



Planning and Zoning Board

Staff Report

CASE NUMBER: ZON18-00689
LOCATION/ADDRESS: Within the 3200 and 3300 blocks of South Power Road (east side).
GENERAL VICINITY: Located north of Elliot Road on the east side of Power Road.
REQUEST: Rezoning from LI-PAD to RM-2-PAD-AF; and Site Plan Review.
PURPOSE: This request will allow for a multi-residential development.
COUNCIL DISTRICT: District 6
OWNER: Garage Town USA, LLC
APPLICANT: Brennan Ray, Burch & Crachiolo, P.A.
STAFF PLANNER: Cassidy Welch

SITE DATA

PARCEL NO.: 304-05-017H
PARCEL SIZE: 9± acres
EXISTING ZONING: LI-PAD
GENERAL PLAN CHARACTER: Mixed Use Activity District/Employment
CURRENT LAND USE: Vacant

SITE CONTEXT

NORTH: Existing self-storage facility – Zoned LI-PAD
EAST: Existing self-storage facility – Zoned LI-PAD
SOUTH: Vacant – Zoned LC
WEST: (Across Power Road) City of Gilbert zoned LI & BP (Business Park)

HISTORY/RELATED CASES

March 25, 1994: Annexed in the City of Mesa (Ord. #2873)
April 18, 1994: Comparable zoning of R1-43 (RS-43) (Z94-020; Ord. #2895)
April 16, 2007: Rezone from RS-43 to M-1-PAD (LI-PAD) and Site Plan Review to allow for the development of a self-storage facility (Z07-020; Ord. #4684)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Denial

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

PROPOSITION 207 WAIVER SIGNED: ☒ Yes ☐ No

PROJECT DESCRIPTION / REQUEST

The proposed development is located east of Power Road on the north side of Elliot Road. The subject site is an approximately 9-acre site. The applicant is proposing a multi-residential development of 99 freestanding rentals, or “rental casitas”. A rezone from LI-PAD to RM-2-PAD-AF and site plan review has been requested to accommodate the development.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPATION:

The applicant has completed a Citizen Participation Process, which included a mailed letter to property owners within 1000’ of the site, as well as HOAs and registered neighborhoods within a mile. The applicant held a neighborhood meeting on October 25th at Superstition Springs Golf Club, which is located within a 2 miles of the site. The neighborhood meeting was attended by 1 neighboring property owner. At the time this staff report was written, staff has not been contacted by any neighbors in the area. The applicant will be providing an updated Citizen Participation Report prior to the November 13, 2018 Study Session. An update will be provided by staff at that Planning and Zoning Board Study Session.

STAFF ANALYSIS

MESA 2040 GENERAL PLAN:

Staff has reviewed the proposal and found that it not consistent with the criteria for review as outlined in Chapter 15 (pg. 15-1) of the Mesa 2040 General Plan and has determined that the proposed use is not in conformance with the General Plan.

This site is within the Character Type of “Mixed Use Activity District/Employment” as identified in the Mesa 2040 General Plan. The goal for these districts is to provide for a wide range of employment opportunities and viable centers of commercial activity that attract people to unique shopping and employment experiences. Residential may be supported as an ancillary use only when a part of the mixed-use development. This would need to be a master planned approach, integrating residential uses as a component of an employment district with an urban design. The current proposal is a stand-alone residential development, not an integrated urban approach, and therefore, is not consistent with the General Plan.

Chapter 15 of the General Plan includes 5 criteria that must be met in order to be considered as complying with the General Plan. Those criteria are listed below:

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. These three guiding principles work together to help move Mesa to become a more sustainable, balanced and recognizable City.

Creating and maintaining a variety of great neighborhoods.

Chapter 4 of the General Plan, Creating and Maintaining a Variety of Great Neighborhoods, identifies five guiding principles for a great neighborhood:

1. Convenient, safe, and attractive pedestrian connections from the adjoining

- neighborhoods and transit
2. Attractive landscaping of public right-of-way with street trees and other plantings to enhance the character and identity of the center.
 3. Lighting and signage appropriate in scale and intensity for locations near residential uses.
 4. Site design includes creating spaces for pedestrian activity and creating direct connection to adjacent neighborhood.
 5. Buildings placed in proximity and orientation to each other to help create a sense of place, energize streets, and improve pedestrian circulation to the center.

The proposed residential development is inherently isolated with no connection or relation to adjoining neighborhoods. The development provides adequate internal pedestrian connection and pedestrian connection to Power Road, however, that connection does not lead to any significant residential support uses.

The self-storage facility has a 5-foot building setback to the North and a 0-foot building setback to the East. The design of the site is further isolated by the adjacent development and is not conducive to a long-term residential community.

Growing and maintaining diverse and stable jobs.

This property is located within the Gateway Strategic Development Plan. The proposed development is not supportive of the Gateway Strategic Development Plan and does not contribute to the job growth of the area.

Economic Development Policy P1 is to preserve designated commercial and industrial areas for future job growth. Mesa is currently an exporter of employees and has historically trailed behind other Valley cities in the *jobs per capita* ratio. The goal is to increase the ratio of jobs and this can only be achieved through the maintenance of valuable employment areas. Approval of the proposed project would be detrimental to the City's goal for the area and would reduce the odds that the surrounding area be developed with the similarly intended employment and retail uses.

Providing rich, high-quality public spaces and cultural resources.

The site plan has provided a fair amount of shared space within the residential development. Residents will have access to community amenities on-site.

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

The site is located within the Inner Loop District of the Gateway Strategic Development Plan. Goal 2 of the Gateway Strategic Development Plan is to create a regional employment center with a variety of jobs. The proposed development inhibits the goals of the Gateway Strategic Development Plan by eliminating viable employment areas and impacting the future of adjacent development.

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

The protection of employment areas is strongly emphasized in the General Plan. The jobs chapter of the General Plan, Chapter 5, recognizes that the future of the City is tied to its ability

to secure a strong economic base and states: "The City of Mesa will do everything necessary to protect these areas from residential encroachment." The residential proposal is in direct opposition to the Mixed Use/Employment districts.

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

1. *Providing appropriate infill development;*
The site is not a candidate for infill development.
2. *Removing development that is deteriorated and/or does not contribute to the quality of the surrounding area;*
The site is currently vacant.
3. *Adding to the mix of uses to further enhance the intended character of the area;*
The proposed residential use does not meet the General Plan goals for providing an appropriate mix of uses in the area.
4. *Improving the streetscape and connectivity within the area;*
The proposed development does nothing to improve the streetscape along Power Road. The applicant has proposed a reduced landscape setback and a masonry block wall along Power Road, isolating the development from the street. A pedestrian walkway has been provided to the South to provide a connection to the future development to the South. No connection to adjacent residential exists contributing to the isolated nature of this development.
5. *Meeting or exceeding the development quality of the surrounding area;*
The proposed residential site plan includes site amenities, open space, and entry features that represent a level of quality that meets or exceeds the surrounding area. The applicant is currently going through the Design Review process and is working on providing a high-quality building design.

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 development is in a suburban form and transitions between uses are addressed through screening and/or separation. The proposal includes modifications to reduce the setbacks at property lines as well as between buildings. Staff has concerns with the reduced setbacks adjacent to surrounding development and believes the proposed reductions will not ensure a quality, sustainable residential development and will impair the development potential for adjacent uses.

Gateway Strategic Development Plan:

The proposed development is located in the Inner Loop District of the Gateway Strategic Development Plan. Due to the Inner Loop District's proximity to the airport and association with increasing over-flight

activities, land uses in the area should be nonresidential. The Inner Loop District primarily focuses on the concentration of light industrial and retail with the possibility of mixed-use residential at a density of 40 dwelling units per acre. Any residential shall not limit the development of the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and addresses impacts to aircraft operations. The proposed development is not consistent with the Gateway Strategic Development Plan.

ZONING:

The parcel is currently zoned LI-PAD. The applicant is proposing a rezone to RM-2-PAD-AF to accommodate the multi-residential development. Due to the site's location within the Airport Overflight Area Three (AOA 3), an AF zoning overlay has been added to the requested zoning. A Planned Area Development (PAD) overlay has been requested for deviations to the development standards. While the proposed residential density of 11.76 du/ac (99 units on 8.42 net acres) is within the RM-2 density range, RM-2 zoning is not consistent with the General Plan for this location. The site is surrounded by a self-storage facility to the North and East with a vacant parcel zoned LC – Limited Commercial. No connection to adjacent residential is provided. Permitting residential zoning and development on this parcel will significantly affect the possibility that adjacent parcels will be developed with employment uses, resulting in a loss of valuable employment areas.

PAD OVERLAY MODIFICATIONS – MZO Article 3:

The purpose of the Planned Area Development Overlay (PAD) is to allow flexibility for the development of a cohesive project. The intent of the PAD overlay is to provide for creative, high quality development in exchange for the flexibility in development standards. The table below show the required development standards and proposed modifications by the applicant. The items in bold are the requested modifications all other items are intended to show compliance with the current zoning code standard.

Table 1

Development Standard	Required	Proposed
Maximum Density (du/ac)	15	Meets
Maximum Height	30'	Meets
<u>Setbacks - Building:</u>		
Front (Power Road)	30'	20'
Side (South)	20'	10'
Side (North)	20'	10'
Rear (East)	20'	10'
<u>Setbacks – Landscape:</u>		
Front (Power Road)	30'	15'
Side (South)	20'	10'
Side (North)	20'	10'
Rear (East)	20'	10'
<u>Minimum Building Separation:</u>		
1-story building	25'	8'
Detached Covered Parking	20'	6'
Building Entrances – Projection and Recess	5' min. depth, 50 sq. ft.	3' min. depth, 14 sq. ft.

Reduction of Building and Landscape Setbacks:

The RM-2 development standards require a 20-foot building and landscape setback along the sides and rear of single-story multi-residential developments. The applicant is proposing a 10-foot building and landscape setbacks. Staff has concerns with the proposed setbacks, especially where adjacent to the existing self-storage facility to the North and East. A 14-foot tall building is located directly along the Eastern property line which will act as the perimeter wall for the units in that area. In response to staff concerns, the applicant has attempted to vary the building placement ranging from 10 feet to 16 feet on the Eastern property line and from 10 feet to 14 feet on the Northern property line. Staff is supportive of the reduction.

Reduction in Building Separation:

The RM-2 development standards require a 25-foot building separation between 1-story buildings. The applicant is proposing a minimum 8-foot building separation. The applicant has indicated that the development standards were designed with a traditional apartment complex in mind. The proposed buildings have a significantly smaller footprint than a traditional multi-residential development and should be treated more like a small-lot single-residence design. Additionally, the applicant is proposing an enhanced courtyard with a minimum width of 20 feet. The clustering of the building allows for a greater common open space. Staff has no concerns with the proposed reduction.

SITE PLAN - MZO Section 11-69-5:

The proposed site plan meets a majority of the review criteria per section 11-69-5 of the Zoning Ordinance. The proposed development is a gated community with the primary access on Power Road with a secondary egress along Power Road. The site is auto-oriented with a central driveway/parking aisle circulating the site, creating a large central rectangle. The center area of the development includes a community open space, fenced dog park, and an amenity pool area. In addition to these community amenities, each unit is provided a fenced rear yard for private outdoor space. A pedestrian grid overlays the plan, with enhanced materials and landscaping where pathways cross the drive aisle. A majority of the units face an enhanced courtyard with the primary entrance facing the courtyard.

Design Review:

The applicant attended a Design Review Board Work Session on October 9, 2018 related to the proposed elevations for this development. The applicant was instructed by the Design Review Board to improve the elevations of the residential units through use of a wide-range of high-quality materials. The applicant is working revisions and improvements to those elevations to achieve a high-quality development.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends denial of the request. The proposed project does not comply with the General Plan nor with the Gateway Strategic Development Plan for the area. It is vital that the City of Mesa makes a concerted effort to protect and maintain all remaining Mixed Use/Employment areas and preserve those areas from residential encroachment. Due to the location of the proposed development and its lack of connection to adjacent neighborhoods, staff has concerns with the long-term viability of a residential development of this nature.