



# City of Apache Junction

## Development Services Department



### APACHE JUNCTION PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION STAFF MEMO

**Date:** April 9, 2024

**To:** Apache Junction Planning & Zoning Commission

**Through:** Rudy Esquivias, Development Services Director  
Sidney Urias, Planning Manager

**From:** Nick Leftwich, Planner

**Subject:** Report regarding commercial land analysis

#### Summary

As the City of Apache Junction continues to grow, questions regarding the long-range economic development and the availability of commercially-zoned land have become increasingly frequent and more necessary to ask as Planning Staff, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the City Council continually make more land use decisions and recommendations that affect these planning considerations.

Planning Staff have been analyzing the city's current commercially-zoned properties and researching development patterns and needs to assist in making these decisions and provide a standard concept of how these land-use questions should be evaluated. At this time, Staff provides a brief report of the analysis of our commercial state of affairs.

#### Analysis

The **total acreage** of Apache Junction, excluding roads which have no zoning, but including all of the vacant State and Federal Lands located within the city boundary is approximately **27,188 acres** (approximately 42 square miles). Of this area, the **commercially-zoned properties** (B-1, B-2, B-3 properties) comprise approximately **797 acres**, or approximately **3%** of the total land area.

In research of best practices and the study of neighboring and comparator cities, Staff has found that there is no general rule of thumb dictating a needed percentage of commercially-zoned land, but the City of Apache Junction has been found to have a reasonably comparable percentage of commercially-zoned

properties to other towns and cities. However, Staff has found that these commercially-zoned properties are not distributed or configured the same way as many of these comparator cities, and we find that Apache Junction's current commercial configuration, which is primarily long commercial strips along major streets, does not adequately facilitate modern commercial development patterns, which are primarily defined by node-based development focused in municipal centers, major arterial intersections, and along highway frontage. This then leaves many properties difficult to develop the way the market most frequently demands, and impairs the commercial viability of many of our commercially-zoned properties.

With this consideration, to facilitate commercial growth, Staff recommends an evaluation of the General Plan Land Use Map during the city's next General Plan Update to find areas of improvement, and to promote the node-based development pattern that modern commercial development currently relies on.

As new developments or rezonings are proposed, Planning Staff, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the City Council must evaluate the highest and best use of commercial properties, considering that some properties do not accommodate the needed commercial development patterns, while other sites may comprise critical locations for long-term economic planning goals. The site selection decisions of businesses of different types and intensity and our decisions and recommendations for rezonings and land-use permits should be guided by these considerations.