



## Planning and Zoning Board

### *Staff Report*

**CASE NUMBER:** Z16-041 (PLN2016-00327)  
**LOCATION/ADDRESS:** The 3200 through 3400 block of North Higley Road (west side).  
**GENERAL VICINITY:** Located south of the Loop 202 Red Mountain Freeway on the west side of Higley Road.  
**REQUEST:** Site Plan Review and Preliminary Plat  
**PURPOSE:** This request will allow for a light industrial development and associated storage yards.  
**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** District 5  
**OWNER/APPLICANT:** Corey Smith, DCSJ, LLC  
**STAFF PLANNER:** Tom Ellsworth

### **SITE DATA**

**PARCEL NO.:** 141-37-001D  
**PARCEL SIZE:** 9± acres  
**EXISTING ZONING:** Light Industrial (LI)  
**GENERAL PLAN CHARACTER:** Employment  
**CURRENT LAND USE:** Vacant / Undeveloped

### **SITE CONTEXT**

**NORTH:** Office – zoned LI  
**EAST:** (across Higley Rd) Sunshine Acres – zoned RS-90  
**SOUTH:** Manufacturing / Employment – zoned LI  
**WEST:** Sand and Gravel Quarry – zoned GI

### **ZONING HISTORY/RELATED CASES**

**January 23, 1983:** Annexed into the City of Mesa (Ord. 1682)  
**May 16, 1983:** Rezone from Maricopa County IND-1 to City of Mesa LI, (Z83-035)

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Approval with Conditions

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

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

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION / REQUEST

The applicant is requesting a Site Plan Review and Preliminary Plat approval for a light industrial development located at 3410 North Higley Road. The 9± acre site currently consists of one vacant lot on the west side of Higley Road just south of the 202 Red Mountain Freeway. The applicant is proposing to subdivide the site into 5 parcels with 6 buildings to create a group industrial center that will serve light industrial type uses.

The applicant is proposing 89,005sf of total building space. The proposed site layout is a grouping of 6 buildings with ancillary storage yards organized from south to north. Each building fronts on to a main drive aisle with the required amount of parking.

The site is accessed from four curb-cuts along Higley Road. Three of the curb-cuts will allow right-in and right-out access only, while one is aligned with the median cut in Higley Road to allow full access to the site from north and south bound traffic.

The following is a description of the buildings on each parcel from south to north:

	Building Area	Parking
Building 1	Office: 1,976 Warehouse: 6,639sf Total: 8,615sf	<u>Required Parking:</u> 126 spaces  Office: .....29 spaces (1 space/375sf): 10,864sf / 375  Warehouse: .....69 spaces (1 space/900sf): 61,508sf / 900  Shop: .....28 spaces (1 space/600sf): 16,633sf / 600  <u>Provided Parking:</u> 155 spaces
Building 2	Office: 1,542 Shop: 11,290 Canopy: 1,920 Total: 14,752sf	
Building 3	Office: 2,942 Warehouse: 9,883 Total: 12,825sf	
Building 4	Office: 920 Warehouse: 5,343sf Total: 6,263sf	
Building 5	Warehouse: 11,248 Expansion: 11,248sf Total: 22,496sf	
Building 6	Office: 3,484 Warehouse: 19,012sf Total: 22,496sf	
	Total Sq. Ft: 89,005	

### NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPATION

The applicant has implemented a Citizen Participation Plan that included mailing letters to all the surrounding property owners within 1000' of the site and all registered neighborhoods and HOA's within one mile. The letters included a description of the proposal, a copy of the site plan and elevations, and contact information to provided comments and feedback to the applicant. To date the applicant has reported that they have not received any comments from surrounding property owners.

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

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 and focusing on those principles that build neighborhoods, stabilize the job base, and improve the sense of place.

*Staff Comment: The site is located along the North Higley Road in an area of the City that has been designated for industrial and employment type uses. The site is bordered on the west by an existing sand and gravel mine with the Boeing manufacturing facility to the south. The proposed land uses are in conformance with the existing LI zoning designation for the site and the site plan meets all of the site development standards for the LI zoning district. The proposed site development is consistent with the context of the area and is providing development to a site that has been vacant for the past few decades.*

The Plan also describes 5 key elements to be considered with development to help move the City toward the goal of becoming a more complete, recognizable City. The five elements include:

1. High Quality Development
2. Changing Demographics
3. Public Health
4. Urban Design and Place-Making
5. Desert Environment

*Staff Comment: The proposed industrial site is being developed on a narrow strip of land that is left over from the adjacent sand and gravel operation. The narrowness of the site provides challenges to the development of the site for warehousing and manufacturing type of uses. The proposed development creates a linear layout for light industrial buildings with screened storage yards that is typical for this type of development. This request will allow for a light industrial development and associated storage yards. The applicant is currently working with staff and the Design Review Board to develop the proposed elevations to a quality indicative of the area.*

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

Staff Comment: *The proposed site is located within the Falcon Field Sub-Area Plan. The proposed land uses are consistent with the land use goals from the Sub-Area Plan. Staff is continuing to work with the applicant through the Design Review process to ensure that the architectural design of the buildings is consistent with the architectural design standards discussed in the Sub-Area 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 shows this area designated as a Transit Corridor within a Neighborhood character type. The focus in this character type is to develop a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, urban environment, particularly within walking distance of transit stops. This character type overlays the other character types and is used to transition the area into a more transit- and pedestrian-oriented development form. This overall category is divided into corridors and station areas. The proposed site is appropriate to be designated as a Corridor subtype. This character type applies to development of the corridors between stations and stops and will be less intense, but should still evolve into a more urban pattern with buildings brought close to the front property lines and parking behind or beside buildings. Streets should maintain a pedestrian orientation, but first floors of buildings may not contain active uses.

Staff Comment: *The proposed development is consistent with the standards and guidelines for the Employment Character Type.*

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

• **Providing appropriate infill development;**

*This request will facilitate development on a narrow strip of land left over from the adjacent mining operation in an area anticipated for employment land uses.*

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

*The development of this vacant site will enhance the overall appearance and quality of this section of North Higley Road.*

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

*The proposed uses on the site plan are consistent with the existing character and mix of intended land uses in this area.*

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

*The proposed development will provide interest to the streetscape along North Higley Road and is consistent with the allowed uses and design standards of the existing LI zoning on the site.*

• **Improving safety within the area;**

*Development consistent with current development standards and codes will increase safety in the area by providing a presence on a long stretch of undeveloped arterial frontage and*

*providing a buffer against operations of the quarry operation located to the west of the subject property.*

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

*The proposed development will create a small group industrial development with internal circulation and common design theme.*

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

*Upon further Design Review refinement, the development of this site to current development standards will meet the development quality of the surrounding area.*

**5. Does the proposed development provide appropriate transitions between uses? In more suburban locations these transitions should be addressed through separation of uses and/or screening?**

*The site is lacking a cross access easement to the south and to the north which is typically part of group industrial developments. Cross access would provide better circulation to employees, visitors and delivery traffic from the site by connecting to median breaks along Recker Road and alignment with Longbow Parkway. Staff is recommending a condition of approval to alleviate this concern.*

### **STAFF ANALYSIS**

This 9± acre site is located along the 3200 through 3400 blocks North Higley Road. The applicant is requesting a site plan review and preliminary plat approval for the development of a group industrial development. The site plan consists of 6 buildings on 5 proposed parcels. The buildings and parcels are designed as one group industrial center with a shared drive aisle and parking. The buildings on site are designed for light manufacturing, office, and warehousing type uses with associated screened storage yards.

The site is currently zoned Limited Industrial (LI). The proposed site development is consistent with the context of the area and is providing development to a previously undeveloped parcel. The proposed site plan meets the development standards identified in the zoning ordinance for an LI zoned site.

#### Concerns:

Staff has a concern with a lack of cross-access to adjacent parcels. The current site plan does not provide cross-access to the existing office development to the north or to the entry drive to the mining operation to the south.

Cross-access to the north would allow traffic from one development to access the other without the need to utilize the arterial street. The property owner to the north has not provided a cross-access easement to this site from their property. Staff has requested that the applicant contact the adjacent property owner to pursue a possible easement. Staff would be supportive of a condition of approval that would require the applicant to provide a future cross-access easement to the north on the plat for this property and to provide a letter from the property owner to the north acknowledging that they are not supportive of a cross-access to their property at the time of permitting. (see Condition #6 and #7)

Cross-access to the south would mitigate dead-end parking on the site and would also align the ingress/egress of the site with the Longbow Parkway allowing full access (left in and left out) to

the site from Higley Road. An easement is already in place across this parcel for the mining operation to access their site. Staff is supportive of a condition of approval require the entry to move to the south to align with Longbow Parkway. (see Condition #8).

**CONCLUSION:**

The proposed site plan is consistent with the General Plan character area for employment uses. The existing zoning on the site allows light industrial uses and the proposed site plan meets the design standards for the LI zoning district. The uses are compatible with the Falcon Field Sub-Area Plan and the applicant is currently working with the Design Review Board to develop the proposed elevations to be consistent with the architectural design elements of the sub-area plan.

Therefore, staff is recommending approval the proposed site plan and preliminary plat with 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 and preliminary plat submitted, and preliminary elevations as approved through the Design Review process, (without guarantee of lot yield, building count, lot coverage).
2. Compliance with all requirements of Design Review.
3. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations.
4. All street improvements and street frontage landscaping to be installed in the first phase of construction.
5. Compliance with all requirements of the Subdivision Technical Review Committee.
6. **Show cross-access on the site plan to the property to the north.**
7. **Record a cross-access easement with the property to the north.**
  - a. **Easement within the subject property to be provided prior to building permit.**
  - b. **Property owner to the north to provide cross-access agreement. If the adjacent property owner to the north is not agreeable to a cross-access easement, the applicant must provide a letter from the adjacent property owner acknowledging that they are not willing to permit an easement to the property. This letter shall be included with the submittal for building permits.**
8. **Move the southernmost entry south to align with Longbow Parkway to allow full access to the site.**