



City of Apache Junction

Development Services Department



CITY COUNCIL NEW BUSINESS ITEM STAFF REPORT

DATE: November 3, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

THROUGH: Bryant Powell, City Manager
Rudy Esquivias, Development Services
Director
Sidney Urias, Development Services Deputy
Director

FROM: Nicholas Leftwich, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Proposal for the approval of an
intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with
Maricopa County to initiate the annexation
of right-of-way on Meridian Drive

BACKGROUND

Ownership of Meridian Drive is and has historically been split between the City of Apache Junction, the City of Mesa, and Maricopa County. Within city limits, the City of Apache Junction owns 65' of right-of-way (ROW) on the east side of the Maricopa County/ Pinal County boundary line, with some minor variance in width at specific sections like intersections. This arrangement of split jurisdictions has resulted in complications with construction permits, review processes, law enforcement, and road maintenance which are now being realized as our community grows with the Superstition Vistas development along Meridian Drive, between Elliot Avenue & Ray Avenue.

In an effort to mitigate and resolve these issues, the City of Apache Junction and the Apache Junction Water District have been coordinating with Maricopa County and the City of Mesa in order to review proposed roadwork and facilitate construction projects that may cross these jurisdiction lines. Through this process, it has been proposed that the City of Apache Junction may annex the Meridian Drive ROW on the west side of the county line so that one municipality has jurisdiction over Meridian Drive. This

would involve both the conveyance of ownership of the ROW and an annexation to extend the city limits to include the west half of Meridian Drive.

PROPOSALS

At this time, it has been proposed that the City of Apache Junction enter into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with Maricopa County in order to formalize their support of this action and their commitment to facilitate the conveyance and annexation on their end. This agreement has been prepared through coordination with the city and Maricopa County and is attached as Exhibit 1. An exhibit showing how the right-of-way on the west half of Meridian Drive is divided between Maricopa County and the City of Mesa has also been provided as Exhibit 2. The Maricopa County ROW subject to this IGA is depicted in blue, and in most locations is 55' in width.

According to A.R.S. 9-471(O):

"As an alternative to the [annexation] procedures established in this section, a county right-of-way or roadway may be transferred to an adjacent city or town by mutual consent of the governing bodies of the county and city or town if the property transferred is adjacent to the receiving city or town and if the city or town and county each approve the proposed transfer as a published agenda item at a regular public meeting of their governing bodies. A transfer of property made pursuant to this subsection shall be treated by the receiving city or town as if the transferred property was newly annexed territory."

Pursuant to this section, the annexation of county right-of-way may forgo the standard blank petition process required for annexing private properties and may be facilitated by mutual agreement approved by the county board of supervisors and our city council.

A future IGA with the city of Mesa for their portion of the ROW is currently being planned for, but requires further logistical details that need to be worked out and addressed before it can be presented. This Maricopa County IGA is being presented now to meet timelines on Maricopa County's part.

PLANNING STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff is supportive of this IGA and the proposed annexation, finding that it addresses several long-time logistical issues that affect construction permits, review processes, and law

enforcement. The annexation and acceptance of this right-of-way does bring responsibilities, however, which we recognize are also factors to consider when making such a commitment.

What happens if we annex Meridian Drive:

-This would remove the need for cross-municipality reviews and individual inspection by each jurisdiction, reducing the time and complexity that have held some construction projects along Meridian back.

-We would become responsible for the maintenance of the Meridian Drive as a whole, rather than the responsibility being split across multiple jurisdictions. This is an ongoing cost.

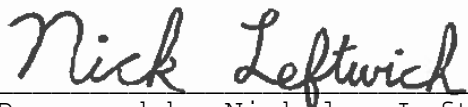
-The City of Apache Junction Police Department would become responsible for the patrol and enforcement of Meridian Drive. Currently, police departments of different jurisdictions are discouraged to patrol this street due to cross-jurisdictional enforcement issues, which would be resolved if one city and police department takes responsibility for the whole street.

What happens if we do not annex Meridian Drive:

-Construction reviews will continue to be routed through Maricopa County, the City of Mesa, and our own review teams, which has a high impact lengthening review and inspection times and causes much redundancy.

-The area is not currently enforced by police of either jurisdiction, due to issues with cross-boundary police enforcement. This arrangement will continue.

-Inconsistency among jurisdictional standards will continue to result in inconsistencies of road design, which has impeded the proper development of the arterial intersections along Meridian.



Prepared by Nicholas Leftwich
Senior Planner

Attachments:

Exhibit #1 - IGA with Maricopa County

Exhibit #2 - Meridian ROW Annexation Exhibit