

Citizen Participation Report for Pecos Road Employment Opportunity (EO) Floating Zone

Date: April 4th, 2017

Purpose: The report provides results of the implementation of the Citizen Participation Plan for the Pecos Road Employment Opportunity Floating Zone. The proposed Floating Zone will cover the area bounded by located at the 6800 to 9200 blocks of East Pecos Road (north and south sides) within District 6. This area is located east of Power Road and west of Ellsworth Road on the north and south sides. The southern boundary is defined by the current city limit line which runs along the rail road alignment from Power Road to Sossaman Road and then follows Germann Road to the Hawes Road alignment, then north to Pecos Road and east to Ellsworth Road. The northern boundary follows the quarter section that is adjacent to the north right of way line of Pecos Road from Power Road to Sossaman Road then north to the southern boundary of Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport east to Ellsworth Road (1,030± acres).

This is an application for the creation of a new Floating Employment Opportunity (EO) zone that will allow landowners within the Floating Zone to opt-in at any given time to change their zoning from its current zoning designation to Employment Opportunity. This report provides evidence that citizens, neighbors and interested persons have had adequate opportunity to learn about and comment on the proposed plans and actions addressed in the application.

Contact:

JD Beatty
20 E. Main St., Suite 200
Mesa, Arizona 85201
(480) 644-3854
email: JD.Beatty@mesaaz.gov

Neighborhood Meeting: Citizens were invited to attend the neighborhood meeting that was held at the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Authority Offices at 5835 S. Sossaman Rd. Mesa, AZ 85212 on April 4th at 5:00PM.

Correspondence: A notification letter was mailed to 218 neighbors, citizens, and property owners within a 1,000-foot radius of the proposed EO Zone boundary. In addition, three neighborhood associations representatives were notified within a mile of the zone within the Mesa City limits.

Results: There were approximately 10 citizens and property owners who attended the meeting, however, only 8 signed-in or filled out comment cards. In addition to the public, there were four City of Mesa staff members from Economic Development, Planning & Zoning and the City Manager's Office. The City Councilmember for District 6, Kevin Thompson, was also in attendance at the meeting. Prior to the meeting, five phone calls were also made to Economic Development from those who had received the mailing, inquiring about the EO Zone.

Below is a list of the questions from the meeting and call-ins, as well as a summary of the answers and discussion in assisting to address those questions:

Summary of Questions & Answers Provided

- **Is the City of Mesa forcing a new zoning on property owners?**
 - o The City of Mesa is NOT changing the underlying zoning of any of the properties within the Pecos Road Employment Opportunity Zone (PREOZ). This City-ran zoning proposal is to establish the area as a Floating Zone, allowing property owners to take advantage of the zoning, if they so choose. It does not "force" any requirements onto the property. The attendees of the meeting understand this portion of the EO plan, and were glad it did not forcibly change their zoning.
- **Will this new zoning allow for "undesirable" land uses to move in?**
 - o The PREOZ restricts the applicable land uses significantly to those that are employment-driven in nature, with the ability to create jobs and investment in the area. While the PREOZ mirrors some of

the land uses that are allowed in General Industrial (GI) zoning, we do not believe this Floating Zone will make it easier for “undesirable” uses to be approved. The caller was happy to hear that, but did still express some concern about heavier/denser land uses.

- **Can a property owner “back out” of the zoning once they have opted-in?**
 - o Once a property opts-in to the EO Zoning Floating Zone, the EO Zoning becomes the new underlying zoning for the property. To change the EO zoning back to another zoning type, the property owner still must go through the standard re-zoning process. However, we did address that oftentimes, if a property owner is concerned about opting in for an interested buyer of their property, they can make the opt-in process a contingency of a sale. Thus, keeping the property owner from unnecessarily opting into the EO zone if a sale falls through. The meeting attendees were very interested in this issue, as most of them are looking to sell/develop their property in the area, and did not want to get “trapped” into the EO zoning.
- **How does this Floating Zone affect the marketability of a property, if one is looking to sell?**
 - o Overall, the City believes this Floating Zone will benefit the area, particularly for property owners that are entertaining larger-scale employment-driven companies, users and developments. The PREOZ is focused towards attracting advanced manufacturing companies, and this Floating Zone is certainly a benefit for those types of interests. Several of the property owners spoke up about their belief that this would assist them in attracting industrial users.
- **Does the City only want large developments, or can smaller “mom and pop” companies take advantage of the EO Zone?**
 - o While one of the impetuses for the creation of the PREOZ was due to larger development interests exploring the area in previous years, the EO Zone can still be appropriate and applicable for “mom and pop” companies that may be smaller in size. The PREOZ Development Plan states that a development must be at least 5 Acres in size to opt-in to the EO Floating Zone. The meeting attendees were pleased about this, as they expressed that they have often worked with smaller companies that would still be creating jobs, but perhaps not as many as a major corporate entity. The City assured them that we are looking for a diverse, well-rounded employer base, and small to medium sized businesses are certainly a component of that.
- **How will this EO Zone affect home values in the area?**
 - o A residential neighbor called and asked this question, and we advised that we cannot make any claims to how the EO zone would affect neighboring residential home values. However, we do believe the EO zone will help encourage development that drives job creation and investment.
- **What are the new land uses allowed in this Floating Zone? Is it more restrictive than the zoning that is already in place?**
 - o The land uses for the EO Zone are technically more restrictive in terms of quantity versus a General Industrial (GI) zoning district. However, they are aimed at industrial and employment uses. During the presentation, the allowable uses were shown to the attendees, and they all seemed to be in favor of the permitted uses, and understood that the goal is to drive industrial and employment-related development, such as advanced manufacturing, research and development, office development, and more.
- **Is there a certain size of property that can opt-in to the EO Zone?**
 - o Yes, the minimum acreage in site area required to opt-in to the EO Zone is 5 acres. The meeting attendees and property owners were glad to hear the minimum was 5 acres, and not larger.
- **Are there different parking requirements in the EO Zone?**
 - o The overall development standards, for the PREOZ are the same as the City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance for the GI Zoning District, unless otherwise called out in the Development Plan. In particular, the parking requirements for the EO Zone are still standard and are not altered by the EO zone.

- **Can other parcels be added to the EO Zone?**
 - o One call-in inquired about if his property could be added to the EO Zone, as it was not currently included. At this time, new parcels cannot be added to the area, and after further discussion, he mentioned his property was below 5 acres in size, and would therefore not be able to opt-in to the EO Zone. He was amenable to this, and was happy overall with the EO zone assisting in attracting development to the area.
- **Does this EO Zone alter the land/lot split requirements? Can this EO Zone assist with subdivision regulations? Will the City consider changing lot split and subdivision regulations?**
 - o These questions were the most discussed topic during the neighborhood meeting, and was of significant concern to the property owners within the proposed EO Zone. Several of the property owners voiced some frustration over the City's lot split and subdivision requirements, and were hoping that the EO Zone would assist in allowing them more lot splits before requiring a subdivision process. It was conveyed by staff during the meeting that unfortunately, the EO Zone is not the appropriate mechanism to altering the City's Zoning Ordinance for Lot Splits and Subdivisions. Many of the property owners expressed that they were "out of splits," and thus would need to subdivide and plat their properties, which is a potential barrier for their properties. It was concluded that while the EO Zone is not able to address this issue, staff expressed willingness to engage in further discussions separate from the EO Zone to explore what options there may be to aid in alleviating this issue.

Overall Summary & Feedback:

Overall, the feedback from the neighborhood outreach, including calls from neighbors and the meeting itself, was positive. The property owners in the area are hopeful that this overlay will aid in attracting development and employment-driven uses to the area, and serve as a potential tool for expediting the development process and providing additional zoning and entitlement flexibility. Multiple property owners during the meeting voiced their support for the EO Zone, and view the new Floating Zone as a benefit for the area and their properties. The calls from some of the surrounding neighbors prior to the meeting were primarily to find out what the EO Zoning was, and after discussion with staff on the phone, were pleased to see the City proactively trying to attract development to the area. The primary issue, as mentioned above, related to Land Split & Subdivisions is a significant concern for the property owners in the area, and while the EO Zone is unable to alter or address this matter, the property owners are interested and willing in engaging the City in further discussions on this topic. In the interim, it was still viewed that this additional Floating EO Zone would benefit the area and aid in the attraction of development, investment and jobs.

Attachments:

- PREOZ – Neighborhood Meeting – Comment Cards & Sign-In Sheet