



## Planning and Zoning Board

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### *Case Information*

**CASE NUMBER:** Z16-017 (PLN2015-00585)  
**LOCATION:** 5850 through 5959 East Still Circle  
**GENERAL VICINITY:** Located north of Baseline Road and west of S. Recker Road  
**REQUEST:** PAD Modification and Site Plan Review  
**PURPOSE:** This request will allow for the expansion of a university academic building and parking structure  
**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** District 2  
**OWNER/APPLICANT:** Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine (dba A.T. Still University)/Toby Rogers – Butler Design Group  
**STAFF PLANNER:** Andrew Spurgin, Principal Planner

### **SITE DATA**

**PARCEL NO.:** 141-53-890, 141-53-891 and 141-53-892  
**PARCEL SIZE:** 37.63 acres (11.44 acres subject to request)  
**EXISTING ZONING:** LI-PAD and PEP-PAD  
**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION:** Educational Campus Specialty District  
**PROPOSED LAND USE:** Academic Building and Parking Structure  
**CURRENT LAND USE:** Surface parking lot and vacant  
**PARKING REQUIRED:** 1,072  
**PARKING PROVIDED:** 1,493  
**BUILDING SQUARE FOOTAGE (GFA):** 121,706sf

### **SITE CONTEXT**

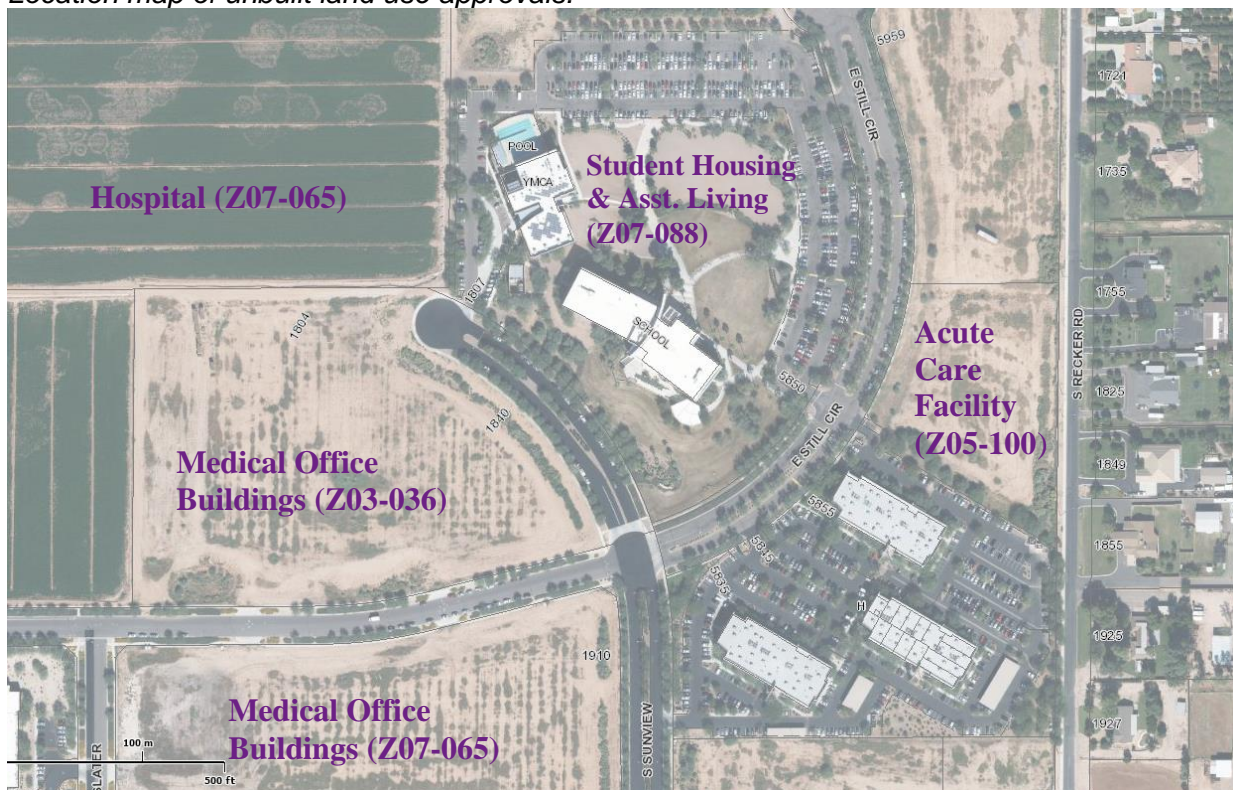
**NORTH:** US 60 Superstition Freeway – unzoned State right of way, approx. 650 feet wide  
**EAST:** (Across Recker Road) Mixed residential and agricultural uses – zoned AG  
**SOUTH:** Medical Office Buildings – zoned PEP-PAD  
**WEST:** Vacant – zoned PEP-PAD

### **ZONING & PROPERTY HISTORY**

**April 28, 1982:** Annexed into City (Ord. #1661)  
**November 22, 1982:** Rezoned from County Rural-43 to AG (Z82-091)  
**October 20, 1997:** Portion of the property zoned to M-1 (Z97-083)  
**August 1, 2000:** Rezoned from AG and M-1 to PEP-PAD (Z00-050). PAD allowed additional building height over code in place at the time.  
**October 22, 2001:** Final plat approval for the Arizona Health and Technology Park.  
**August 6, 2003:** Design Guidelines approved for the Arizona Health and

<b>October 13, 2003:</b>	Technology Park. Site plan approval for medical office buildings to the west of Sunview, which were not built. (Z03-036)
<b>April 5, 2004:</b>	Site plan approval for medical office buildings to the south, across Still Circle (Z04-016), were built and currently occupied.
<b>January 9, 2006:</b>	Site Plan approval for long-term acute care facility to the east of Still Circle, which was not built (Z05-100).
<b>July 9, 2007</b>	Rezone properties west of Sunview from AG and PEP-PAD to PEP-DMP-CUP for 1,426,000 square feet of new buildings consisting of hospital, specialty hospital, medical offices buildings and hotel. Project was not built. (Z07-065)
<b>September 17, 2007:</b>	Rezone lot 9 (17.38 acres) from PEP-PAD to M-1 PAD CUP to allow student housing, assisted living and recreation facility. PAD modified to allow up to 47'6" height for housing and a parking reduction of up to 197 spaces below code (Z07-088).
<b>August 30, 2010</b>	Council Use Permit for a Freeway Landmark Sign at a height of 85 feet (Z10-019) adjacent to Superstition Freeway frontage, expired since not exercised.
<b>September 3, 2011:</b>	Zoning Ordinance restructured M-1 PAD to LI-PAD

*Location map of unbuilt land use approvals:*



**STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval with conditions**

**P&Z BOARD RECOMMENDATION:** ☐ Approval with conditions. ☐ Denial

**PROPOSITION 207 WAIVER SIGNED:** ☒ Yes ☐ No

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The property subject to the Site Plan and PAD modification is located within the Arizona Health & Technology Park. The subdivision was designed as a business park that relates to adjacent medical facilities such as Banner Gateway. In addition to A.T. Still University, tenants of the Park create a node of medical institutions supportive of the healthcare field.

The site is located north of Baseline Road and the intersection of Sunview Circle. Still Circle is a private roadway that serves as the main entryway to the University and functions as a collector but is a private drive. Still Circle aligns with Inverness Avenue at the four-way intersection with Sunview. Recker Road follows the eastern property line of the subject property as a local street that dead-ends south of the Superstition Freeway and provides access to residential parcels located on the east side of Recker Road.

The existing zoning for the University campus features Light Industrial "LI" to the west of Still Circle and Planned Employment District "PEP" to the east of Still Circle and both sides feature an existing Planned Area Development "PAD" overlay. The applicant requests to modify approximately 11.44 acres from the existing PAD to allow the University to construct a new 3-story academic building consisting of 121,760 square feet and a 3-story parking structure as part of the new phase of campus expansion. Other elements of the existing PAD, such as the YMCA facility and the previously approved four-story residential buildings, will not be modified by this request.

With this application, the applicant has requested site plan approval with further modification to the PAD to address the following items:

1. Increase in the maximum height permitted in the LI district from 40 feet to 54.5 feet,
2. To exceed the maximum allowed parking by 153 spaces, and
3. To reduce the required bicycle parking by 184 spaces.

The existing PAD and site plan approved in 2007 allowed development of the YMCA recreational complex and a 4-story student living and assisted living complex. The YMCA complex was completed; however, the residential component was postponed to a later phase of development. The current request removes a 221 space parking lot on the west side of Still Circle for the new 3-story academic building but provides sufficient land to retain the senior and student housing. Providing the parking structure with this phase of development allows this infrastructure to be in place once future phases of campus building come online. The two alternative site plans are provided in the report attachments – one showing the requested garage and a second showing a surface parking alternative.

## **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

The applicant has notified all surrounding property owners within 500-feet of the subject site, registered neighborhoods within one mile and homeowner's associations within one-half mile of the site. To further ensure notice was received by the adjacent residents along Recker Road the applicant hand-delivered additional notices on March 15, 2016 and scheduled a presentation for interested neighbors for March 21, 2016. Additional meetings were held with the neighborhood on April 4, 2016 and July 5, 2016. According to the Citizen Participation Report provided by the applicant, the primary concerns expressed by neighbors were relative to

the parking garage location adjacent to Recker Road and associated issues related to height, design and operations of the parking garage. Comments received by staff were also limited to concerns regarding the parking garage location and design.

### **CONFORMANCE WITH THE MESA 2040 GENERAL PLAN**

*Summary: The proposed expansion of the University is consistent with the concepts of the Specialty District with Educational Campus sub-type established in the Mesa 2040 General Plan. The location has been identified on Chapter 7's Character Area map as a component of a larger 275-acre area for a Specialty District and directly supports Chapter 5 policies targeted the healthcare sector for job growth. Creation of a destination campus supports Chapter 6 policies for providing high quality public spaces.*

The goal of Mesa 2040 General Plan is to establish and maintain neighborhoods and to build a sense of place in neighborhoods and in commercial/employment areas of activity. Rather than focusing on individual land uses, the Plan focuses on the "character of development in different areas." Character types combine concepts of land use with building form and intensity to describe the type of area being created through the development that occurs.

#### **Criteria for review of development**

State statutes require that all adopted zoning and rezoning ordinances be consistent with the adopted General Plan. Determining consistency with the General Plan requires a review of the proposal against the character area requirements and the other goals and policies of the Plan and any adopted sub-area plans. The following criteria have been developed for use during the review process to determine whether or not the proposed development is achieving the vision and goals established in this Plan and thus meeting the statute requirements.

#### **1. Is the proposed development consistent with furthering the intent and direction contained in the General Plan?**

The General Plan focuses on creating land development patterns that emphasize the character of place. Strengthening neighborhoods and the commercial centers that serve them is also important. There is an emphasis on retrofitting auto-centered form of suburban development with infill developments that provide pedestrian connections.

Section II of the General Plan establishes the primary elements of the document:

- A. Creating and maintaining a variety of great neighborhoods,
- B. Growing and maintaining stable and diverse jobs,
- C. Providing Rich, High Quality Public Spaces and Cultural Resources, and
- D. Community Character.

*The proposed use of this property is consistent with the guiding principles of the General Plan and, in particular, contributes to goals to improve the educational system for the community and build connections between education and job opportunities in the health care industry. The healthcare industry is one of five targeted sectors identified in the General Plan for future job growth. The University functions as an anchor for the larger Specialty District identified in the General Plan and has potential to incubate further development in the area. Finally, creating a destination campus environment contributes to the Plan's vision for quality public spaces to allow places for social interaction and that can be programmed for educational events for the enrichment of the greater community.*

**2. Is the proposed development consistent with adopted sub-area or neighborhood plans?**

*The proposed development is not located within an adopted sub-area or neighborhood plan.*

**3. Is the proposed development consistent with the standards and guidelines established for the applicable character type(s)?**

Figure 7-1 of the Mesa 2040 General Plan identifies this location as a Specialty District which are large areas intended for anchors such as an educational campus, airport or medical facility. The General Plan recognizes that Specialty Districts may have significant impact on surrounding development either through the amount of traffic they generate, or the noise associated with their activities. Development in this character type maintains a campus feel and connection between buildings by having consistency in landscaping and signage and a high quality of building design and materials. The Educational Sub-type recognizes building forms typically 2 to 4 stories, set in lawns and clustered together to allow for walkability.

*The proposed expansion of the University strengthens the Specialty area designated in the General Plan by establishing a destination campus that will anchor this Specialty Area. The proposed 3-story academic building and parking garage designed to serve the larger campus and adjacent medical office buildings is in keeping with the form and guidelines of the Educational Campus sub-type.*

**4. Will the proposed development serve to strengthen the character of the area by:**

**• Providing appropriate infill development;**

*The request makes use of approximately 11 acres of a larger 130 acre bypassed area of land that is surrounded by a mix of existing commercial and residential developments south of the Superstition Freeway in both cities of Mesa and Gilbert. Sunview and Inverness Avenue were developed as collector type roadways in anticipation of future development of these tracts and are currently underutilized.*

**• Removing development that is deteriorated and/or does not contribute to the quality of the surrounding area;**

*The request will allow for development on bypassed land that will serve the greater community as a destination academic campus in a key employment sector identified Chapter 5 of the General Plan. Approximately 130 acres in the larger 275 Specialty District remains vacant and thus the development of this proposal on the subject 11-acre area for University campus expansion is an opportunity to carry out the broad vision of the General Plan.*

**• Adding to the mix of uses to further enhance the intended character of the area;**

*This particular Specialty District established in the General Plan covers a roughly 275-acre area east of Higley Road and north of Baseline Road and includes the existing University campus, YMCA and adjacent medical office buildings, the HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital, as well as additional medical office buildings along Baseline Road. A large UPS distribution facility is also located within this Specialty District. Major healthcare institutions such as Banner Gateway are also located in the vicinity and typically healthcare institutions cluster development with hospitals, medical office buildings, educational and training*

*facilities and supportive uses such as multi-residence developments and hospital uses. This pattern exists in other Valley locations such as around the Chandler Regional Medical Center or the Mayo Clinic and HonorHealth campuses in Scottsdale.*

- **Improving the streetscape and connectivity within the area;**

*Still Circle is a private street that is open to the public and serves as the spine road for the future build-out of AT Still University. Placement of the new Academic Building on the west side of the street with a parking garage on the east side of the street connected by a series of three crosswalks establishes a more close-knit campus feeling than currently exists. The “park-once” concept of a parking garage will facilitate pedestrian activity between campus buildings, the YMCA and the medical office buildings. A connection between the campus to and South Recker Road was discussed however both staff and the applicant believe that protection of the existing character of the adjacent community is important and therefore a connection to the east is not included with the proposed development.*

- **Improving safety within the area;**

*The current situation of the University results in campus students and patients in the medical office building to park on-street on Still Circle, Sunview and Inverness Avenue – sometimes up to 600 feet west of the four-way intersection which is an unsecure area due to the vacant lands west of the Campus. Creating a centrally located parking garage will shorten walking distances, maintain pedestrian circulation within the area patrolled by campus security and reduce pedestrian exposure to extreme weather conditions. The applicant has described a security plan that includes a combination of lighting, monitored security cameras and security guards to promote safety within the campus and medical office buildings.*

- **Adding to the sense of place;**

*The new academic building will establish a sense of enclosure in combination with the existing academic building and the YMCA to create a large campus lawn area that will contribute to a sense of place for the University and fulfilling the policies of Chapter 6 of the General Plan for high quality public spaces. Enclosing the street view along Still Circle with the academic building and garage will create an inviting urban presence in an area that currently features a parking lot on one side and vacant land on the other side.*

- **Meeting or exceeding the development quality of the surrounding area?**

*Roughly 130 acres of the surrounding lands are vacant therefore quality development at this location will set a standard for build out of the Specialty District designated in the General Plan. The site plan indicates open spaces, areas of landscaping and a pedestrian circulation system consistent with the description for a Specialty District in the General Plan. The Design Review process will ensure that the site will be developed in a way that meets or exceeds code requirements and the previously adopted Design Guidelines for the Arizona Health & Technology Park that will enhance the quality of the overall complex.*

**5. Does the proposed development provide appropriate transitions between uses? In more urban areas these transitions should generally be accomplished by design elements that allow adjacent buildings to be close to one another. In more suburban locations these transitions should be addressed through separation of uses and/or screening;**

*The proposed academic building to the west of Still Circle is consistent with the vision outlined in the original zoning establishing the University campus and relates to the*

*previously approved 4-story student housing and assisted living and YMCA, as well as the existing academic building. The surrounding areas to the west are likely to be used for medical institutions and/or offices based on previous proposals and the General Plan Specialty District designation. The parking garage to the east of Still Circle is proposed for 27'6" in height to the top of wall elements and thus steps down in height when viewed as a transition from the 54'6" academic building to the residential uses along South Recker Road. The east elevation of the garage will be setback a minimum distance of 115'2" from the east property line and will include foundation base landscaping, a drive aisle and additional perimeter landscaping. Ground cover and continuous groupings of 24" and 36" box trees are proposed along the eastern perimeter to provide screening. In addition, existing 36" box mesquite trees are proposed to be transplanted to the parking lot islands along the east side of the garage.*

### STAFF ANALYSIS:

The applicant's request is to expand the A.T. Still University campus with a new academic building and a parking garage. The garage would be accessed from Still Circle and provide convenient pedestrian connections to the existing and proposed academic buildings and the medical office buildings to the south that are currently used as additional classroom space for University programs.

#### *PAD Modifications Requested:*

	<b>LI District</b> (Academic Building)	<b>LI Mod. Request</b>	<b>PEP District</b> (Parking Garage)	<b>PEP Mod. Request</b>	<b>Applicant's Justification</b>
<b>Max. Height</b>	40'	54'6"	Plan Specific	27'6"	Increased floor-to-floor heights and greater window areas are desired to better utilize daylight for the Academic Building. The 54'6" height is inclusive of roof mounted equipment screening. The habitable building is planned for 46'6"
<b>Front and street facing side yards</b>	20'	0'	20'	0'	AT Still Circle is a private drive and therefore this standard is not applicable
<b>Vehicle parking - colleges/universities</b>	<b>Parking requirement:</b> 1,072 minimum spaces (1/200 sf) and 1,340 maximum spaces (125%)		<b>Mod. Request:</b> 1,493 spaces (1/144 sf)		A parking utilization study is described in the project narrative of establishing a 6.95 spaces per 1,000sf ratio. When applied to the campus with the proposed site changes, the formula yields the requested parking schedule.
<b>Bicycle parking - colleges</b>	<b>Parking requirement:</b> 214 (1 space per 5 vehicles spaces)		<b>Mod. Request:</b> 30		Due to the location of the University and the function of the medical programs offered by AT Still, students must carry laptop computers and wardrobe change therefore bicycling is not practical for students.



The report will discuss the requested PAD modifications in two sections, first relative to the proposed academic building located and second relative to the proposed parking garage.

**Academic Building:** The applicant has requested a new 3-story academic building consisting of 121,706 square feet as a companion to the existing 98,000 square foot academic building. The existing 3-story academic building was approved in August 2000 to allow a height of 43'6", not including the additional rooftop features. This approval was specific to the first academic building and associated parking fields however it included a conceptual site plan for up to 4 academic buildings with a stipulation for future Planning & Zoning Board, Design Review Board and City Council review.

This portion of the campus west of Still Circle was subject of rezoning and a new site plan in 2007 to allow a 4-story student housing and assisted living facility up to 47'6" in height and the East Valley YMCA facility. By virtue of construction of the YMCA, this site plan was validated and the applicant has expressed a desire to retain the ability to provide the residential component in a future phase of campus development.

The current proposal would remove 221 spaces of the existing parking west of Still Circle that was part of the August 2000 approval, to be replaced with a 121,706 square foot academic building. The new building is proposed for 46'6" of height plus an additional 8' for roof-mounted panels to screen equipment. This request requires additional modification to the PAD, however is generally consistent with previous approvals for the academic building and housing that exceeded the maximum height in the LI district. By removing the parking field next to the street the new academic building will work with the existing academic building, YMCA and future housing to frame an enclosed lawn area to establish a campus environment.

**Parking Garage:** The University has struggled to provide sufficient parking for the growing student enrollment and expanding breadth of academic program offerings. During site visits staff observed extensive on-street parking along Still Circle, Sunview Circle and along Inverness Avenue to the west of Sunview for a distance of up to 600 feet. The overflow parking situation is not ideal, particularly when future parcels in the Arizona Business & Technology Park develop.

*Staff observed on-street parking:*



{00207198.1}



*Aerial view showing on-street parking along Sunview and Inverness Avenue:*



Compounding the University's overflow parking problem is an observed under-parked situation of the YMCA facility. The YMCA parking is barricaded to preclude connection with the existing University surface parking lots at the north end of the campus. When the YMCA facility was approved in 2007, a parking reduction was approved in the context of the larger PAD request to add the 4-story residential uses. The individual land uses associated with the YMCA such as the fitness area, pool, childcare, office and multi-purpose room would typically require 267 spaces following strict adherence to the Zoning Ordinance; the barricaded YMCA parking lot features only 83 spaces, less than one-third of the 267 spaces.

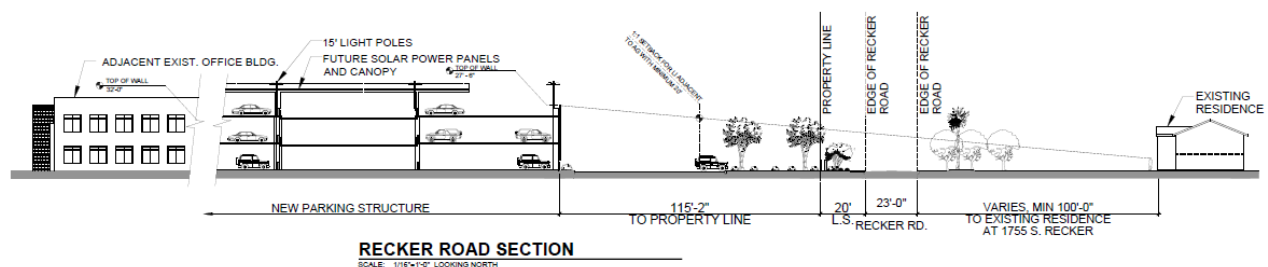
In addition to correcting the on-street parking situation and the under-parked YMCA, an additional 194 existing off-street spaces on the west side of Still Circle will be displaced for the proposed academic building discussed in the section above. To comprehensively address the parking situation, the applicant has proposed a 3-level parking structure on the east side of Still Circle.

Foreseeing the need to address parking needs, the University conducted a parking audit as described in the project narrative. Based on the audit the applicant has requested a parking ratio of 6.95 per 1000 square feet ratio to provide up to 1,493 off-street parking spaces, consisting of 297 existing surface spaces to remain; 208 new surface spaces; and 988 spaces within the new garage. The Zoning Ordinance establishes a maximum parking rate at 125% of the minimum. The applicant's request exceeds the parking maximum amount but has used the project narrative to describe several factors that contribute to the need for this quantity of parking.

The applicant is also requesting a reduction in the number of bicycle parking spaces that would typically be required. The existing vehicle parking deficiencies have been documented as described above, however the applicant has also noted that the nature of the University's medical programs and student population differs from a typical University with a range of disciplines and, therefore, warrants special consideration. 30 bicycle spaces will be provided with this phase of construction (condition #5).

The narrative indicates that the garage has been located as proposed to provide the shortest walking distances to the academic buildings and also provide an alternative for the medical office building parking lots. A system of crosswalks is proposed to provide connections between the garage and the academic buildings on opposite sides of Still Circle (condition #6). The applicant has separately discussed a campus wayfinding system that will be considered separately with a Comprehensive Sign Plan through the Board of Adjustment (condition #7).

The parking garage site is zoned for PEP uses and in 2006 a two-story long-term acute care facility was approved on the land currently proposed for the garage. The overall scale and bulk of the proposed parking garage relative to the residential community east of Recker Road is an item of concern. The General Plan recognizes that land uses within Specialty Districts "can have a significant impact on surrounding development either through the amount of traffic they generate, or the noise associated with their activities." No vehicle access is proposed from the garage to South Recker Road and the design is not expected to result in significant noise impacts. The scale of the garage will have a presence on South Recker Road, which is a unique enclave of large residential parcels mixed with agricultural uses. The applicant's request places the garage at 115'2" from the eastern property line. The applicant has furnished a visual impact analysis that demonstrates how the perception of the bulk of the garage can be minimized. The visual impact analysis was performed from the residence located at 1755 South Recker Road since that particular lot sits roughly in the middle of the length of the garage and features the least amount of front setback distance from Recker Road. A copy of the visual impact analysis is provided with this report.



Conceptual designs for the garage have been provided with the site plan that features elevations indicating conventional 3-foot tall concrete barriers to shield vehicle headlights from shining toward the east and architectural embellishment of the east facing facade with perforated metal screens as well as steel canopy framing and perforated metal decking to provide contrast. In lieu of solid wall garage barriers, staff proposes that the ground level of the garage use perforated metal, ironwork or similar open view barriers that meet vehicle impact requirements but provide for transparency to address CPTED concerns raised by Mesa Police (conditions #8 and 9). The applicant's position is that the 3-foot solid barrier is appropriate to shield headlights from the adjacent Recker Road community. The site's perimeter screen wall, landscaping and the

generous setback distance should minimize the impact of ground-level headlights.

Providing a green screen vertical garden along the east elevation has also been discussed with the applicant. East facing climbing vines have greater survivability probability than south or west facing vines and staff supports this concept to soften the hard edge of parking garage (condition #10). The design for the garage will be more thoroughly vetted with the Design Review Board.

### **CONCLUSIONS:**

Modifying the previously approved site plan and PAD to relocate surface parking spaces to allow a new academic building complements the Mesa General Plan designation for this location as a Specialty District with the Educational Sub-Type in a key employment sector targeted in the General Plan for job growth. Providing a parking garage and additional off-street parking east of Still Circle at quantities above typical Ordinance requirements appears necessary to remedy parking problems and provide infrastructure for future campus build-out. The garage option is a preferred alternative to surface parking as is it would further contribute to the campus setting envisioned for Specialty Districts and facilitate a park-once format allowing a central civic space consistent with the General Plan policies for high quality public spaces. The Design Review process will be used to address any additional concerns regarding the building designs and therefore staff recommends approval of this case subject to the following conditions:

### **CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:**

1. Compliance with the basic development as described in the project narrative and as shown on the site plan.
2. Compliance with all Design Review requirements.
3. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations except as modified by the PAD.
4. **Prior to approval of building permits for the parking garage, completion of a lot line adjustment between APN 141-53-889 and 141-53-890 and a lot combination for APN 141-53-890 and 141-53-891.**
5. **A minimum of 32 motorcycle/scooter parking spaces and 30 bicycle parking spaces shall be provided and designed in accordance with Chapter 32 of the Zoning Ordinance.**
6. **Pavers or decorative/stamped concrete shall be provided for pedestrian crosswalks across Still Circle.**
7. **The conceptual signage shown in the plans and described in the project narrative shall be subject to approval of an updated Comprehensive Sign Plan as required by the Zoning Ordinance.**
8. **The ground level of the parking garage shall use perforated metal, ironwork or similar open view barriers that meet impact vehicle barrier requirements, rather than use of a solid wall.**
9. **Applicant shall consult with Mesa Police regarding the final design for the parking garage during the building permit review and a final CPTED inspection by the Mesa Police Department shall be coordinated prior to issuance of the certificate of occupancy, or certificate of completion as applicable.**
10. **Foundation base landscaping along the east (Recker Road) facing elevation of the parking garage shall include planting and maintenance of a vertical garden ("green screen") anchored to the wall or the ground which consists of trellises with climbing plants or vines, planter boxes with overhanging plants such as cat's claw vine or similar vertical garden as approved by the Planning Director.**

11. **Any dead, dying or missing landscaping adjacent to Sunview Circle and Still Circle shall be replaced consistent with previously approved landscape plans.**
12. **Administrative site plan review to address final design of solid waste facilities and any landscape plan corrections to address possible utility conflicts.**