



Planning and Zoning Board

Case Information

CASE NUMBER: Z16-043 (PLN2016-00489)
LOCATION/ADDRESS: 4550 E Southern Avenue.
GENERAL VICINITY: Located north of Southern Avenue and east of Greenfield Road.
REQUEST: Rezoning from RS-6-PAD to LC; and Site Plan Modification
PURPOSE: This request will allow expansion of the existing mini-storage facility into a portion of the existing RV storage facility located at 4550 East Southern Avenue.
COUNCIL DISTRICT: District 2.
OWNER: Beth Coons, RFN Investment
APPLICANT: Jeff D Welker, Welker Development Resources, LLC
STAFF PLANNER: Wahid Alam, AICP

SITE DATA

PARCEL NUMBER(S): 14051721
PARCEL SIZE: 7.33± acres
EXISTING ZONING: LC (Limited Commercial) and RS-6 PAD (Single Residence- Planned Area Development)
GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Neighborhood Suburban
CURRENT LAND USE: RV storage

ZONING HISTORY/RELATED CASES:

October 6, 1973: Annexed into the City of Mesa (Ord. No. 829)
August 19, 1974: Establish AG Zoning on annexed property (Ord. # 886, Z74-052)
April 23, 1979: Rezone from AG to R1-6-PAD to expand "Sunland Village" Retirement area and provide Boat, Trailer and Vehicle storage for the tenants. (Ord. # 1224, Z79-040)
September 10, 1984: Rezone from R1-6-PAD to C-2 to allow development of a mini-storage. (Ord. # 1871, Z79-040)

Note: Present zoning designation of RS-6-PAD and LC occurred in 2011 when the abbreviations for zoning districts R1-6 changed to RS-6, and C-2 to LC.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval with Conditions.

P&Z BOARD DECISION: ☒ Approval with Conditions ☐ Denial

PROPOSITION 207 WAIVER SIGNED: ☒ Yes ☐ No

SITE CONTEXT

NORTH: Sunland Village 8 residential development –zoned RS-6-PAD
EAST: Existing multiple residence development – zoned RM-4
SOUTH: (across Southern Avenue) Existing multiple residence development and Medical Offices – Zoned RM-3 & OC
WEST: Existing multiple residence – zoned RM-4

PROJECT DESCRIPTION/REQUEST

The applicant is requesting to expand the existing mini-storage located at 4550 East Southern Avenue northward into part of the area occupied by an existing RV-storage facility that is zoned RS-6-PAD. This RV storage area is a part of the Sunland Village development and is for exclusive use of the residents of this development. The existing mini-storage and RV storage share the same parcel located within “Sunland Village Eight” Subdivision, TRACT A- parcel # 14051721 and consists of approximately 7.33± acres.

In 1984 a 1.2± acres portion of TRACT A approximately 110’ deep from Southern Avenue, was rezoned to C-2 (now LC) to allow the mini-storage facility facing Southern Avenue. The remaining northern 6.13± acres still has RS-6-PAD zoning and is currently used as the RV storage facility for the residents of Sunland Village. The proposal is to expand the existing mini-storage facility further north with three more buildings parallel to the existing mini-storage facility along Southern Avenue and reduce the size and reconfigure the shape of the RV storage area. There is no existing vehicular access between the mini storage and RV storage facility; the proposed site plan shows two vehicular access gates between the two uses.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPATION

The applicant notified surrounding property owners within 1000’ including registered neighborhoods. Applicant held a neighborhood meeting, which was attended by eighteen people at Sunland Village auditorium at 4601 E Dolphin Avenue. At the meeting the primary issue of discussion was storm water runoff and retention because of the proposed expansion. Specific questions and concerns regarding current drainage patterns and if storm water runoff would be increased, decreased and/or redirected. In addition, there were inquiries about how storm water retention was going to be achieved within the existing retention basin that is located on the east side of the site. All storm water-related questions were answered and assurances given that the property owners were complying with all of the City of Mesa storm water retention requirements. There was a request to lower the exterior light poles in RV area. There were questions related to the type of surfacing materials to be used for the self-storage expansion. The attendees were informed that the owners were proposing to install asphalt in the new self-storage drive aisles as had been done within the existing self-storage area. It was confirmed for all in attendance that self-storage customers would not be allowed to access the self-storage site from Flower Circle. That access point would be maintained for Sunland Village residents only - who are storing in the RV storage area. The only access to the self-storage facility will be from the existing commercial driveway on Southern Avenue. To date, staff has not received any comments or concerns from neighboring property owners regarding the request.

CONFORMANCE WITH THE GENERAL PLAN

Summary: Given the existing zoning and development pattern, the proposed rezoning and site reconfiguration is a logical modification of the existing pattern and can meet the changing needs of the surrounding neighborhood and can, therefore, be

considered consistent with the 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

The zoning ordinance requires that all re-zonings and site plans 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 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.

The first choice for redevelopment of the RV storage area for conformance to the General Plan would be to have it as an extension of the existing residential development. There are several challenges to implementation of such an option as described below in the Staff Analysis section.

The proposal to rezone to a commercial district at this location is unusual given that it is away from the arterial intersection and between two areas zoned for multi-residences uses. This placement can create a challenge for stable neighborhood development depending on how the commercial piece is used and developed.

This proposal will allow expansion of an existing mini-storage facility into an adjacent RV storage facility. This land was previously intended for usage for RV and Boat Storage for residents of Sunland Village Eight Subdivision. This change in the predominant use of the property is based on changing needs of the market in this area. The impact on Southern Avenue will be minimal because the current mini storage building screens the rest of the site. The difference between the RV storage use and the mini storage use on the adjacent properties will also be minimal. The proposed use of this property is consistent with the guiding principles of the General Plan.

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

This area is not within any adopted sub-area plan.

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

The Character Area map of the Mesa 2040 General Plan defines this location as *Neighborhood Suburban* which is defined as follows:

Neighborhoods

Focus: The primary focus of the neighborhoods character type is to provide safe places for people to live where they can feel secure and enjoy their surrounding community. Neighborhoods can contain a wide range of housing options and often have associated nonresidential uses such as schools, parks, places of worship, and local serving businesses. The total area devoted to local serving businesses (commercial and office activities) in one location is generally less than 15 acres and these businesses would typically serve people within a mile radius of the area. Existing strip commercial areas along the border of a neighborhood are considered part of this character type. The goal is to redevelop these strip commercial areas over time to provide more of a mix of uses and to integrate better into the surrounding neighborhood. Nonresidential areas within neighborhoods should be designed and located to bring people together and to not disrupt the fabric and functioning of the neighborhood as a place where people live. The design, development, and maintenance of neighborhoods focuses on ensuring clean, safe, and healthy areas where people want to live and maintain their investments. Neighborhoods are also designed to provide opportunities for people to gain a sense of place and feel connected to the larger community.

The Sub-Types: Suburban

This is the predominant neighborhood pattern in Mesa. These neighborhoods are primarily single-residence in nature with most lots ranging in size from 6,000 sq. ft. to 18,000 sq. ft. As part of a total neighborhood area, this character type may also contain areas of duplexes and other multi-residence properties and commercial uses along arterial frontages and at major street intersections. Schools, parks, and religious institutions are frequently found in these neighborhoods. Streets are generally wide and contain sidewalks on both sides.

The General Plan includes the following “form and guidelines” items that apply to this request:

- Small, neighborhood scale office, retail, restaurants, services in appropriate locations such as along arterials or at the intersection of arterials and collector streets.
- Nonresidential lots are typically 3-acres or less in size and the aggregate of any cluster of non-residential uses is generally less than 15 acres.

The existing surrounding development fits the description of the subtype: Suburban. The proposed rezoning from a residential district to a commercial district at this location raises the question of the appropriate depth of commercial zoning into a residential neighborhood relative to maintaining neighborhood integrity. The appropriate depth of the rezoning is further discussed in the Staff Analysis section.

4. Will the proposed development serve to strengthen the character of the area by:
• **Providing appropriate infill development;**

This site is not an infill property within the existing neighborhood zoned RS-6-PAD. The proposed site plan is designed to accommodate an existing facility without increasing the adverse impact to its surrounding neighborhood.

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

The unpaved RV storage area is a lower quality development that contributes to air quality issues. The redevelopment will reduce or eliminate the unpaved area and provide new buildings that meet current development standards.

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

While this proposal changes the ratio of RV storage area to mini storage area, it does not introduce any new land uses.

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

This request will not make changes to the streetscape.

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

The Design Review process will be used to ensure this development meets or exceeds the quality of the surrounding area.

- 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 commercial zoning brings with it requirements for providing buffers and screening from the residential uses that are evaluated through the site plan review process. The proposed site plan including conditions of approval to provide sufficient screening and separation from the neighboring facilities, which will help transition the new development with the existing surrounding uses.

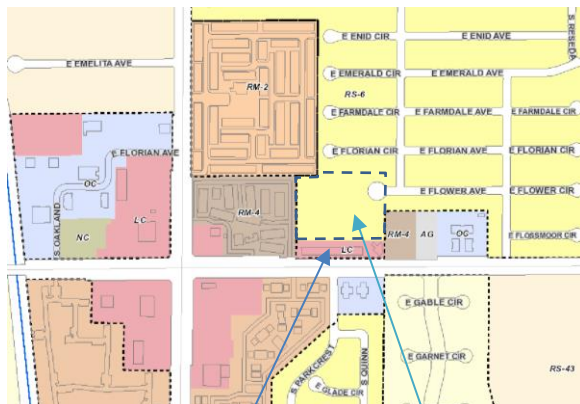
STAFF ANALYSIS

SUMMARY:

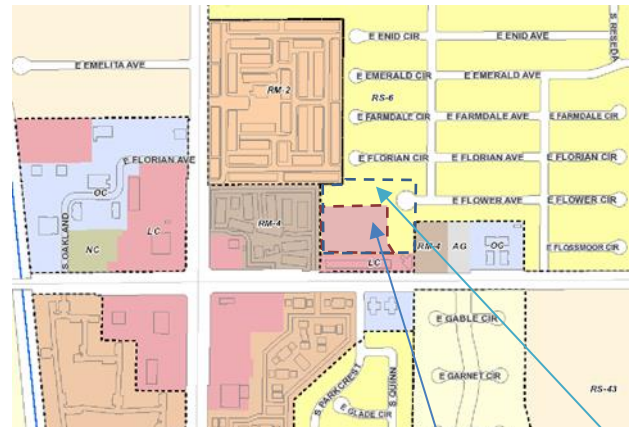
The current Parcel# 14051721 for 7.33± acres (TRACT A of the Sunland Village Eight Subdivision) has two existing uses:

- an existing mini-storage facility along Southern Avenue covering 1.2± acres with a depth of 110' from Southern Avenue and,
- an existing RV and Boat storage facility for Sunland Village Subdivision residents only, zoned for RS-6-PAD, on the northern 6.13± acres.

The applicant is requesting to rezone 2.78± acres from RS-6-PAD to LC to expand the mini-storage facility with three additional buildings for a total of 75,600 square feet. The total site area for the mini storage facility would be 3.98± acres and the existing RV storage area will be reduced to 3.35 ± acres.



Current Zoning LC & RS-6-PAD

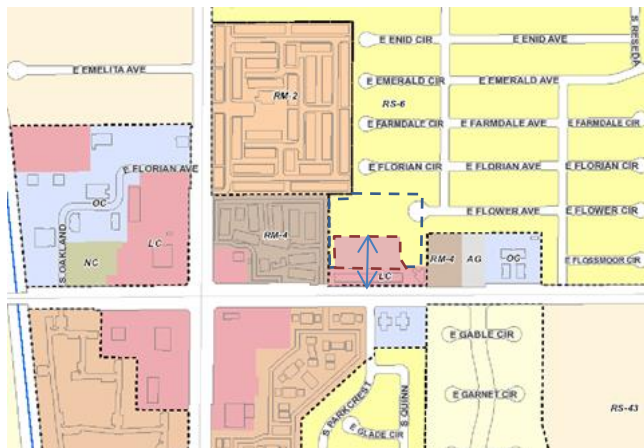


Proposed rezoning to expand LC & RS-6-PAD

REZONING:

The first consideration is whether or not further expansion of the LC zoning is appropriate at this location. The goal of the General Plan is to concentrate commercial zoning at major intersections and not strip zone along the arterial streets. Given the existing zoning and development pattern, staff finds that expanding the area zoned LC for an expansion of the existing use would not be detrimental to the surrounding neighborhood.

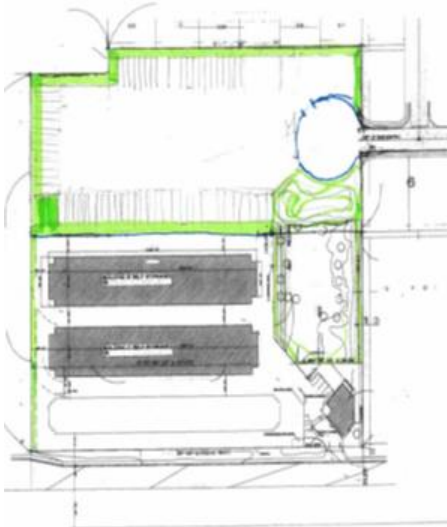
There is always the concern that the proposed use will not happen and that other uses could occur which would not be appropriate for the location. Again, given the location and visibility of this property, and the availability of other commercially zoned property in the area that is better situated for more active commercial uses, the likelihood of other uses taking place on this property is limited.



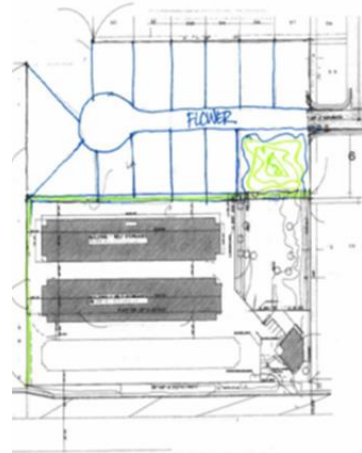
redevelopment of this property becomes very difficult.

Staff has had some concern with the requested depth of the proposed LC zoning and has asked the applicant to consider limiting the zoning to only 305 feet of depth from Southern Avenue to match the RM-4 zoning depth to the east. This would allow only two additional mini storage buildings and provide for a more functional RV storage area. The primary benefit staff sees with this alternative zoning is that it maintains sufficient depth to the residential area that it maintains the option for redevelopment along a possible extension of Flower Avenue. With the zoning line as proposed by the applicant

Rezoning to the depth suggested by staff would allow for current and future development as depicted in these staff generated illustrations:



Staff suggested Site Plan-A for now



Staff suggested Site Plan-B for future

In discussions with the applicant, they have expressed significant concern with reducing the depth and resulting size of the rezoning. Limiting the site plan to just two additional mini storage buildings makes the project difficult to develop financially. Further, it will be difficult to ever develop an extension of Flower as a residential area given the small size, the inability to be part of the Sunland Village HOA, and the changes in building requirements since the original residential development. While there have been some changes in the needs of the Sunland Village residents with regards to the need for RV storage, there is still a steady demand that will carry into the future. The applicant does not foresee the need to further reduce the area dedicated to the RV storage.

SITE PLAN:

Overall, the site plan is standard for development of this type of land use. There are, however, several issues with regards to the specific context that need to be considered and addressed.

1. Connection between the RV storage and mini storage

The proposed site plan shows two points vehicular access between the existing RV Storage area to the north and the proposed expansion of the ministorage area along Southern Avenue. Since the RV storage area is approved for use by only residents of Sunland Village, Planning would prefer to keep the RV's ingress and egress only from Flower Circle. Having the two uses integrated by driveway access will make it too easy to convert the RV storage area into an operation open to any user. Typically, outdoor RV storage uses require General Commercial zoning.

There is a provision in the zoning ordinance which allows for consideration of a Special Use Permit (SUP) by the Board of Adjustment to allow these types of RV storage areas to be opened up to non-resident use. The applicant has applied for this SUP. Staff supports the approval of the SUP. If the SUP is approved staff no longer has concerns for the connection between the two uses.

Condition #6.b. requires the site plan be revised to show a solid wall between the two portions of the site. It also provides, however, that should the SUP be approved by the Board of Adjustment, that Board could also allow the connections as shown on the current site plan.

2. Access from Southern

The existing driveway access off of Southern Avenue appears very tight for RV's, Solid Waste, and emergency vehicles. Staff believes some modifications will need to be made to the current ADA parking spaces. Through the more detailed evaluation that will take place to prepare the building permit submittal, a more detailed evaluation and design will be made on this driveway. In order to comply with City standards for vehicular movement it may be required to make some adjustments to the driveway location, curb radii, access gate, and/or parking design (condition #6.a.).

3. Perimeter landscaping

The proposed site plan is deficient in perimeter landscaping. Current zoning code requires all LC zoned properties to have the following landscape setbacks:

Street/ property line	Minimum Setback	Provided Setback
Southern Avenue	15'	Existing condition- driveway 0', Building 24'
Mini Storage-along west property line (RM-4)	20' at least 15' landscaped	0' existing and 0' proposed
Mini Storage-along north line next to RV storage (RS-6-PAD)	25' at least 20' landscaped	Proposed 0'
Mini Storage-along east line next to retention area (RS-6-PAD)	25' at least 20' landscaped	Proposed 0'
Mini Storage-along east property line (RM-4)	20' at least 15' landscaped	15' existing

The applicant has applied to the Board of Adjustment for a Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit (SCIP) to allow for these deviations from code. Staff believes that the request is justifiable for the area along the west property line adjacent to the single existing mini storage building, but does not support deviations further north next to the three proposed new buildings. Staff is not supportive of the deviation along the boundary between the mini storage and the RV storage while the RV storage is maintained just for the residents of Sunland Village. Staff would be supportive of the deviation along the northern boundary of the mini-storage use if the SUP is approved allowing others to use the abutting RV storage area. Staff is supportive of the requested deviations along the east side of the property.

If any of the deviations are not approved by the Board of Adjustment, the site plan will need to be modified to reflect the code requirements (conditions #6.c. d. and e.).

4. Surfacing of the RV storage area

The RV-Storage area needs to be improved with asphalt or concrete to meet current code requirements for dust free surfaces. The applicant may suggest alternative materials other than asphalt or concrete for the parking spaces provided that the alternative complies with City of Mesa development standards.

CONCLUSIONS:

Staff does not have any major concerns that cannot be addressed with conditions relative to the proposal to rezone this property to allow for the expansion of the existing mini storage facility. Staff has some concerns with the proposed depth of the expansion of the LC zoning, but on balance, believes the expansion will not be detrimental to the neighborhood if developed as proposed. There are several site plan modifications and/or code deviations needed for the final site plan. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the requested rezone 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 submitted (without guarantee of lot coverage).
2. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations.
3. Compliance with Design Review process.
4. Signs (detached and attached) need separate approval and permit for locations, size, and quantity.
5. **All non-conforming signs shall be removed from the site upon issuance of a building permit.**
6. **Prior to building permit submittal, submit a revised site plan for Planning Director review and approval to include:**
 - a) **Modifying the driveway design from Southern Avenue, including possible redesign of the parking spaces and/or access gate, as might be necessary to meet City standards to accommodate the turning radii for emergency and solid waste vehicles.**
 - b) **Replacing the vehicular cross access between the LC and RS-6-PAD zoning districts with a minimum 6 feet height masonry wall and noting that vehicular cross access may be provided if the Board of Adjustment approves a Special Use Permit to allow the RV storage area to be used by people who reside outside of the Sunland Village Subdivision.**
 - c) **Perimeter landscaping along Southern Avenue per Mesa Zoning Ordinance 11-33-3 (one tree and 6 shrubs per 25 linear feet of street frontage).**
 - d) **Fifteen foot (15') wide perimeter landscaping along the entire west property line of the portion of the property zoned LC unless modified by the Board of Adjustment through a Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit.**
 - e) **Twenty foot (20') wide perimeter landscaping along the entire length of the north property line of the portion of the property zoned LC unless modified by the Board of Adjustment through a Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit.**