives to attain a specific outcome. To be consistent with the Rural Residential Placetype, staff also reviews the Proposed Project against the goals of the Citrus Sub-Area Plan. See the "Sub-Area Plan" section below.

Sub-Area Plan:

- The Proposed Project is within the Citrus Sub-Area Plan.
 - The Proposed Project's density is 1.27 du/ac density, which is consistent with the General Plan; however, the Citrus Sub-Area Plan provides for a character area that is predominately RS-35 to preserve low-density, suburban-estate type residential uses.
 - Staff is recommending that the Proposed Project reduce the number of lots from 47 to 46, meeting the maximum density permitted in the RS-35 zoning district per the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO), which is 1.24 du/ac.
 - The Planning and Zoning Board voted to recommend that City Council approve the Proposed Project as submitted by the applicant, although not consistent with the Citrus Sub-Area Plan, in part because much of the sub-area plan has been built out (remove Condition No. 1 in Staff's recommendation).
- Although not assigning the RS-35 zoning district or those development standards, this lower density will support the characteristics envisioned by the Citrus-Sub Area Plan to allow for suburban, low-density housing, with the large-lot, low-density residential characteristics. By going from 47 lots to 46 lots, the density would decrease to 1.23 du/net acre aligning with the maximum density of the RS-35 district. Please see Condition No. 1 below requiring the Proposed Project to meet the maximum density in the RS-35 District.
- The landscape design includes citrus and large-leaf shade trees along the development perimeter, internally along street frontages and open space, and will include landscaping on each individual lot per the Citrus Sub-Area Plan, meeting the intended landscaping for this area.

Zoning:

- The project site is zoned Agricultural (AG).
- The applicant is requesting to rezone the site to Single Residence-15 with a Planned Area Development Overlay (RS-15-PAD).
- Single Residence is a permitted use within the RS-15 District.
- The project site is within the Airfield Overflight Area 3 (AOA 3) Overlay; single residential is a permitted use within the AOA3.

Surrounding Zoning & Use Activity:

The Proposed Project is compatible with surrounding land uses, which include single family residences and a place of worship.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Northwest RS-15-PAD Single Residential | North RS-35-PAD Single Residential | Northeast RS-35-PAD Single Residential |
| West (Across 32 nd St.) RS-15-PAD Single Residential | Project Site AG Vacant | East (Across Miramar) RS-35-PAD & AG Single Residential & Place of Worship |
| Southwest (Across Brown Rd.) RS-15 Single Residential | South (Across Brown Rd.) RS-15 Single Residential | Southeast (Across Brown Rd.) RS-9 Single Residential |

Site History:

- August 25, 1979: City Council annexed 2,225± acres, including the project site, into the City of Mesa (Ordinance No. 1277).
- February 18, 1980: City Council approved a rezoning for 821± acres, including the project site, from Maricopa County Rural-43, R1-35, and R1-35-SU to City of Mesa AG, SR (equivalent to current RS-43), and R1-35 (Case No. Z80-018; Ordinance No. 1313).

Project/Request Details

Site Plan:

- Access:
 - The site is gated with one full access point on Brown Road and a secondary egress-only exit gate for residents on 32nd Street, which also allows for emergency vehicle access.
 - The internal streets are private and include an attached sidewalk on one side and on-street parking on the opposite.
 - A 6-foot concrete trail runs through the main amenity and pocket park creating a north-south connection through the open space.
 - Pedestrian crossings are provided where the sidewalks and trails intersect internal streets and pedestrian gates connect to the public rights-of-way.

- **Parking:**
 - Per Table 11-32-3.A of the MZO, single residences are required to provide a minimum of two covered parking spaces per dwelling unit.
 - The Proposed Project meets this requirement. Additionally, 124 on-street parking spaces have been identified.

- **Landscaping:**
 - Per Section 4-2 of The Citrus Sub-Area Plan, developments should include two rows of citrus trees along all arterial street frontages and one row along all collector and local streets.
 - The applicant is providing two rows of Red Push Pistache, a large-leaf variety, and two rows of Navel Orange trees along Brown Rd.
 - At least one row of the same trees is provided along 32nd Street and Miramar with additional landscaping on the inside of the property walls.
 - A variety of trees line the entry into the development, tracts, retention areas, the main amenity space and pocket park. Per the Citrus Sub-Area Plan, lots in all new developments should have one row of citrus trees located along the side and rear property lines and a minimum of four citrus trees in the front of the lot.
 - This landscaping will be required to be shown on each lot during the building permit process.

- **Open Space:**
 - The open space within the development includes landscaped retention areas along the perimeter and at the entrance of the project site establishing a “green edge”.
 - The Proposed Project also includes an approximately 1.42-acre community amenity area with passive and active features such as a shade structure, open turf, play structures, swing benches, fireplace, and plaza event space.
 - The approximately 0.61-acre pocket park provides an additional plaza space, raised planters, and swing benches.

Planned Area Development Overlay:

Per Section 11-22 of the MZO, the purpose of a PAD overlay is to permit flexibility in the application of zoning standards and requirements where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development provides equivalent or superior standards in a creative way to meet the intent of the underlying zoning district and General Plan.

| Development Standards | MZO Required | PAD Proposed |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Maximum Building Coverage</u> - MZO Table 11-5-3.A.1 | 40% | 50% |

| Development Standards | MZO Required | PAD Proposed |
|--|--|--|
| <u>Maximum Height – MZO Table 11-5-3.A.1</u> | 30 feet | Restrict lots 40-47 to be single story for the primary unit. |
| <u>Fences and Freestanding Walls – Section 11-30-4(A)(1)(b) –</u> | Side and rear yards, no fence or freestanding wall within or along the exterior boundary of the required side or rear yards shall exceed a height of 6 feet. | Side and rear yards, no fence or freestanding wall within or along the exterior boundary of the required side or rear yards shall exceed a height of 7 feet. |
| <u>Fences and Freestanding Walls – Section 11-30-4(E)</u> | The maximum length of continuous, unbroken and uninterrupted fence or wall place adjacent to right-of-way or private streets functioning as public roads shall be forty feet. Articulation shall be provided through the use of columns, landscaping pockets and/or a change to different materials. | The maximum length of continuous, unbroken and uninterrupted fence or wall place adjacent to right-of-way or private streets functioning as public roads shall be forty feet. Articulation shall be provided through a combination of variation in wall type, wall height, and wall projections, including trellises. |
| <u>Detached Accessory Buildings or Structures – Section 11-30-17(B)(2)(e)(ii) – Building Setback</u> | Detached buildings or structures over 15 feet in height at the peak of the roof shall not be located within any rear, side, or street side yard, and shall adhere to the setback requirements of the underlying zoning district. Rear Setback – 30 feet | For lots not adjacent to Brown Road, detached buildings or structures over 15 feet in height at the peak of the roof shall maintain a 15-foot rear setback. For lots adjacent to Brown Road, detached buildings or structures over 15 feet in height at the peak of the roof shall maintain a 30-foot rear setback. |

| Development Standards | MZO Required | PAD Proposed |
|---|--|---|
| <u>Minimum Dimension for Residential Enclosed Garages</u> – Section 11-32-4(F)(2) - Depth | A double-car garage shall be at least 20 feet wide and 22 feet long. | A double-car garage shall be at least 20 feet wide and 21 feet long. |

The Proposed Project offers creative, high-quality development for both residents and the surrounding area, providing:

- Landscaping in an amount greater than what is specified in the Citrus Sub-Area Plan: The Brown Rd frontage will have two rows of large leaf trees with two additional staggered rows of citrus trees where only two rows of trees would be required. Additionally, the landscaped retention yards and tracts along 32nd Street and Miramar give the look of additional rows of trees beyond the one required row.
- A pedestrian trail that connects from the entry of the development to the 1.42-acre amenity space and 0.61-acre pocket park with enhanced stamped asphalt cross walks to increase safety and pedestrian focus.
- An enhanced entry monument with a water feature contributing to the overall identity of the community, including the architectural character and landscape theme surrounded by enhanced landscaping.
- Enhanced community walls with articulation and varying wall types, wall heights, projections, and trellises: By using trellises every 40 feet along Brown Road and by providing a combination of different wall materials and columns, the perimeter community walls demonstrate high quality and creativity.
- The proposed development also exceeds the following development standards of the RS-15 zoning district:
 - Minimum lot area
 - Minimum lot width
 - Minimum lot depth
 - Minimum lot depth abutting an arterial street
 - Minimum interior side yard
 - Minimum street side yard

Impact Analyses

School Impact:

The Mesa Public School District reviewed the project and found that the development will not negatively impact school capacity. The estimated demand on local schools shown below is within capacity:

- Elementary: 12 students (Bush)
- Middle School: 6 students (Stapley)
- High School: 8 students (Mountain View)

Citizen Participation

The applicant conducted a Citizen Participation process, notifying surrounding property owners, HOAs, and registered neighbors.

Neighborhood Meeting:

Per the applicants, an initial meeting was held with the Legacy Mesa Homeowners Association on May 14, 2025. Staff did not attend this meeting, but the applicants will be available to answer any questions.

- A neighborhood meeting was held on October 16, 2025, where six attendees raised questions/concerns about the following:
 - Access to the irrigation ditch along the north property line
 - Timeline for home availability
 - Possibility of relocating the egress to Miramar instead of 32nd Street.
 - Home square footage
- The applicant provided the following response to the attendee questions:
 - A view fence and maintenance gates will be included for access to the irrigation ditch.
 - Models will potentially be open in spring of 2027 and build out in 2030 or as market demands.
 - Can look into relocating the exit to Miramar instead of 32nd Street.
 - Homes will be between 3,500 and 5,100 square feet.

Required Notification:

- Property owners within 1,000 feet, HOAs within ½ mile, and registered neighborhoods within one mile of the subject site were notified of the public hearing.

Public Comments:

- At the April 22, 2026, Planning and Zoning Board meeting four residences spoke in opposition to the project, and raised questions/concerns about the following:
 - Concerns about locating the development exit on 32nd Street instead of Miramar due to potential traffic, safety, and neighborhood impacts, including its limited capacity as a non-through street, potential cut-through traffic into residential neighborhoods, and overall roadway functionality. Request for a traffic study to evaluate these impacts.
 - Concerns about preserving roadway safety and operations on Brown Road, including maintaining existing right-hand deceleration and turn lanes for nearby entrances.
 - Request to designate 32nd Street as a no-parking zone to ensure safe traffic flow and adequate roadway width.
 - General support for the development, particularly the single-story design, with emphasis on minimizing impacts to existing residents.
- The applicant provided the following response to the attendee questions:
 - City traffic and engineering staff did not require a right-turn lane on Brown Road.
 - The exit-only access on 32nd Street (rather than Miramar) is being maintained based on the existing street network and required half-street improvements.
 - Any decisions regarding on-street parking controls on 32nd Street would be made by the City, not the applicant.

Conditions of Approval

Staff recommends **approval** of the Rezoning, subject to the following conditions:

1. Submit revised plans, including the Preliminary Plat, to be in conformance with the 1.24 dwelling unit per acre density of the RS-35 zoning district prior to City Council approval.
2. Compliance with the final site plan, landscape plan, and documents as submitted.
3. Prior to the issuance of any building permit, obtain approval of a Preliminary Plat and obtain approval of and record a Final Plat.
4. Prior to the issuance of any building permit, obtain product approval through an Administrative Review.
5. During the building permit process, landscaping on the individual lots will be reviewed.
6. Compliance with all applicable City development codes and regulations.
7. Installation of all off-site improvements and street frontage landscaping during the first phase of construction.
8. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations, except the modifications to the development standards as approved with this PAD overlay as shown in the following table:

| Development Standards | PAD Approved |
|--|---|
| <u>Maximum Building Coverage</u> - MZO Table 11-5-3.A.1 | 50% |
| <u>Maximum Height</u> – MZO Table 11-5-3.A.1 | Restrict lots 40-47 to be single story for the primary unit. |
| <u>Fences and Freestanding Walls</u> – Section 11-30-4(A)(1)(b) – | Side and rear yards, no fence or freestanding wall within or along the exterior boundary of the required side or rear yards shall exceed a height of 7 feet. |
| <u>Fences and Freestanding Walls</u> – Section 11-30-4(E) | The maximum length of continuous, unbroken and uninterrupted fence or wall place adjacent to right-of-way or private streets functioning as public roads shall be forty feet. Articulation shall be provided through a combination of variation in wall type, wall height, and wall projections, including trellises. |
| <u>Detached Accessory Buildings or Structures</u> – Section 11-30-17(B)(2)(e)(ii) – Building Setback | <p>For lots not adjacent to Brown Road, detached buildings or structures over 15 feet in height at the peak of the roof shall maintain a 15-foot rear setback.</p> <p>For lots adjacent to Brown Road, detached buildings or structures over 15 feet in height at the peak of the roof shall maintain a 30-foot rear setback.</p> |
| <u>Minimum Dimension for Residential Enclosed Garages</u> – Section 11-32-4(F)(2) - Depth | A double-car garage shall be at least 20 feet wide and 21 feet long. |

9. Compliance with all requirements of Chapter 19 of the Zoning Ordinance including:
- a. Owner must execute the City’s standard Avigation Easement and Release for Falcon Field Airport prior to or concurrently with the recordation of the Final Plat or the issuance of a building permit, whichever occurs first.
 - b. Due to the proximity to the Falcon Field Airport, any proposed permanent or temporary structure, as required by the FAA, is subject to an FAA filing for review in conformance with CFR Title 14 Part 77 (Form 7460) to determine any effect to

navigable airspace and air navigation facilities. A completed form with a response by the FAA must accompany any building permit application for structures(s) on the property.

- c. Prior to the issuance of any building permit, provide documentation by a registered professional engineer or registered professional architect demonstrating compliance with the noise level reductions required in Section 11-19-5 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance.
- d. Provide written notice to future property owners that the project is within three miles of Falcon Field Airport.
- e. All Final Plats must include a disclosure notice in accordance with Section 11-19-5(C) of the Zoning Ordinance which must state in part: "This property, due to its proximity to Falcon Field Airport, will experience aircraft overflights, which are expected to generate noise levels that may be of concern to some individuals."

Exhibits

Exhibit 1 - Presentation

Exhibit 2 - Ordinance

Exhibit 3 - Ordinance Map

Exhibit 4 - Vicinity Map

Exhibit 5 - Site Plan

Exhibit 6 - Minutes

Exhibit 7 - Submittal Documents