

TOWN *Of* PARADISE VALLEY



STAFF REPORT

TO: Chair and Planning Commission Members

FROM: Chad Weaver, Community Development Director
Paul Michaud, Planning Manager
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DATE: June 2, 2026

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

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

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Request

The applicant requests a Major Special Use Permit amendment (SUP-26-02) regarding the proposed addition of solar panel system on four (4) 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 2nd work session is to review the scope of the request, review the Statement of Direction (SOD) from the Town Council, and provide an opportunity for the Planning Commission to provide comments.

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.

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 four (4) 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, structure/array is

approximately 4,214.23 square-feet, and structure/array four is approximately 6,869.77 square-feet – totaling 19,200.04 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 31,581.04 square-feet, totaling 15.41% floor area ratio (31,581.04 square-feet/204,994 square-feet of the lot). A total floor area ratio increase of 9.42% (5.99% existing and 15.41% proposed).

This request requires a Major SUP application since the shade structures constitute an increase of more than 40% (156% 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 of 16 trees will be necessary in order to install the four new shade structures. The applicant is proposing to install an additional 20 pollinators and milkweed plants in place of the trees. Seven (7) new Willow Accacia trees will also be planted adjacent to the west property line to assist in providing additional screening of the shade structures from the residential lots to the west. Per Town Council direction, the applicant is also proposing a Red-tip Photinia hedge as an alternate to the Willow Acacia, which does not grow to the maximum height of the Accacia. Vegetation selection will be determined by adjacent residents, Planning Commission and Town Council discretion.

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 (eg. First Southern Baptist Church in 2023 and Temple Solel Intermediate Amendment in 2013). 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 16-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 add 20 milkweed plants in places of the 16 trees that will be removed. Seven (7) new Willow Accacia trees will also be planted adjacent to the west property line to assist in providing additional screening of the shade structures from the residential lots to the west. Per Town Council direction, the applicant is also proposing a Red-tip Photinia hedge as an alternate to the Willow Acacia, which does not grow to the maximum height of the Accacia. Vegetation selection will be determined by adjacent residents, Planning Commission and Town Council discretion.

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 11 feet from grade and each measure 16 feet to the top of structure from grade. This maximum height also aligns with the maximum accessory structure height for residentially zoned lots (R-43 specifically). 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. Finally, Array Four spans 41-feet 8-inches across the southern elevation and 166-feet 10-inches along the western elevation. Per Open Space Criteria requirements, the provided setback of 42-feet 8-inches for Array Four (closest to a particular property line) allows for a height of ±20-feet 5-inches – well above the proposed maximum height of 16 feet.

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 11 feet from grade (16 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
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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. Array Four setbacks are 42-feet 8-inches from the western property line, 131-feet and 2-inches from the northern property line, and 339-feet and 1-inch from the southern property line. Array Four is setback less than the 60-foot SUP Guideline, though the height is well below what the Open Space Criteria allows (42-foot 8-inch setback allows for a maximum 20-foot 5-inch height). The Planning Commission shall explore appropriate setbacks for each shade structure.

Analysis: The solar panel shade structures (Arrays One through Three) meet SUP Guidelines, with the exception of Array Four. 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. Array Four setbacks are 42-feet 8-inches from the western property line, 131-feet and 2-inches from the northern property line, and 339-feet and 1-inch from the southern property line. Array Four is setback less than the 60-foot SUP Guideline due to the fact that they are covering existing parking spaces on the western side of the parking lot. However, the height of Array Four is well below what the Open Space Criteria allows (42-foot 8-inch setback allows for a maximum 20-foot 5-inch height).

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 (in process), Citizen Review Session (neighborhood meeting) held by the applicant (held on May 28, 2026, mailing sent out May 15, 2026), a Planning Commission public hearing on the SUP for their recommendation to Town Council (tentatively June 16th), and Town Council study session and Town Council public hearing for action on the SUP (Fall 2026).

Public Comment

Town staff has received no public comments to date. However, there is no required noticing with the SOD or for work sessions. The required noticing for the Citizen Review Session and public hearing was completed per Town requirements (noticed on May 15th for both the June 16th Recommendation hearing and the May 28th Citizen Review meeting). Voluntary notice was also sent to the residences directly to the west and north of the Town church parcel on April 28th (Attachment G).

Next Steps

If no further work session is needed, the next scheduled Planning Commission meeting for this application request will be the public hearing for recommendation on June 16th. The Citizen Review Session (neighborhood meeting) occurred May 28th. Meeting summary report will be included in the June 16th packet material.

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. Presentation
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