

TOWN
Of
PARADISE VALLEY



STAFF REPORT

TO: Chair and Planning Commission Members

FROM: Chad Weaver, Community Development Director
Paul Michaud, Planning Manager
Brandon McMahan, Planner II

DATE: June 16, 2026

DEPARTMENT: Community Development Department – Planning Division
Brandon McMahan, 480-348-3531

AGENDA TITLE: Discussion and Possible Action on Franciscan Renewal Center
Major Special Use Permit Amendment (SUP-26-02) 5802 E Lincoln
Drive (APN 169-31-020)

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Planning Commission forward Ordinance 2026-02 to the Town Council with a recommendation of approval.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Request

The applicant requests a Major Special Use Permit amendment (SUP-26-02) regarding the proposed addition of solar panel system on three (3) new parking lot shade structures on the Franciscan Renewal Center property (approximately 4.7 acres) located at 5802 E Lincoln Drive (Maricopa County Assessor Number 169-31-020) submitted by Mike Slivers, on behalf of Franciscan Renewal Center.

Purpose

The purpose of the June 16th meeting to hold the required public hearing on the request for recommendation to the Town Council. The Statement of Direction (SOD) requires that the Planning Commission render its recommendation on or before September 1, 2026.

Location

Franciscan Renewal Center is a place of worship located east of the northeast corner of Lincoln Drive and Smoke Tree Lane. It fronts Lincoln Drive, a major arterial within the Town. To the immediate north and west of the church are the R-43-zoned lots (rear yards) of the Lincoln Drive Vista subdivision. To the east this parcel adjoins the other portion of the Franciscan Renewal Center church site, which is within the Maricopa County jurisdiction (Maricopa County Assessor Number 169-34-001).

History

Franciscan Renewal Center gained Special Use Permit (SUP) approval in December 2013 for the portion within the Town limits. In June 2018, the Town granted permit approval to begin construction of the Community Life Center (BD18-41667). Two formal amendments have been approved throughout the history of the church. Please reference the SUP History Summary (Exhibit C) for a brief history of the amendments to the church's SUP.

June 2nd Planning Commission Review

The Planning Commission reviewed the request at the June 2nd study session. The Commission had several questions. These included the following:

- The setback of Array Four did not meet the SUP Guideline recommended setback of 60 feet adjoining residential. The original placement of Array Four was determined by the location of the existing parking spaces on the western edge of the property (adjacent to Arrays Two and Three). In response, the applicant has removed Array Four. This removal also alters the overall scope of the request. The square footage and the overall floor area have been updated in the proposed plan set (Attachment D).
- Overall maximum height was also a concern of the Commission, requesting that the applicant explore the feasibility of lowering the height of each array. In response, the applicant is proposing to lower the remaining three structures by one foot. The new maximum height will be 15 feet above grade, with a minimum clear height of 10 feet. This new height is closer in line with other solar shade structures approved at First Southern Baptist Church (14 feet 11 inches maximum height, with minimum 9-foot clear height) and Temple Solel (14 feet 6 inches maximum height, with minimum 9-foot clear height).
- The vegetation screening plant palette (Willow Acacia and Red-tip Photinia) was not sufficient, per Commission comment. In response, staff provided the applicant with the Town Landscape Guidelines as well as the Visually Significant Corridor Plan which houses lists of Town approved plants, trees and shrubs. Furthermore, staff added Stipulation Three to Ordinance 2026-02. Stipulation Three reads: "Landscape screening (tree or hedge) will be communicated to the three (3) adjacent residential lots to the west of the property (APNs 169-31-015, 169-31-014, and 169-31-013). If the owner of adjoining property conveys no reasonable request for additional and/or alternate vegetation screening to the applicant, the applicant will be relieved of planting additional vegetation on their side of the property wall. The specific plant type, tree or hedge, must be selected from the Patterns of Nature Plant List found within the Visually Significant Corridor Plan. At least three (3) trees or hedge plantings adjacent to each the affected residential lot unless otherwise communicated by the adjoining property owner shall be required. At least two (2) attempts shall be made to try to contact the adjoining property owner(s) regarding additional plantings. The minimum standard of notification shall be a written letter sent via certified mailed to the owner at his last known address by certified mail, or the address to which the tax bill for the property was last mailed. Such notice will be completed prior to final inspection." Language from Stipulation Three is crafted to mirror Section 2403(b) of Article 24, pertaining to walls adjacent to adjoining properties and the process in which notification is made to adjacent property owners.
- The Commission requested that the array designer/engineer attend the June 16th meeting to discuss the proposal, speak to the placement of the various arrays, and answer any questions the Commission may have.

Scope of the Request

The scope of the request is a Major SUP amendment of the church's zoning for the addition of solar panel systems on top of three (3) new parking lot shade structures in the western/southwestern portion of the parking lot. Parking structure/array one is approximately 3,745.6 square-feet, structure/array two is approximately 4,370.44 square-feet, and

structure/array three is approximately 4,214.23 square-feet – totaling 12,330.27 square-feet of addition. The existing floor area on the lot is 12,281 square-feet (Community Life Center). The new total lot square-footage is 24,611.27 square-feet, totaling 12% floor area ratio (24,611.27 square-feet/204,994 square-feet of the lot). A total floor area ratio increase of 6.01% (5.99% existing and 12% proposed).

This request requires a Major SUP application since the shade structures constitute an increase of more than 40% (100% of increased floor area) upon the existing total floor area on this site (Section 1102.7 of the Zoning Ordinance), with a Major SUP application requiring a Statement of Direction (Section 1102.8.C of the Zoning Ordinance). No new lighting or removal of lighting is being proposed with the new solar structures. Two (2) light poles will be lowered under Array One. Existing parking lot lighting output is compliant at 0.75-foot candles at the property line (refer to Attachment D for previously approved lighting plan, per substantially compliant 2019 parking lot improvements). Removal or relocation of 10 trees will be necessary in order to install the three new shade structures. The applicant is proposing to install an additional 20 pollinators and milkweed plants in place of the trees. Staff also added stipulation three to Ordinance 2026-02 indicating that the three adjacent properties to the immediate west will provide the applicant with direction as to if additional screening via hedge or tree is preferred. Plant selection will be derived from the Patterns of Nature Plant List found within the Visually Significant Corridor Plan.

Statement of Direction (SOD)

The Town Council approved the SOD (Attachment E) on May 14th. The Town Council suggested that the Planning Commission review possible impact of the proposed solar panels for the residences to the north and west, both regarding the arrays themselves and the proposed additional tree plantings.

The SOD provides the Planning Commission with a deadline on or before September 1, 2026 to complete their review and make a recommendation to the Town Council. The expectation is the applicant will provide all necessary information for the Planning Commission to render a recommendation sooner.

Below is a summary of the SOD and an analysis based on the scope of the request as it relates to how the proposed request compares to the SUP Guidelines.

1. Use. The primary church use of the site will not be altered. The solar shade structure additions are compliant with the use and is found on other religious campuses within the Town of Paradise Valley. Below are two other examples of solar shade structures, placed on place of worship sites. Also displayed are the associated approved setbacks and heights of each:
 - First Southern Baptist Church (Intermediate Amendment, SUP-23-03)
 - Setbacks: 65 feet 5 inches to southern property line (adjacent to Vista Dr), 29 feet 6 inches to eastern property line (SUP property), 450 feet to northern property line (SUP property), and 363 feet to west (R-18A zoned lots).
 - Height: 9-foot clear height from grade, 14 feet 11 inches maximum height of array from grade.
 - Temple Solel (Intermediate Amendment, SUP-13-06)
 - Setbacks: 100 feet to southern property line (R-43 zoned lot), 56 feet to eastern property line (Kiva School – no setback requirement adjacent to non-residential use), 133 feet to northern property line (McDonald Dr), and 65 feet to west (Monte Vista Dr).
 - Height: 9-foot clear height from grade, 14 feet 6 inches maximum height of array from grade.
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The primary areas of study for the Planning Commission include, and are not limited to, the design, location, impact of the shade structure to the surrounding area outside the site (specifically noise, light, and visibility/design of the solar panels), and use of landscaping to help screen the structure.

Analysis: The primary church use of the site will not be altered. The solar shade structure additions are compliant with uses at a place of worship with Section 1102.2 of the Zoning Ordinance. A similar solar shade structure is found at other religious campuses within the Town of Paradise Valley such as at First Southern Baptist (Vista) Church and Temple Solel, which went through similar amendments in 2023 and 2013 respectively.

The solar shade structures are tilted away from the R-43 zoned residences to the west – gaining the maximum height of 15-feet further away from the western property line. The solar panels on top of the shade structure are comprised of a matt-finished black material that is non-reflective. The remaining structure associated with the arrays match existing color and material found on campus (i.e. sanctuary shade structure, etc.).

There is existing landscaping on the church property adjacent to Lincoln Drive consisting of trees and bushes, as well as along the western edge adjacent to the residential lots. There are also small bushes planted in the parking lot islands on campus. The applicant is proposing to install an additional 20 pollinators and milkweed plants in place of the trees. Staff has added stipulation three to Ordinance 2026-02 indicating that the three adjacent properties to the immediate west will provide the applicant with direction as to if additional screening via hedge or tree is preferred. Plant selection will be derived from the Patterns of Nature Plant List found within the Visually Significant Corridor Plan.

2. Height. SUP Guidelines suggest a maximum height of 24 feet for accessory structures. The guidelines further apply the Open Space Criteria whereby no structure would penetrate an imaginary plane starting at a setback of 20-feet from all property lines at 16-feet above natural grade which slopes upward at a ratio of one foot vertically for each five-feet horizontally. The proposed accessory structures all have a minimum clearance height of 10 feet from grade and each measure 15 feet to the top of structure from grade (both lowered one foot from the original submittal). This maximum height also aligns with the maximum accessory structure height for residentially zoned lots (R-43 specifically), as well as the approved shade structures at First Southern Baptist Church and Temple Solel. The arrays differ in both length and width. Array One spans 41-feet 6-inches across the western elevation and 91-feet 11-inches along the southern elevation. Array Two and Three each span 41-feet 8-inches across the southern elevation and 211-feet and 11-inches along the eastern elevation.

The Planning Commission shall evaluate the proposed height and viewsheds based on its visibility of the proposed shade structures as seen from off-site, as well as the structure's appropriate scale, with special consideration given to the views from the west and north side bordering R-43 residential homes and from Lincoln Drive to the south.

Analysis: The solar panel shade structures meet SUP Guidelines. The Guidelines suggest a maximum height of 24 feet for accessory structures. The guidelines further apply the Open Space Criteria whereby no structure would penetrate an imaginary

plane starting at a setback of 20 feet from all property lines at 16 feet above natural grade which slopes upward at a ratio of one foot vertically for each five feet horizontally. The proposed accessory structure has a minimum clearance height of 10 feet from grade (15 feet to that top of structure).

3. Setbacks. SUP Guidelines as applied to this site suggest that the setbacks to the exterior property lines are 60-feet adjoining a residential property and 40-feet adjoining a public street. The proposed setbacks for Array One are 125-feet and 8-inches from the western property line (adjacent to R-43 zoned residential lots), 356-feet and 7-inches from the northern property line (adjacent to R-43 zoned residential lots), 114-feet and 11-inches from the eastern property line (Franciscan Renewal Center County parcel), and 214-feet and 3-inches from the southern property line (Lincoln Drive). Arrays Two and Three are setback 99-feet and 1-inch from the western property line, 109-feet and 10-inches from the northern property line, 192-feet and 5-inches from the east property line, and 318-feet and 4-inches from the southern property line. All three arrays are compliant with setbacks outlined in the SUP Guidelines. The Planning Commission shall explore appropriate setbacks for each shade structure.

Analysis: All three solar panel shade structures meet SUP Guidelines. SUP Guidelines as applied to this site suggest that the setbacks to the exterior property lines are 60 feet adjoining a residential property and 40 feet adjoining a public street (no setback guideline from a non-residential use). The proposed setbacks for Array One are 125-feet and 8-inches from the western property line (adjacent to R-43 zoned residential lots), 356-feet and 7-inches from the northern property line (adjacent to R-43 zoned residential lots), 114-feet and 11-inches from the eastern property line (Franciscan Renewal Center County parcel), and 214-feet and 3-inches from the southern property line (Lincoln Drive). Arrays Two and Three are setback 99-feet and 1-inch from the western property line, 109-feet and 10-inches from the northern property line, 192-feet and 5-inches from the east property line, and 318-feet and 4-inches from the southern property line.

Process

The process for the SUP request is a pre-application review by the Town staff (completed), approval of the SOD (completed), Planning Commission review of the SUP (completed on June 2nd), a Citizen Review Session (neighborhood meeting) held by the applicant (held on May 28, 2026, mailing sent out May 15, 2026 – 2 attendees, meeting minutes included within Attachment G), a Planning Commission public hearing on the SUP for their recommendation to Town Council (June 16, 2026 with mailing notification on May 15, 2026), and Town Council study session and Town Council public hearing for action on the SUP (tentatively scheduled for September 10th Study Session and October 8th Public Hearing).

Public Comment

Except for the comments from the Citizen Review Session, Town staff received no other public comments. The required noticing for the Citizen Review Session and public hearing were completed per Town requirements (noticed on May 15th for both the June 16th Recommendation hearing and the Citizen Review meeting).

Next Steps

Based upon the action (approval, continuance or denial) by the Planning Commission, the Town Council will discuss and take action on the Major SUP Amendment (Ordinance 2026-02).

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Staff Report
 - B. Vicinity & Related Maps
 - C. SUP History Summary
 - D. Narrative & Plans
 - E. Statement of Direction
 - F. Draft Ordinance
 - G. Notification Material
 - H. Prop 207 Waiver
 - I. Presentation
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