



# PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

## STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: 02/19/2026

Agenda Item(s): 6R

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**TO:** Planning and Zoning Commission  
**THROUGH:** Chris M. Jacques, AICP, Planning Director  
**FROM:** Lorie Dever, Deputy Planning Director  
**SUBJECT:** Code Amendment: Code Modernization (TA26-01)

### ***PURPOSE***

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This is a city-initiated text amendment to Sections 21-100, 21-200, 21-500, 21-600, and 21-700. The proposed modifications in each of these Sections are summarized below:

- Amend Section 21-100 *"Introductory Provisions and Administration"* to clarify administrative and processing procedures related to specific case types;
- Amend Section 21-202 *"Definitions and Land Use Classification"* to consolidate and add definitions for common terms and various land use classifications cited throughout the Zoning Ordinance;
- Reformat and revise provisions in Sections 21-503 through 21-505. Specifically removing duplicative regulations, along with consolidating and renaming similar uses in alignment with defined industry practices and terms;
- Revise and enhance operational limitations and placement requirements for car washes and service stations in Section 21-505;
- Move and consolidate definitions within the Desert Lands Conservation Overlay and Hillside Development Overlay District within Section 21-600 *"Special Uses, Districts and Overlays"* into Section 21-202 *"Definitions and Land Use Classifications"*;
- Rescind the *"Senior Citizen Overlay Zoning District"* and reconcile prior adopted signage regulations within Section 21-700 *"Signage"*; and
- Update cross-references within individual regulations to point to new section numbers.

If approved, staff believe this code modification will consolidate, clarify and streamline provisions throughout the Zoning Ordinance for ease of use and adaptability.

### ***BACKGROUND***

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In conjunction with revising the Zoning Ordinance to address adopted legislative changes, in 2024 staff undertook and completed the first phase of restructuring and modernizing the Zoning Code in preparation for future code amendments. Building upon those efforts, this city-initiated code modification seeks to further clarify existing provisions, consolidates and adds common definitions into one location where possible, and reorganizes the non-residential section for ease of use, among other refinements.

### ***PROPOSED REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS***

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The primary objective of the proposed changes is to add clarity, transparency, and consistency in enforcing the Zoning Ordinance regulations. Additionally, staff are proposing a moderate change to the operational limitations and regulations associated with car washes and services stations to address on-going concerns with

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proliferation and oversaturation. These were presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission at the February 5, 2026 meeting for feedback and discussion.

### Service Stations

With regard to service stations, the proposed code allows up to three (3) service stations at all street intersections. As the number of service stations coming online has progressively increased throughout the city, public sentiment consistently included apprehension and concern with allowing three stations in close proximity, especially at major intersections. In response to those over saturation concerns, this proposal would set the maximum number allowed at Arterial/Arterial and Arterial/Limited Parkway intersections to two (2). **(Exhibit A)** For Arterial/Collector intersections, the maximum number of service stations permitted would be one (1). The existing provision to require at least a five-hundred-foot separation between stations on the same side of the street would be maintained. At the Commission Study Session, general concurrence with the modifications were indicated, and as such, no alteration to the original proposal was made.

### Car Wash Facilities

As noted above, staff also proposed changes to the operational limitations and siting regulations associated with car washes with this amendment. While many of the proposed regulatory changes that are intended to increase compatibility with adjacent residential areas were well received, the proposed limitation on automotive uses in the Intermediate Commercial (C-2) Zoning District garnered considerable discussion. Although the proposed limitation within the C-2 Zoning District is not unique within other zoning ordinances in Arizona, it is not necessarily a common regulation at present. As such, Commission asked staff to conduct additional research to understand the impact of the proposed regulations. More specifically, Commission asked staff to: 1) Determine the number of facilities located less than a mile of another; and 2) Determine how many commercial centers under 25 acres have more than two automotive uses plus car wash onsite.

Staff's analysis and findings are noted in italics below.

### Question 1: How many car wash facilities are located less than one mile from another car wash?

*There are approximately 24 car washes within and immediately adjacent to Peoria's city limits.*

- *Only seven (7) car wash facilities have a separation of greater than one (1) mile from the next closest facility. This equates to less than thirty percent (<30%) of the existing inventory.*
- *Of the seventeen (17) facilities not meeting the spacing separation, most typically have two or more car washes located less than one mile from them.*
- *Of the total 24 existing car washes, seven (7) are located within the Acacia Council District, and seven (7) are within the Palo Verde Council District.*
- *Four (4) of the seven (7) in the Palo Verde District had the closest spacing. All were located along Thunderbird Road between 79<sup>th</sup> to 88<sup>th</sup> Avenues, which is less than one-half mile apart.*

*In analyzing the inventory further, only a small number of car wash locations have ceased operations, and of those, they primarily have been the smaller automatic tunnels which were co-located with service stations. While some loss in inventory has occurred, operators of older "full-service" car washes have pivoted to maintain relevancy and profitability. More specifically, the majority of existing full-service facilities have undergone major renovations; moving to a newer "self-service" model which requires minimal staffing. Likewise, the majority of all new car washes being constructed are "self-service" facilities, which is expected to continue to be the trend.*

*If the regulatory environment stayed status quo, staff would expect a similar saturation and development pattern to occur as infill and new development continues. However, should the spacing limitation of one (1) mile between facilities be approved, staff believe it would have an immediate impact*

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*on reducing potential oversaturation within infill and new growth areas, while still allowing for continued thoughtful industry expansion within the city. As such, staff is recommending this spacing provision be adopted as proposed.*

**Question 2:** How many commercial centers under 25 acres have more than two automotive uses, of which one is a car wash?

*Staff analyzed all commercial centers along Arterial/Arterial and Arterial/Limited Parkway intersections within Peoria; paying particular focus on C-2 zoned commercial centers, and centers zoned Planned Area Development with C-2 underlying zoning.*

*Results showed no existing commercial centers under 25 acres having more than two automotive uses and a car wash. Instead, it was observed that these smaller centers typically had only one (1) automotive use along with one (1) stand-alone car wash facility. In limited instances, the smaller commercial centers might have two (2) automotive uses with no car washes, and in other instances it was only a service station combined with a car wash on the corner. Additionally, it was noted in commercial centers under 10 acres in size, they frequently had no car wash and only one (1) auto-oriented use. In contrast, within the 'Auto District' on Bell Road, there were two car washes adjacent to multiple auto and vehicle uses. However, the Bell Road Auto District is zoned Planned Area Development (PAD), over 25 acres in size, and specifically regulated to allow numerous automotive and vehicle related industries to locate adjacent to one another.*

*Based on these observations, staff believes the proposed regulation limiting automotive uses within C-2 zoned commercial centers under 25 acres would have no real tangible impact on existing centers operating today. Thus, given the feedback at Commission and results of the analysis, staff does not believe further mitigation is needed beyond the one (1) mile spacing to address oversaturation at this time. As such, the proposed C-2 regulation has been removed from the draft code, which is reflected in Exhibit A. Should oversaturation of these uses continue to persist, additional mitigation measures may be explored upon further analysis and direction from City Council.*

### Allowances for Exceptions:

With regard to potential changes to regulations within the Zoning Ordinance, it is important to remember there are existing avenues within the Zoning Ordinance that allow a developer to pursue modified regulations where they seem appropriate. By way of example, should a developer wish to build a car wash facility, but cannot meet the minimum separation between facilities, the developer can always seek an exception via three avenues:

1. Rezone to a "Single use" Planned Area Development (PAD) and create customized standards; or
2. Modifying an existing PAD to specifically adjust the land use matrix and use-specific standards to allow this type of facility to be built at this specific location; or
3. Seek a variance to reduce or modify the spacing requirements for a specific location.

The first two avenues are the most common route taken by developers, such as seen in past self-storage cases presented to Commission in recent years. The third option goes before the Board of Adjustment, which has granted spacing deviations in the past when mitigating factors are present and/or physical characteristics of the site warrant further consideration. In granting the deviation to the spacing standard, the board recognized the business still meet the intent of the provisions, but the deviation caused no undue hardship on adjacent property owners.

As noted above, all options currently exist within the Peoria Zoning Ordinance and would continue to be available going forward should the code amendment, or some form thereof, be adopted by City Council. Therefore, staff believes there is sufficient options available to address site specific concerns should they arise.

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### ***KEY FINDINGS***

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- The proposed changes are in keeping with the adopted General Plan requirements which require regular review, maintenance and/or update of the city's policies and regulatory documents to maintain ease of use, efficiency and effectiveness.

### ***COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT***

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#### *Public Meetings:*

- Planning and Zoning Commission Study Session on February 5, 2026

#### *Public Noticing:*

The application was properly noticed pursuant to Table 21-146 and Section 21-154 of the Peoria Zoning Ordinance, which includes placing a legal ad in the Peoria Times at least 15 days prior to the Public Hearing. Additionally, the draft code was published on the City's website for review prior to the February 5, 2026 study session, then subsequently updated to address feedback received at Commission.

#### *Support / Opposition:*

No opposition or support for this proposal was received.

### ***POSSIBLE ACTIONS / OPTIONS***

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- A:** Approve as recommended by staff; or
- B:** Approve in part or with modifications; or
- C:** Deny; or
- D:** Continue action to a date certain or indefinitely.

### ***RECOMMENDATION***

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Staff recommends that the Planning and Zoning Commission take the following action:

**Recommend approval of Case TA26-01 to the City Council as proposed in Exhibit A.**

### ***STAFF CONTACT***

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