

**Project Narrative
for**

***A.T. Still University
Expansion***

**Planning & Zoning Submittal
City of Mesa
PS15-089**

**A Planned Educational & Employment Development
Located at:**

**5850 East Still Circle
(NW Corner of East Baseline Rd. and South Recker Rd.)
Mesa, Arizona 85206**

**November 30, 2015
Revised: June 24, 2016**

Basic Overview of Project Proposal

A.T. Still University (ATSU) of Health Science is a private, not-for-profit university founded in 1892. The University is nationally and internationally recognized as a leading, graduate level, health science University and founding institution of osteopathic medicine. ATSU is comprised of two residential campuses: the original campus established in Kirksville, Missouri in 1892, and the Mesa campus, which opened in 1995. ATSU is a learning-centered university dedicated to preparing highly competent professionals through innovative academic programs with a commitment to continue its osteopathic heritage and focus on whole person healthcare, scholarship, community health, inter-professional education, diversity, and underserved populations.

ATSU is expanding to accommodate a 50% growth in students. The new building planned for this site will accommodate this growth, along with 33,000 square feet of currently leased area within the three adjacent medical office buildings. ATSU's new building will offer technologically advanced teaching facilities, new student life functions, and expansion space for the growth of faculty and staff. The new student life functions will include a bookstore, library facility, study areas, computer lab, a café and student collaboration facilities that will extend student dwell times on site, thereby reducing parking lot turnover and increasing parking demand.

This submission is for Site Plan Review of a parcel of land located at 5850 East Still Circle, northwest of East Baseline Road and South Recker Road, referred to herein as A.T. Still University Expansion, a planned academic campus comprised of four existing buildings totaling 195,000 square feet and a new 3-story building of 125,000 square feet. A Pre-Application Conference submission was made to the City of Mesa for this proposal on November 3, 2015, and a meeting was held with planning representatives on November 23, 2015.

The subject area being proposed for expansion consists of 3 contiguous parcels that include the 5850 A.T. Still Academic Building, the Ross Farnsworth YMCA and the Arizona Health & Technology Park, comprised of three medical office buildings developed by and leased from The Alter Group. The parcels are presently zoned LI-PAD (Light Industrial) in the City of Mesa General Plan Educational Campus Specialty District, which allows for the development of academic classroom buildings and faculty office facilities. No change in the zoning classification of the parcels is being requested as part of this development proposal.

The overall project master PAD plan was modified in 2007 (Z07-88) to allow development of the YMCA and the construction of future intergenerational student and assisted living housing. A shared parking study was approved indicating 588 spaces would be required with the Phase I components of the site.

This proposal requires modification to the current PAD zoning. The development includes the proposed new 3-story academic building of approximately 125,000 sf and adjacent parking structure, as well as a future phase, which would include the intergenerational student housing/assisted living complex previously approved. The parking structure is being proposed to reduce expansion of surface parking lots and provide closer proximity for pedestrians to the new and existing academic buildings, while preserving the northern third of the site for future growth. This proposal organizes the various land use activities in a comprehensive manner to the benefit of both the development and the surrounding area providing an exceptional opportunity for the University to improve its educational facilities and expand its student enrollment and the City of Mesa to capture related employment the expansion would generate.

Description of Proposed Site Improvements

A general description of the proposed improvements is provided herein;

A. Building Orientation and Site Circulation

The site development is comprised of four existing buildings, with vehicular access from a center spine road (East Still Circle). The existing buildings have been oriented to provide a consistent image along the main drive and common pedestrian access for students and faculty. The new academic building will be sited in a prominent location along East Still Circle, creating a strong brand identity for the University and visually linking the existing buildings on either side of the main drive. Close proximity to the existing 5850 academic building minimizes travel distances between classrooms in both buildings.

Access to the campus will be enhanced with improved entry identification signage at Baseline Road, leading to a prominent vehicular “gateway” at the corner of Sunview and East Still Circle. The gateway will consist of a vertical signage pylon at the center median, as well as horizontal signage at each side of the intersection. Vertical light poles with campus banners on either side of East Still Circle will further improve the visibility of the campus entry during both day and night.

The banners attached to the light poles will identify the University's core programs and brand identity, and guide visitors, students and faculty to the new campus parking garage. The breezeway on the ground floor of the new academic building will function as both the building entry and the pedestrian “gateway” to the academic core of the campus. This gateway, visible from both the parking garage and East Still Circle, will provide a sense of arrival and reinforce campus identity. Additionally, wayfinding signage to direct pedestrians between academic buildings will be developed as part of the design process.

B. Parking and Design

Parking

Parking shall be in general conformance with the requirements listed in Mesa Zoning Ordinance, which requires for 1 stall per 200sf (5/1000) and allows this to be increased to 125%. The project presently shows 1,493 spaces, slightly under the target of 1,494 (6.95/1000), which is 11% above the 125% maximum allowable requirement.

The 2007 PAD Modification originally required 785 parking spaces to meet minimum Code requirements with a café in the YMCA. A reduction was allowed to 588 spaces, assuming that students housed at the future intergenerational student housing/assisted living complex would share the academic building parking, avoiding a double-up of code required spaces. Because of the off-set of parking demand of commuting students by students housed on campus, it is understood that the future housing would not require further additional parking.

Approximately 490 spaces had been constructed for the initial 92,000 sf Academic building and 100 spaces for the YMCA, with another 620 spaces provided within the Arizona Health & Technology Park medical office building (MOB) project, adjacent to the campus. The University currently leases 98,000 sf in the MOB park, (approximately 90% of the available leasable area accounting for 560 parking spaces). Of this 98,000 rsf, the School anticipates moving approximately 42,000 sf (43%) of the MOB space into the new Academic building. This would require 240 of the existing MOB parking spaces be displaced to the campus parking areas or garage.

The University prepared an internal audit of student parking patterns in September 2012 which demonstrates that based on current student enrollment, overlapping class schedules and 195,000 sf of current building and leased areas, the current parking demand requires up to 1,350 cars parked at any one time for the campus and MOB lots. This converts to a parking ratio of 6.95/1000 sf on 195,000 sf. Up to 170 cars have been documented parking on adjacent streets. And as previously noted, the new academic building will include new student life functions that will extend student dwell times on site, thereby reducing parking lot turnover and increasing parking demand.

57,000 sf will remain leased in the existing MOB, leaving 215,000 sf of new and existing building programmed area on the campus grounds. Using the 6.95/1000 ratio yields a total peak demand of ~1,494 spaces. After construction of the new Academic Building, 297 of the existing surface spaces will remain; 1196 new spaces be provided to meet the 6.95/1000 objective.

In addition to the automobile parking, 30 motorcycle/scooter parking positions are provided to meet the required ratio of 1 motorcycle/scooter parking position/50 automobiles. 30 bicycle parking positions are also being provided. While 30 bicycles represents just 10% of the ratio of 1 bicycle for each 50 cars prescribed for universities in the zoning ordinance, the nature of the ATSU education and its location make commuting via bicycle virtually impossible and demand for bicycle parking non-existent. ATSU students must carry lap-tops and a classroom wardrobe change. Furthermore the site is largely land-locked by the Superstition Freeway with no bike trails or paths in the vicinity.

The Site Plan as submitted shows a new parking structure of 988 cars, strategically sited to provide convenient walkable parking close to the academic core. Structured, as opposed to surface parking, creates a compact, dense campus with a sense of place, and preserves land for future expansion. The parking garage has been strategically located to the east of the new Academic Building directly across Still Circle Road. This location, with its close proximity to both the academic facilities to the west and medical office buildings to the south, is critical to minimizing travel distances between parking, classes and student participation in clinical activities.

The proposed garage location also allows for a clear and organized pedestrian circulation path between the various buildings, well separated from the driveways at the northwest corner of the garage. Special textural paving will be used at the crosswalk connecting the vertical circulation core at the southwest corner of the parking garage and circulation from the medical office buildings with the iconic gateway portal through the new academic building to further accentuate and enhance the pedestrian pathway. All sidewalks and street crossings will be ADA compliant and all parking driveways will have clear sight vision triangles free of signage, banners, light poles, landscaping, etc.

Since the previous Planning & Zoning Submittal in November, 2015, ATSU has elected to reconfigure the parking garage to mitigate concerns on the part of its Recker Road neighbors regarding views to and from the parking structure as well as potential noise. Specifically, the width of the parking garage has been reduced from 4 bays to 3 bays, increasing its distance from the east property line along Recker Rd. from 54'-10" to 115'-2", which not only diminishes its physical presence from the east, but also allows for more landscaping to further screen views to and from the garage. The length of the garage has been increased 117'-0" to the north to make up the number of required parking spaces however the overall volume of the parking structure is reduced by 5%. The parking structure now accommodates 988 cars vs. 1,064 previously, while the surface parking between the garage and Recker Rd. has increased by 64 cars, yielding an overall reduction in ATSU campus parking spaces from 1,505 cars to 1,493 cars to more precisely meet the 6.95/1,000 ratio of parking to each 1,000 square feet of academic building area.

An alternate site plan has also been included in this Planning & Zoning Submittal which depicts an all surface parking option. It is the University's desire to maintain this option as part of this submittal recognizing that its implementation would require a future formal site plan resubmittal.

Screening

Where screening is required by development regulations, a combination of elements shall be used including solid walls and landscaping. The method of screening shall be architecturally compatible with the adjacent building in terms of materials and colors. Trash enclosures, service facilities, will be sited away from project entrances and interior circulation drive aisles.

- Perimeter Public Streets: All car parking areas adjacent residential areas on Recker Road are proposed to be screened with existing masonry screen walls. Screen walls are not proposed along US Hwy 60/Superstition Freeway frontage given that there is a significant height differential adjacent ADOT ROW and parking is not proposed adjacent to the freeway in this phase.
- Parking Garage: Large scale panels with ATSU brand identity graphics will screen the west façade of the garage and activate the view that faces the campus along East Still Circle. The south and east facades will be screened by perforated metal panels designed to provide visual interest.
- Surface Parking: At those surface parking areas where screening is not required, no additional walls or fencing will be provided in order that these areas are kept as open and contiguous as possible for safety and security reasons.

C. Drainage and retention

The subject site is generally level, with a gentle slope from northeast to southwest. The new site plan will create appropriate retention area(s) to accommodate the on-site retention demands. In accordance with Chapter 8 of the Mesa Engineering Procedures Manual requirements, onsite retention for the 100 year, 2-hour design storm event will be provided.

The entire site is designated within Flood “Zone X,” as per latest FEMA map. Flood Zone X is defined as areas of 500-year flood and/or areas of 100-year flood with average depths of less than 1 foot or with drainage areas less than 1 square mile.

Half-street surface flows along Recker Road are currently collected through street scuppers into temporary basin wells along the east edge of the site. These will be displaced by the new parking structure. A series of underground piping and catch basins will collect the street flows and upper level parking deck run-off into a retention basin along the south end of the parking structure. This basin will drain into drywells within 36 hours.

The proposed academic building and associated hardscape will drain to the large existing retention basin located northwest of the intersection of East Still Circle and Sunview Drive. Retention requirements will adhere to the City of Mesa Design Criteria.

D. Architecture

Architectural Character and Style

The provisions of this section propose an attractive architectural design and materials that will create a consistent educational campus vocabulary. Areas surrounding the academic buildings, and exposed more directly to Recker Road and the center spine drive aisle, will include a higher level of articulation and enhanced detail as appropriate for those frontages.

A contemporary style is proposed, compatible with the existing buildings with strong forms, sophisticated colors, textural materials and overhangs providing shade and shadow create significant architectural identity at a pedestrian scale while providing additional detail and scale elements to enhance the pedestrian experience. The breezeway in the new building will function as both the building entry and the “gateway” to the campus, providing a sense of arrival and campus identity. Classroom entrances shall be featured at the mid-points of the building. Attention will be focused on the enhanced corner and end design elements, maximizing the visual impact of walls and an attractive desert landscape palette.

Elevations of the building incorporate design elements that promote an enhanced, “campus-like” appearance within the context of the development. Visual interest is promoted through an interesting composition of asymmetrical design elements, a variety of materials, color accents, unique glass window treatments that complement the building massing, accent lighting and thoughtful landscaping that screens or accents as appropriate. Varied panel height articulation, color patterning, architectural reveals and integrated sandstone architectural elements will be featured providing for a cohesive and visually pleasing architectural design solution on all four sides of the building.

The desirable architectural design elements proposed for these buildings include:

- Parapet height variation, combined with color modulation, to break down the building’s mass;
- Color, texture, shade and shadow through creative use of materials on all four corners;
- Building and landscape accent lighting;
- Building entry accentuation with significant canopy elements;
- Vertical accents at building corners with contrasting material elements.
- The buildings shall have clearly defined entrances, incorporating elements such as extensive use of recessed glass, projected canopies or overhangs, accent lighting for identification and security, enhanced landscaping, textural paving and signage.
- The new Academic Building in particular will incorporate various solar control and light harvesting strategies including the central breezeway, horizontal shade elements, recessed glazing with overhangs and a special light diffusing solar-film treatment at the glass transoms.

**Mesa Zoning
Ordinance - 11-7-2
Employment Districts**

| Requirement | LI District | PAD Request | Justification |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Minimum Site Area (Acre) | 1 | | Complies |
| Minimum Lot Width (ft) | 100 | | Complies |
| Minimum Lot Depth (ft) | 100 | | Complies |
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|---|-----------------------------------|------|--|
| Maximum Height (ft) | 40 | 54.5 | The proposed building height represents a modest increase (<10%) from the existing academic building. The slightly increased floor to floor heights and greater window areas are largely driven by the desire to better utilize natural daylight to reduce energy consumption. |
| Frontand Street Facing Side | Local St: 20' | 0' | Private drive |
| Interior Side and Rear, adjacent to AG Districts | 1' / 1' bldg ht w min 20' setback | | Complies |
| Minimum Separation between buildings on same lot (ft) | 0 | | Complies |

**Mesa Zoning
Ordinance - 11-32-2
Parking Spaces**

| Requirement | LI District | PAD Request | Justification |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|---|
| Colleges, Universities | 1 / 200 sf | 1 / 143 sf | Audit performed by University indicates that their student body being comprised entirely of commuting students demands greater parking than typical colleges or universities. |

Building Material and Colors

Particular attention to detail is given to all sides of the building so that the main architectural theme/style is articulated on all four sides. Materials and/or colors are carried from the main elevation throughout the entire design of the building to produce a comprehensive design solution with specific emphasis as functionally and visually appropriate.

Proposed Exterior Wall Material: Exterior wall materials consist of sandstone veneer, and synthetic stucco systems provided with smooth sand finishes. Glazing will be low-reflectance glass with clear anodized framing.

Prescriptive minimum combinations of materials are not indicative of quality architectural design, but at least three different wall materials will be used at building corners. Glass window wall and steel canopies and accents make up the remaining exterior wall area.

Exterior Materials Parking Structure: The Parking Structure shall conceal parked cars at grade and its first elevated level by means of a combination of opaque screen walls and open decorative panels. Painted or galvanized perforated metal screens will articulate and partially screen the east garage façade facing Recker Road and large scale graphic panels will further articulate and screen the garage's west elevation while further enhancing the school's identity. Steel canopy framing and perforated steel decking will provide accent color contrast and emphasis at building entries while providing solar protection.

Proposed Exterior Wall Colors: All exterior wall materials will be painted in non-reflective, contemporary, neutral tones. Masonry shall be integrally colored and textured.

A materials board, with proposed colors, will be submitted as a part of the separate Design Review Submittal for final approval along with a site plan, grading & drainage plans, landscape plans, exterior elevations, floor plans, building sections and other exhibits as requested by Planning Staff.

Green Building Elements

To the greatest degree possible and consistent with the uses to be developed, the Project will strive to meet the environmental goals of the Green Building practices, wherever practical. This commitment will include the following minimum sustainable practices:

- Use of low water consumption plumbing fixtures and or dual flush;
- Utilize recycled building materials such as; steel, miscellaneous metals, ceiling tile and insulation, composite wood products, gypsum wallboard, fly-ash in the concrete mix and aggregates for asphalt paving.
- Utilize energy efficient lighting and mechanical equipment.
- Stimulate the economy by procuring building materials regionally within 500 miles of project site.
- Paints, coatings, adhesives, sealants, and floor coverings that are low Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) emitting will be used.
- Use of white, highly reflective roofing systems to reduce heat island effects.
- The Parking Garage will also include provisions for future solar panel at its top level.

Conceptual Elevations

Included with this submittal are colored exterior elevations and material and color palettes, representative of the proposed building architectural styles, specifics on these proposed building elements are included on those documents for review and approval by City Staff.

E. Proposed Land Use

The proposed development is consistent with the provisions of the City of Mesa's General Plan. The development on the existing LI (Light Industrial) zoning classification provides the opportunity for educational facilities and faculty offices to provide employment opportunities that are supportive of the City's General Plan vision. The physical barrier of the freeway to the north, and the access provided by the German Road major arterial makes this site particularly well suited for student access.

Landscape Design

Landscaping Theme and Details

The goal of the landscape design is to create a comfortably scaled development with tree lined streets and public spaces, provide a reflection of the architectural character,

height and density of the buildings, and enhance the environment with color and plant variety. Landscaping shall meet the minimum requirements set forth in the Zoning Ordinance.

The majority of the existing trees that will be disturbed by new construction will be Salvaged and reused on site. This will provide a mature look and match the existing landscape areas.

The landscape palette has been selected with consideration given to low water use, visual screening, air quality, shading and long term maintenance. The list of plants proposed for this project are indicated on the drawings as presented with this PAD Modification; these plants were selected from the most current version of the Arizona Department of Water Resources Low Water Use/Drought Tolerant Plants List as required. The landscape will transition from the perimeter area's natural design into a more "urban" concept that is greener and lush at the building entrances and entry drives. Arid-regional and low water use plants will be used throughout and accented by decorative plantings and massing of accents and shrubs. Tree groupings will provide shade for walks and partial screening of the dock areas. Plant placements and landscape architectural design will range from informal at the perimeter and frontage to more formal groupings within the building's hardscape and pedestrian areas, creating an overall theme that will complement the project's architecture.

Foundation plantings shall be planted adjacent to building entries to accentuate the building design and highlight building entrances, while providing a buffer between building and parking areas.

Along Recker Road, Evergreen Bird of Paradise (see landscape concept plan) trees are shown to be planted. Tree species are dictated due to the overhead power lines. Parking Structure driveway entrances shall have increased landscaping and include additional specimen trees.

All retention areas with side-slopes adjacent to the right-of-way and internally shall be landscaped. No retaining walls are shown at the retention basins, as we are able to achieve minimal side slopes.

For the security and safety of its users, area lighting will be provided throughout the newly developed portions of the site. All area lighting will be shielded to mitigate light pollution and glare into adjacent properties and will be mounted at or below allowable heights.

Open Space

Given the existing use, the majority of the site's land area will consist of the building footprint and surrounding pedestrian courts. It is anticipated that useable open space shall be provided in the form of shaded outdoor sitting areas that may be shared between buildings. These open space areas shall be fully landscaped, utilize decorative paving materials and plants with large canopies.

Conclusion

The ATSU Expansion looks to building on the existing strengths of this desert oriented campus which includes academic buildings with a pedestrian connection to three supporting medical office buildings. Density is used as a strategy to create a true pedestrian oriented campus of buildings. A sense of place is created by the siting of the new building, and the pass through entry creates visibility from the perimeter campus access road.

The Expansion will also provide an exceptional opportunity for the City of Mesa to capture business and industry opportunities, which in turn will create job opportunities for existing and future residents.

Based upon the overall information/analysis provided herein, and the companion documents submitted, we believe this Site Plan Review request for the development is consistent with the overall intent and goals of the City of Mesa General Plan, Employment/Industrial Design Guidelines and the provisions of the City's Zoning Ordinance, all of which set forth the vision and expectations for this area and for this type of development.