



**MEMO**

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission

FROM: Sheila DeSchaaf,  
Planning & Development Director

DATE: May 4, 2015

SUBJECT: Zoning Map Amendment – 1009 E. Highway 260 (USFS Admin Site) **P15-004**

**Background**

The Town of Payson is initiating a Zoning map amendment from R1-175 and Open Space (OS) to Educational Facilities District (EF) for the US Forest Service administration site located at 1009 E. Highway 260. The 284 acre property is situated south of Highway 260 along E. Granite Dells Road, between S. Mud Springs Road and S. Rim Club Parkway.

This site is straddled by C-2 Commercial district properties to the northeast and northwest. R2 Multifamily residential district properties on portions of the east and west. R3 Multifamily property, presently Gila Community College and undeveloped land owned by Gila County and Highway 260 adjoin the north boundary of the site. Various R1 Single Family residential zoned districts abut this parcel along the entire south property boundary as well as portions of the east and west property lines.

The US Forest Service and their uses on federal land are not subject to local zoning regulations. Thus the Forest Service is generally silent on matters pertaining to land use designations placed upon US Forest Service property. Rezoning this parcel prior to the sale of the parcel by the US Forest Service will help to ensure adequate land use controls are in place to restrict the future use of this parcel to only those uses that are educational or ancillary in nature thereto upon the sale of this property by the Forest Service.

**Analysis**

39 +/- acres in the northwest corner of this parcel will be retained by the Forest Service for their local operations (indicated in Exhibit B). The remainder of the site is slated to be purchased by the Rim Country Educational Alliance, a separate legal entity governed by a 7-member board of appointees from the Towns of Payson and Star Valley, for the development of a university campus.

At full build-out, the conceptual development plan (Exhibit C) proposes a total of 250,000 square feet of academic buildings, 450,000 square feet of housing, 180,000 square feet devoted to a hotel/conference center, and 25,000 square feet each for associated retail and YMCA facilities. Plans have not been completed for the easternmost portions of the site at this time. However, additional educational facilities and/or ancillary facilities could be established in the future.

This site is also within the Highway 260 Growth Area, a defined underdeveloped area, adjacent to open space and residential neighborhoods, in which to concentrate business development. The 2014-2024 General Plan Growth Area Element expresses that Payson actively supports development of this parcel by an academic institution. In practice, a higher education campus is a mixed-use development. It may host civic space, social, office and light industrial lab space, housing, open space, and commercial retail.

The Land Use Element of the 2014-2024 General Plan Update designates this site for Mixed Use and Open Space. Mixed Use is defined as areas where a vertical mix of uses is encouraged, with a range of density and intensity with the highest density of development focused at district cores or major intersections. Open Space designations are for areas precluded from development except for parks, plazas and open space owned and maintained by the Town or other agencies. Lakes, trails and organized recreation space are among this classification. This classification also includes significant geological formations and sensitive ecological systems on public land. The General Plan holds that if land is designated as Open Space and such land is part of a parcel or on a parcel that is being developed as part of a larger development, the location of the open space may be changed so long as the amount of open space designated is not reduced. Approximately 25 acres in the southwest corner of this parcel was designated as open space. Undeveloped acreage and active recreational areas are shown within this area on the site plan. Open Space areas may be adjusted and in some cases should be adjusted in order to preserve environmentally sensitive areas within this site. In no case, shall the number of acres devoted to open space within the project site be reduced, and connectivity shall be maintained between open space areas. In addition, open space, landscaping and screening/buffering and tree preservation provisions exist for all properties and must be incorporated into the overall development plan.

Granite Dells Road, which bisects this site, has been designated as a shared road for the purpose of serving not only vehicular traffic but also pedestrians as part of the proposed trail route for the Payson Area Trails System and bicycles by including bike lanes in each direction.

All property located within the Town of Payson is within the Design Review overlay district with the exception of one, two or three-family dwelling units. There are no guidelines specific to EF zoned properties, nor have predetermined yard setbacks or lot coverage standards been created. Each separate use upon this property shall be required to utilize the yard setbacks and design review criteria established for the most similar category of uses as defined by the Unified Development Code. For instance, student housing shall be governed by multifamily district development standards. A hotel/conference shall be constructed in accordance with Commercial district standards. If warehousing, research or development facilities are constructed Industrial district standards would apply. This will help to ensure current and future phases of development upon this site is harmonious and/or of minimal impact to surrounding land uses and the topography.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff finds that this rezoning request could be appropriate, so long as future development conforms to applicable Town Codes. Staff recommends approval of this rezoning application subject to the following conditions:

1. Each of the individual uses upon this property shall be subject to the zoning district standards most-closely representative of each individual use.
2. Roadway improvements within, serving or adjacent to this site, that are constructed or improved to service development upon this parcel shall be designed to include bike lanes and pedestrian trails in conformance with adopted Town of Payson planning documents.

Any other condition the Commission deems necessary.

**Suggested Motion to Approve:**

“I move the Planning & Zoning Commission recommend to the Town Council approval of P15-004, an amendment to the R1-175 - Single Family Residential and O.S. - Open Space zoning designations for the US Forest Service administration site to EF- Educational Facilities District, if/when the property transfers out of Forest Service ownership, subject to the conditions listed in the staff report.”

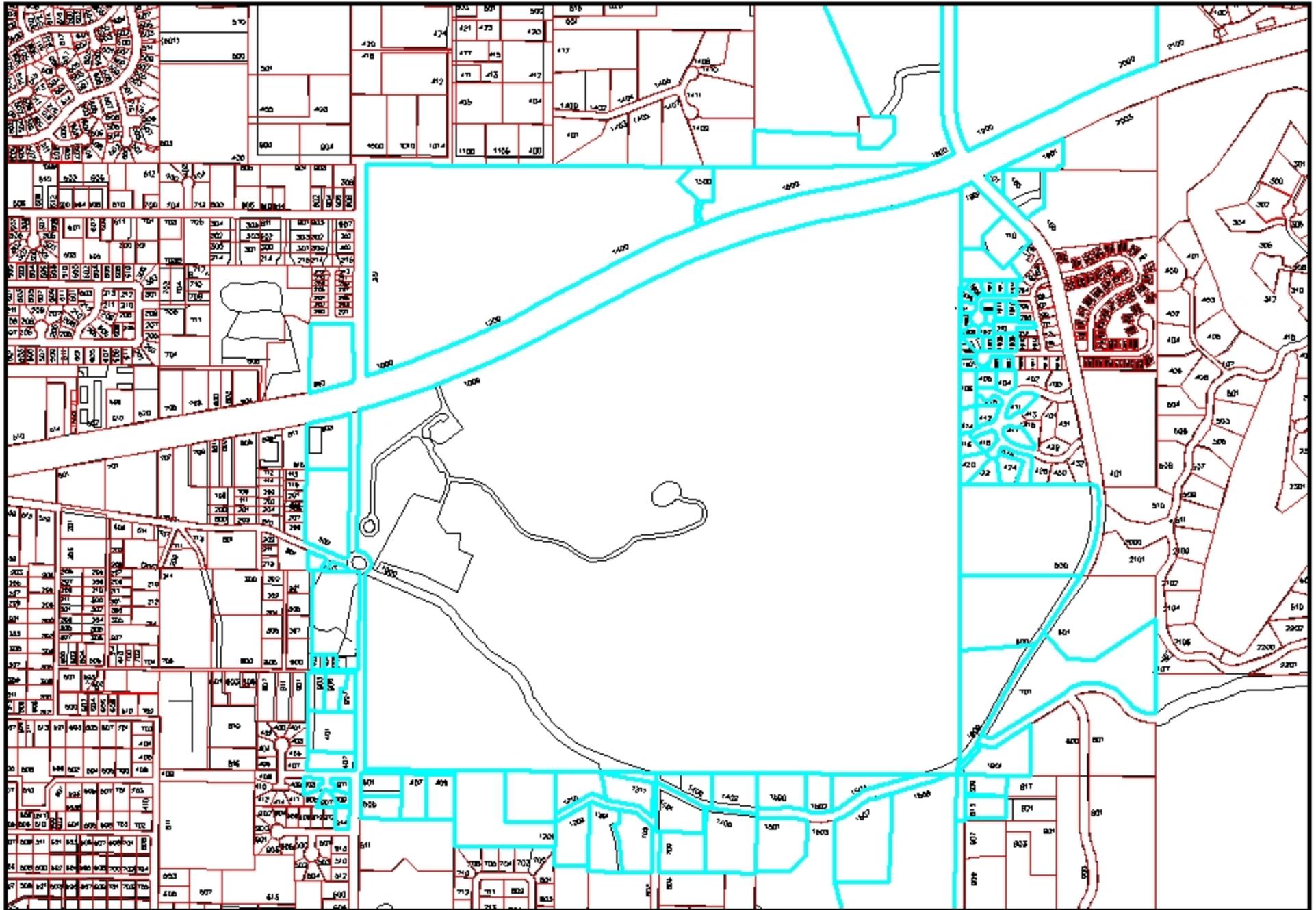
**Neighborhood Involvement**

Notice of this zoning action was posted on E. Granite Dells Road at the intersection of S. Mud Springs Road and at the main entry to the property along E. Highway 260. A 1/8<sup>th</sup> page display ad was published in the Payson Roundup on April 17, 2015. Notices were mailed to the private property owners within 300’ of the boundaries of the site. Each notice provided the details of this Planning & Zoning Commission public hearing. As a Town initiative, the Planning Commission hearing is being utilized to pursue citizen participation in conjunction with the proposed amendments.

Attachment(s): Exhibit A – 300’ map of the subject site; Exhibit B – map depicting areas of the site to be sold/retained by the US Forest Service and area to be sold, Exhibit C - Conceptual Development Plan

# properties within 300' of Subject Site

Exhibit A

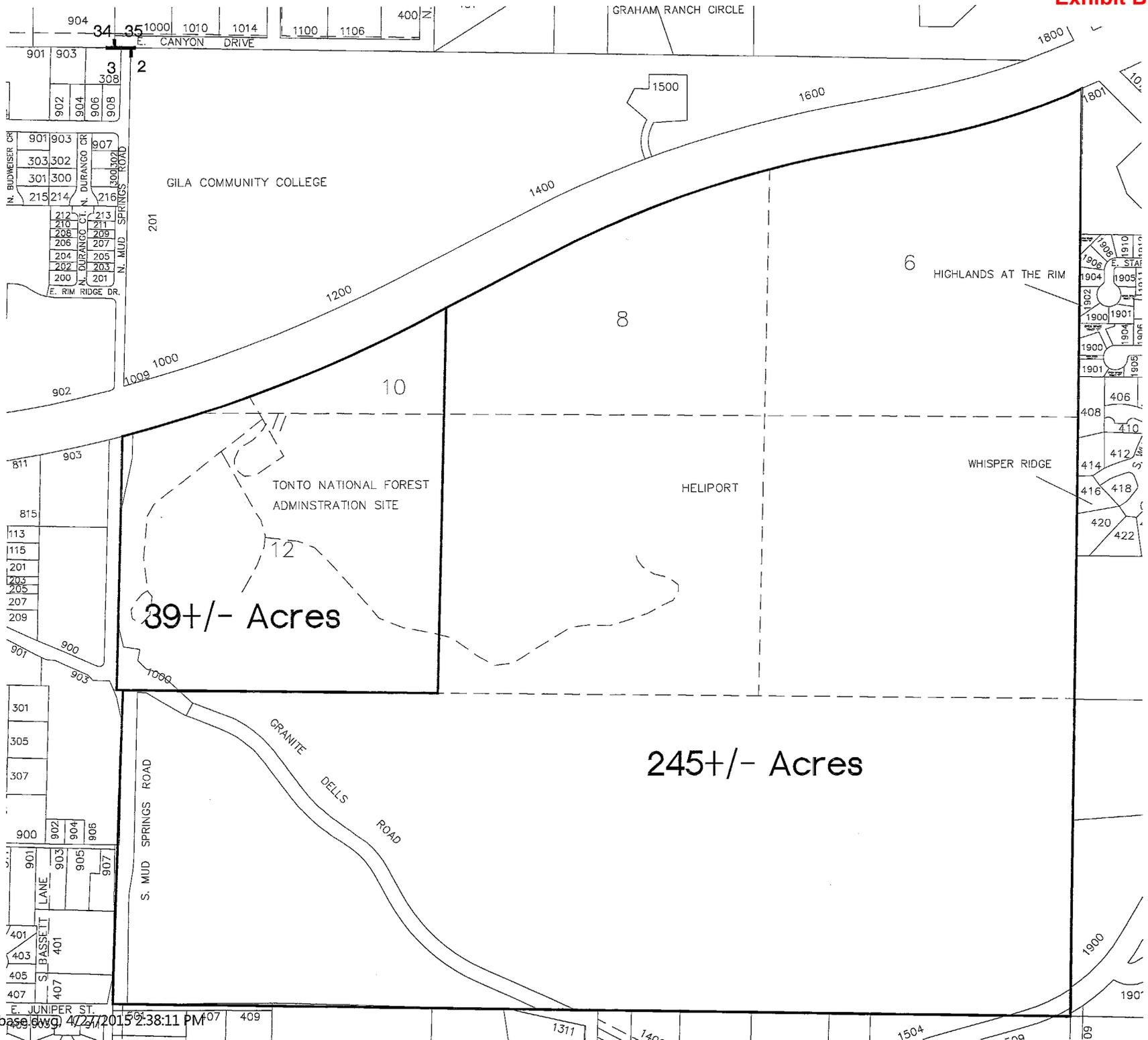


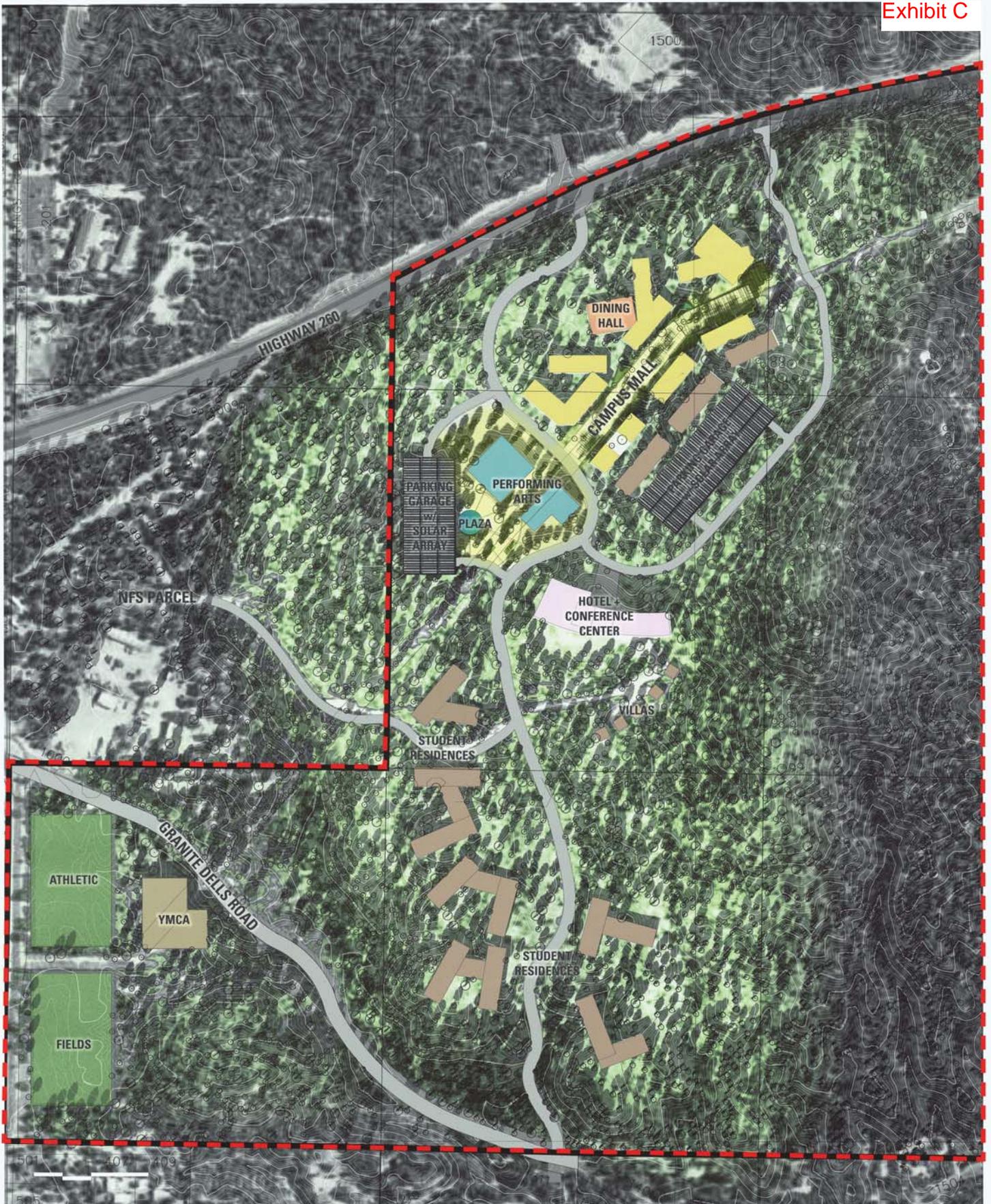
303 North Beeline Highway  
Payson, Arizona 85541  
(928) 474-5242 [www.ci.payson.az.us](http://www.ci.payson.az.us)  
GIS/PaysonGIS\_Master.mxd 11/28/2007



This map has been provided for informational purposes only and is not accurate for engineering design. Every effort has been made to ensure this map is as accurate as possible. The Town of Payson shall assume no liability for the base information contained in this map.







FULL BUILD-OUT PROGRAM BREAKDOWN	
academic buildings	250,000 SF
residential buildings	25,000 SF
performing arts buildings	450,000 SF
hotel	180,000 SF
	25,000 SF
	930,000 SF
Academic	Total
Retail	
Housing (1500 beds)	
Hotel Conference (225 beds)	
YMCA	



scale: 1" = 100'

