



OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

COUNCIL MINUTES

July 27, 2026

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in the Study Session room at City Hall, 20 East Main Street, on July 27, 2026, at 5:15 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mark Freeman
Scott Somers
Rich Adams
Jennifer Duff
Alicia Goforth
Francisco Heredia
Dorean Taylor

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

OFFICERS PRESENT

Scott Butler
Holly Moseley
Jim Smith

Mayor Freeman conducted a roll call.

1. Review and discuss items on the agenda for the July 27, 2026, Regular Council meeting.

All of the items on the agenda were reviewed among Council and the following was noted:

Conflict of interest: None

Items removed from the consent agenda: 5-c

In response to a request from Councilmember Duff regarding agenda Items 8-a, **(Proposed amendments to Chapters 6, 7, 8, 31, and 86 pertaining to Fleet-Based Services and Service Stations. The amendments include but are not limited to: adding definitions for Fleet-Based Services, Heavy Fleet-Based Services, and Accessory Electric Vehicle Charging; modifying definitions for Light Fleet-Based Services and Service Stations; adding Heavy Fleet-Based Services, Accessory Electric Vehicle Charging, and related footnotes to land use tables; modifying Section 11-31-25 titled, "Service Stations"; and adding Section 11-31-40 titled, "Fleet-Based Services." (Citywide)), and 8-b, (Proposed amendments to Chapters 6, 7, 8, 31, and 86 pertaining to Fleet-Based Services and Service Stations. The amendments include but are not limited to: adding definitions for Fleet-Based Services, Heavy Fleet-Based Services, and Accessory Electric Vehicle Charging; modifying definitions for Light Fleet-Based Services and Service Stations; adding Heavy Fleet-Based Services, Accessory Electric Vehicle Charging, and related footnotes to land use tables; modifying Section 11-31-25 titled, "Service Stations"; and adding Section 11-31-40 titled, "Fleet-Based Services." (Citywide))**, on the Regular Council meeting agenda, Chief of Emerging Technology Ian Linssen displayed a PowerPoint presentation. **(See Attachment 1)**

Councilmember Duff expressed support for Option 8-a, noting that option would allow drone fleets to be stored vertically or on rooftops rather than at ground level. She stated that this approach would make more efficient use of land, preserve space for economic activity, and reduce the need for expanded surface parking, fencing, and screening. She suggested that locating drones above ground level could lessen noise impacts and would be comparable in height to existing parking lot light poles. She opposed Option 8-b based on the prohibitive rooftop charging and noted that the Council Use Permit (CUP) requirement in Limited Commercial (LC) districts would provide an opportunity to evaluate potential impacts on nearby residential areas.

Mr. Linssen explained that two options were prepared following the July 16 Council discussion, and he compared each option. He noted the difference is that Option 8-b would allow at-grade and building heights of up to 30 feet only within the General Industrial (GI) and Heavy Industrial (HI) districts. (See Page 2 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question from Mayor Freeman, Mr. Linssen confirmed that state legislation allows generally applicable regulations affecting drones to be adopted before the legislation takes effect on September 12, 2026. He explained that the proposed regulations would apply broadly to fleet uses, including drones, robotaxi parking, delivery-van staging, accessory fleet uses, and service stations. He added that the regulations could also apply to battery-powered vehicles.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Goforth, Assistant Planning Director Rachel Phillips clarified that the current code does not require separation for service stations and does not establish development standards, including screening or separation requirements, for light fleet-based services. She explained that the original proposal applied only to electric vehicle charging infrastructure due to noise concerns; however, following Council direction, the requirement was expanded to apply to the entire service station use.

Vice Mayor Somers commented that the proposed 150-foot separation requirement was based on state legislation and reflected the evolution of fleet services to include aerial drones in addition to traditional cars and trucks. He expressed concern that drone operations in LC districts could affect nearby neighborhoods through overflight and noise.

Councilmember Taylor pointed out that the separation requirement was also intended to protect nearby businesses, particularly restaurants with outdoor seating, from the noise associated with drones repeatedly taking off and landing.

Ms. Phillips clarified that the 150-foot separation requirement would apply to residentially zoned properties and residential uses. She noted that the Planning Director could reduce the distance if a sound study demonstrated that the proposed use would not increase existing noise levels. She added that the landscape-yard requirement would still provide a 15-foot buffer between properties.

City Manager Scott Butler added that each proposed fleet operation would require a CUP, whereas such uses previously would have been permitted by right in the LC district. He noted that requiring Council approval would allow each proposal to be evaluated individually based on its location, compatibility, and merits. He pointed out that Option 8-a would provide the Council with greater discretion while preserving its authority to approve or deny each application on a case-by-case basis.

In response to a question from Councilmember Goforth, Ms. Phillips clarified that the requirement was initially proposed for service stations and light fleet-based services because electric charging

equipment may generate a humming noise. She noted that, at the Council's direction, the requirement was expanded to apply to all applicable uses, while the CUP requirement was limited to the LC district.

Responding to a comment from Councilmember Duff, Planning Director Mary Kopaskie-Brown stated that LC sites vary in character and surrounding uses; therefore, each CUP application should be evaluated individually. She explained that in some locations, drone delivery equipment mounted on poles or placed at ground level may be compatible, in others it could be disruptive. She added that a noise study would allow the Council to consider existing ambient noise levels to determine whether the proposed use would remain within applicable thresholds.

In response to a question from Councilmember Goforth, Ms. Phillips explained that CUP criteria generally address compatibility and potential impacts on surrounding properties, including whether the proposed use would be detrimental to the surrounding area.

City Attorney Jim Smith added that the law does not clearly classify the decision as legislative; however, it is considered a discretionary decision subject to established criteria.

Responding to a question from Mayor Freeman, Mr. Linssen reported that drone delivery services operate in other parts of Arizona and nationwide but would be new to the East Valley.

Councilmember Adams expressed support for Option 8-b which restricts the location of pole-mounted charging stations to the GI and HI districts through the CUP process, providing a measured approach that could be reconsidered after evaluating its effectiveness and visual impacts.

Councilmember Duff expressed support for allowing pole-mounted drone facilities, stating that requiring all equipment to remain at ground level could restrict innovation, use land inefficiently, and discourage providers from operating in the COM.

Councilmember Taylor supported a cautious approach, noting that vendors may use either ground-based or pole-based facilities. She cited public concerns regarding the potential proliferation of drone activity, acknowledged that airspace is regulated by the FAA, and favored initially limiting locations while evaluating community acceptance and the effectiveness of the CUP process.

In response to a question from Councilmember Heredia, Ms. Phillips noted that the CUP process would require a public hearing, a neighborhood meeting, and public notice. She confirmed that a Good Neighbor Policy could also be imposed as a condition of approval.

In response to an inquiry from Vice Mayor Somers, Mr. Smith advised that there is not an objective decibel level within our noise ordinance that would allow enforcement for this use.

Responding to a question from Mayor Freeman, Mr. Linssen stated that the industry currently uses a mix of ground-based and vertical-based delivery systems. He noted that applications may also include other fleet services, such as autonomous vehicle staging, and that proximity to commercial partners and end customers is an important operational consideration. (See Pages 3 and 4 of Attachment 1)

Mayor Freeman expressed support for Option 8-a, stating that it would provide greater flexibility for vertical delivery systems in LC districts while retaining separation and CUP requirements.

Ms. Kopaskie-Brown confirmed that the ordinance could be amended as the industry evolves. She stated that existing businesses would remain subject to the regulations in effect when approved unless they later modify their site plans or operations, in which case the updated requirements could apply.

In response to a question from Councilmember Goforth relating to allowing Light Industrial (LI) to Option 8-a, Ms. Phillips explained that light fleet-based services are currently permitted in LI districts but adding a CUP requirement could raise Proposition 207 concerns.

Assistant City Attorney Kirstin Dvorchak explained that the proposed regulations were introduced in time for Council action before the statute's general effective date. She noted that although the ordinance could be revisited as the industry evolves, the statute may limit the COM's ability to modify the regulations after the effective date.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Taylor, Ms. Phillips confirmed that, under Proposition 207, changing a zoning entitlement from a more restrictive to a less restrictive designation is generally easier because it does not diminish property rights. She noted that development standards may be modified more readily because they are treated differently from zoning entitlements.

Councilmember Duff pointed out that zoning text amendments typically require at least six months and suggested reconsidering the 30-foot height limit in a future amendment to allow drone operations from taller rooftops where appropriate.

Ms. Kopaskie-Brown clarified that both options would require a CUP for drone delivery operations in the LC district, allowing the Council to review each proposal individually. She stated that, under Option 8-a, a provider could propose either ground-level or pole-mounted equipment, while Option 8-b would limit equipment in the LC district to ground-level installation. She reiterated that the principal distinction between the options was whether pole-mounted equipment would be permitted in LC districts; uses in the GC and LI districts would not require a CUP due to existing zoning entitlements and Proposition 207 considerations.

Mayor Freeman thanked staff for the presentation.

2. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of various boards and committees.

2-a. Design Review Board meeting held on June 9, 2026

It was moved by Councilmember Adams, seconded by Councilmember Duff, that receipt of the above-listed minutes be acknowledged.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Freeman–Somers–Adams–Duff–Goforth–Heredia–Taylor
NAYS – None

Carried unanimously.

3. Current events summary including meetings and conferences attended.

Mayor Freeman and Councilmembers highlighted the events, meetings, and conferences recently attended.

4. Scheduling of meetings.

City Manager Scott Butler stated that the schedule of meetings is as follows:

Monday, August 10, 2026, 2:00 p.m. – Special Session

Thursday, August 13, 2026, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

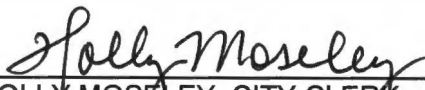
5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

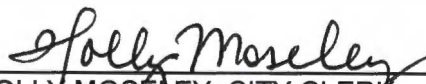

For MARK FREEMAN, MAYOR



ATTEST:


HOLLY MOSELEY, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 27th day of July 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.


HOLLY MOSELEY, CITY CLERK

sr
(Attachment-1)

Fleet-Based Services & Service Stations Text Amendments

Mary Kopaskie-Brown, Planning Director

Rachel Phillips, Assistant Planning Director

Sean Pesek, Senior Planner



Updates since 7/16 Study Session

Two Ordinance Options for Consideration

Option 1

- Require a CUP for Light Fleet-Based Services in the LC District
- Increase the separation distance for Service Stations to 150 feet
- Increase the separation distance for Fleet-Based Services to 150 feet and require for any fleet-based services, not just electric charging infrastructure
- Apply the 30-foot maximum height only to all Fleet-Based Services in all districts

Option 2

- Require a CUP for Light Fleet-Based Services in the LC District
- Increase the separation distance for Service Stations to 150 feet
- Increase the separation distance for Fleet-Based Services to 150 feet and require for any fleet-based services, not just electric charging infrastructure
- Require Accessory, Light Fleet-Based and Heavy Fleet-Based Services to be located at grade except in CI and HI at a height of up to 30 feet



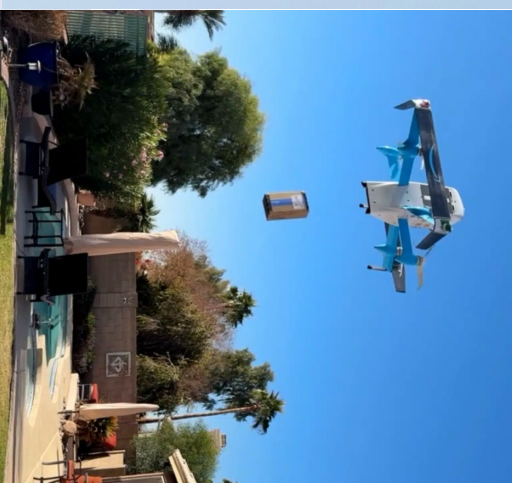
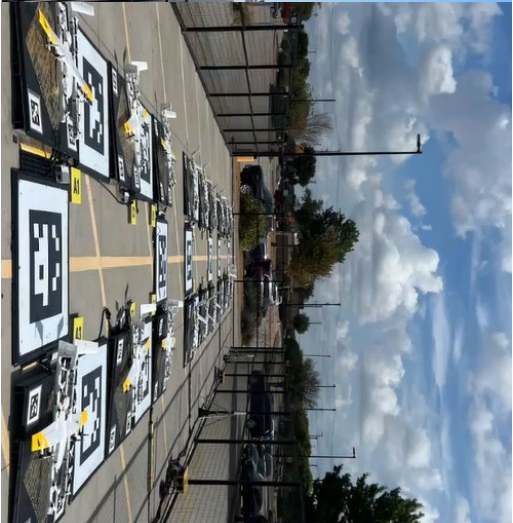
mesa·az

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – PLANNING DIVISION

Background & Purpose

New and Emerging Technology Driving the Changes

Fleet Services with Drone Delivery





mesa·az

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – PLANNING DIVISION

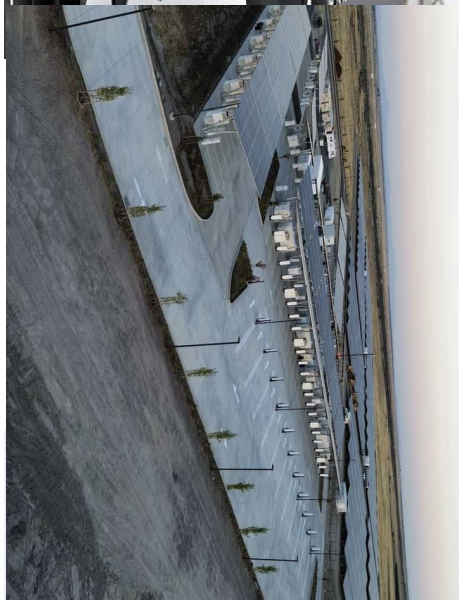
Background & Purpose

New and Emerging Technology Driving the Changes

Fleet Services of Robotaxis



EV Service Station



Fleet-Based Services Text Amendments



mesa·az

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – PLANNING DIVISION

Fleet-Based Services – Overview of Proposed Changes

- Updates to Land Use Classification Definitions
- Updates to Land Use Tables
- Introduction of fleet-specific development standards (new Section 11-31-40)



Fleet-Based Services – Updates to Definitions

Fleet-Based Services (NEW):

- Primary use is the parking, storage, staging, fueling, charging, or dispatch of fleet vehicles
- In connection with passenger transportation services, delivery, medical transport operations and similar businesses **operating more than five (5) vehicles**
- Includes EV charging infrastructure and accessory support facilities
- **Excludes:** Towing & Impound, Vehicle Sales, Major Auto Repair, Outdoor Storage, Airports, Heliports



Fleet-Based Services – Updates to Definitions

Light Fleet-Based Services:

- 50 or fewer ground- or aerial-based vehicles
- All vehicles have a GVWR of less than 10,000 lbs
- Less than 10,000 sq. ft. of dedicated fleet area

Heavy Fleet-Based Services (NEW):

- One or more vehicles with a GVWR of 10,000 lbs or more; or
- More than 50 ground- or aerial-based vehicles all under 10,000 lbs; or
- 10,000 sq. ft. or more of dedicated fleet area



Fleet-Based Services – Updates to Definitions

Accessory Fleet-Based Services (NEW):

- Fleet-Based Service that is accessory and subordinate to a principal use on the same lot or parcel
- Serves only the operational needs of the principal use
- Shall not constitute the primary use of the site
- Shall not function as an independent fleet facility or provide fleet services to off-site businesses
- Fleet parking, charging, staging, etc.) shall not exceed the area devoted to the principal use





Fleet-Based Services – Updates to Land Use Tables

- Light Fleet-Based Services remain permitted in the same zoning districts as currently allowed (GC, LI, GI, and HI) and added to the LC District
- Added Fleet-Based Services added as an accessory use in the LC, GC, PEP, LI, GI, and HI Districts
- Heavy Fleet-Based Services permitted with a CUP in the GC and LI Districts, and by-right in the GI and HI Districts



Fleet-Based Services Development Standards

Parking, Charging & Storage Standards

All Types of Fleet-Based Services (Light, Heavy, or Accessory)

- Fleet vehicles must be parked, charged, and stored in designated areas
- Fleet areas must be clearly delineated and distinct from required parking
- Not permitted in setbacks, landscape yards, maneuvering aisles, or required loading zones
- Aerial-based vehicle parking, charging, and/or storage: 30-ft maximum height

Accessory Fleet-Based Services Only

- Must be located to the side or rear of buildings
- Not permitted between the front building façade and a public street
- May occupy up to 50% of the required on-site parking spaces for the principal use



Fleet-Based Services Development Standards

Screening Standards

Ground-Based Fleet Vehicle Screening:

- Street-side: 40-in masonry wall behind the required landscape yard
- Internal side and rear property lines: 6-ft masonry wall

Accessory Equipment and Infrastructure:

- Screened per ground-mounted equipment standard of Section 11-30-9(A)(4)

Screening Alternatives:

- Alternatives may be approved by the Planning Director



Fleet-Based Services Development Standards

Residential Separation:

- Accessory equipment and charging infrastructure must be separated from residential uses and/or zoning districts by a distance of 100 feet
 - Does not apply to residentially-zoned properties that only contain commercial use(s)
- Planning Director may approve less than 100 feet with a sound study showing noise at the property line stays at or below 60 dB, or doesn't increase ambient noise where it already exceeds 60 dB

Services Station Text Amendments



mesa·az

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – PLANNING DIVISION

Service Stations – Overview of Proposed Changes

- Updates to Land Use Classification Definitions
- Updates to Land Use Tables
- Updated Service Station development standards in Section 11-31-25



Service Station – Updates to Definitions

Service Station:

- Modified to clarify that it includes the fueling and/or charging for motor vehicles
- Specifies the use serves the general public and doesn't include fleet fueling and charging operations

Accessory Electric Vehicle Charging (NEW):

- Provision of electric vehicle charging within a parking lot or parking structure which is incidental and subordinate to the principal use





Accessory EV Charging – Updates to Land Use Tables

Accessory Electric Vehicle Charging

- Accessory Electric Vehicle Charging added as a permitted accessory use in the Commercial, Employment, and Downtown Districts
- Footnotes:
 - Limited to 20% of required on-site parking; excess spaces may be converted if a parking study demonstrates additional capacity exists
 - Landscaping removed for charging infrastructure must be replaced on-site



Service Stations – Updates to Development Standards

Fuel Pump Canopy:

- Max 16-ft canopy height and 30-in canopy fascia width
- Canopy lighting must be recessed and flush mounted; maximum 20 footcandles within 150 feet of residential uses

EV Shade Structures:

- When shade structures are provided over EV charging spaces they shall match or complements the design of the primary building (when present)



Service Stations – Updates to Development Standards

EV Charging Lighting:

- Can be integrated into the shade structure, canopies, charging equipment, or other features
- Maximum 20 footcandles within 150 feet of residential uses

Vehicle Stacking:

- Min 20-ft stacking on both sides of fuel pump islands and 36 ft for one-way circulation approaches
- Modifications may be approved by the Planning Director based on a circulation study



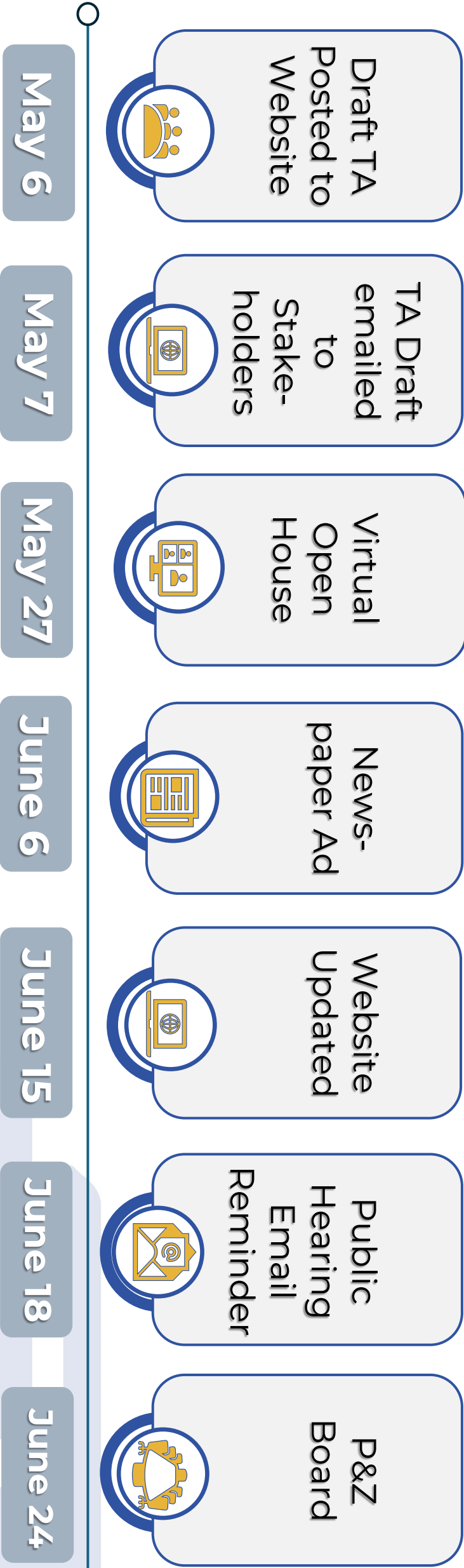
Service Stations – Updates to Development Standards

Residential Separation:

- Fuel pumps and charging stations must be separated 100 feet from residential uses and/or zoning districts
- Planning Director may approve a reduced distance with a sound study showing noise at the property line stays at or below 60 dB, or doesn't increase ambient noise where it already exceeds 60 dB



Public Outreach & Notification





mesa·az

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – PLANNING DIVISION

Questions?

