



**PLANNING DIVISION
STAFF REPORT**

Board of Adjustment

May 1, 2019

CASE No.: BOA19-00173		CASE NAME: Digital Realty
Property Owner:	Hawk Ventures, LLC	
Applicant:	Bryan Marsh, Hawk Ventures, LLC	
Location of Request:	Within the 3200 through the 3500 blocks of South Crismon Road (east side)	
Parcel No.:	304-01-006M	
Nature of Request:	Special Use Permit (SUP) to allow a reduction in the number of required parking spaces for development of a data center in the LI–PAD District.	
Zoning District:	Light Industrial (LI) with a Planned Area Development (PAD) Overlay	
Council District:	6	
Site Size:	53.2 ± acres	
Proposed Use:	Data Center	
Existing Use:	Vacant	
Hearing Date(s):	May 1, 2019 / 5:30 p.m.	
Staff Planner:	Veronica Gonzalez	
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with 4 Conditions	

HISTORY

On November 3, 2014, the City Council approved a rezoning request to create the Elliot Road Technology Corridor. The corridor includes properties located between Hawes Road and Signal Butte Road on the north side of Elliot Road to the Salt River Project Transmission Line easement. The purpose for adopting the Elliot Road corridor zoning is to encourage development of a campus like high technology industries along the corridor. The rezoning did not change existing underlying zoning designation on those affected properties. It only created development standards and review guidelines, as well as an option for property owners to choose (opt-in) and develop their property under the Corridor guidelines. Property owners can still develop their property under requirements

of the existing underlying zoning requirements, if they choose to not opt-in to the zoning requirements of the Elliot Road corridor standards.

On April 15, 2019, the property was rezoned to the Elliot Road Technology Corridor LI-PAD zoning district through the opt-in process.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

The request is for a Special Use Permit (SUP) to allow a reduction in the number of parking spaces required for a proposed data center within the Elliot Road Technology Corridor. The property is approximately 53.2 acres and will consist of multiple buildings with 136,000 square feet of office space and 1,216,000 square feet of data halls, totaling up to 1,352,000 square feet.

Table 11-32-3(A) of the City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO) does not specifically list the number of parking spaces required for data centers. Per Section 11-32-3(G) of the MZO, the Zoning Administrator has the authority to determine the number of parking spaces required for a use not specifically listed in the MZO. Such decision for parking spaces requirements shall be based upon the requirements for a comparable and similar use specified in the MZO. In this instance, office and warehouse uses are the most comparable uses to data centers. Per Table 1-32-3(A) of the MZO, office uses must be parked at one space per 375 square feet and warehousing must be parked at one space per 900 square feet. Using these parking requirements, 1,715 parking spaces are required for the proposed 1,352,000 square foot data center facility. The site plan shows the applicant is proposing 356 on-site parking spaces. According to the applicant, the proposed number of parking spaces is adequate to support the development. This is due to the uniqueness of operations of such a facility, as most of the floor area of the building will be occupied with data equipment. Overall, approximately 90% of the building area will be used for storing of the data equipment. The remaining area of the building will be occupied by personnel. At full build-out, the facility will employ 336 employees. The site plan shows the development will provide 336 parking spaces for all employees, including 20 additional parking spaces for visitors.

General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals

The Mesa 2040 General Plan character area designation on the property is Employment District. Per Chapter seven of the General Plan, the Employment character area designation is primarily used for employment opportunities in high quality settings. The proposed development for a data center with high skilled personnel conforms with the goals of the General Plan. The property is also located in City's Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Strategic Development Plan. The goal of this plan is to capitalize on the expansion of the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and create a regional employment center. The proposed development conforms to the goals of the plan by bringing more than 300 high wage jobs to the area.

Site Characteristics:

The subject property abuts an existing single residence neighborhood to the north. There is a 250' SRP transmission line easement located between the subject property and the

adjacent residential neighborhood to the north. The proposed site plan and elevation shows the height of the buildings will be a maximum of 50'. This height conforms to the requirement of the Elliot Road Technology Corridor. Per requirements outlined in the rezone standards of the Corridor, a maximum height of 50 feet is allowed for all buildings within 600 feet of the north line of the SRP easement, and a maximum height of 150 feet for all other areas in the Corridor. The proposed development is 50' and within 433' of the north line of the SRP easement.

Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:

Northwest RS-7 PAD Existing Residential	North RS-6 PAD Existing Residential	Northeast RS-7 PAD Existing Residential
West PEP PAD and LI PAD Vacant	Subject Property LI-PAD Data Center	East AG Vacant
Southwest (Across Crismon Road Alignment) AG Vacant	South AG Vacant	Southeast AG Vacant

Mesa Zoning Ordinance Requirements and Regulations:

Per Section 11-32-6(A) of the City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance, the Board of Adjustment shall find the following criteria are met for approval of a SUP for reduced parking:

1. Special conditions – including but not limited to the nature of the proposed operation; proximity to frequent transit service; transportation characteristics of persons residing, working, or visiting the site – exist that will reduce parking demand at the site;

The proposed use is unique in comparison with other uses that occupy large floor area. According to the applicant, the number of employees needed to run the data center facility is significantly less than a traditional office or warehouse use and will require only parking spaces for those employees. There is no daily public visit to the site that will require additional parking spaces to accommodate those from the general public.

2. The use will adequately be served by the proposed parking; and

At full build-out, the data center facility will employ 336 people. The applicant has provided a total of 356 parking spaces that will adequately serve employees parking needs, as well as 20 visitor parking spaces.

3. Parking demand generated by the project will not exceed the capacity of or have a detrimental impact on the supply of on-street parking in the surrounding area.

The parking demand for the data center facility is not anticipated to exceed the number of parking spaces provided or have a detrimental impact on the supply of on-street parking in the area.

Per Section 11-70-5(E) of the City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance, the Board of Adjustment shall also find the following criteria are met for approval of a SUP:

1. Approval of the proposed project will advance the goals and objectives of and is consistent with the policies of the General Plan and any other applicable City plan and/or policies;

The site is located in the Employment character area of the Mesa 2040 General Plan and in the Elliot Road Technology Corridor. The proposed project is consistent with the goals and objectives of the General Plan and the Elliot Road Technology Corridor by providing high quality technology related employment.

2. The location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposed project are consistent with the purposes of the district where it is located and conform with the General Plan and any other applicable City plan or policies;

The proposed project conforms to the land use regulations of the Elliot Road Technology Corridor District and the General Plan character type designation.

3. The proposed project will not be injurious or detrimental to the adjacent or surrounding properties in the area, nor will the proposed project or improvements be injurious or detrimental to the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the City; and

The proposed project is in an area that has been designated for high technology industrial uses. Development standards in the Elliot Road Technology Corridor, such as limiting building height to 50 feet for properties within 600' of the north line of the SRP easement, is intended to mitigate potential impacts on the adjacent residences to the north. The proposed development will conform to requirements of the Elliot Road Corridor and will not be injurious or detrimental to the surrounding properties.

4. Adequate public services, public facilities and public infrastructure are available to serve the proposed project.

Adequate public services, public facilities and public infrastructure will be extended to serve development of the property.

Findings

- A. Digital Realty proposes to develop a data center facility with up to 1,352,000 square feet at full build-out on approximately 53.2 acres within the Elliot Road Technology Corridor.

- B. The proposed development is consistent with the goals of the General Plan and the Gateway Strategic Development Plan and compatible with surrounding development.
- C. The proposed development will achieve the goals of the Elliot Road Technology Corridor by bringing high tech industrial jobs to Mesa.
- D. The proposed project meets the criteria of Section 11-70-5(E) of the MZO for approval of a SUP.
- E. The request is consistent with the goals of the General Plan, the development, and is in conformance with the LI-PAD zoning district and the Elliot Road Technology Corridor designation on the property.
- F. Allowing reduction in the number of parking spaces on the property will not be injurious or detrimental to adjacent properties and adequate public services will be provided to the site.

Neighborhood Participation Plan and Public Comments

The applicant sent required notification letters to all property owners within 500' of the site. As of writing this report, staff has not been contacted by any resident to express support or opposition to the request.

Staff Recommendations:

The proposed project meets the review criteria for reduced parking outlined in Section 11-32-6(A) of the MZO and the criteria for a SUP outlined in Section 11-70-5(E) of the MZO. Staff recommends approval of the request with 4 conditions:

Conditions of Approval;

1. *Compliance with the final site plan;*
2. *Compliance with all City development codes and regulations, except as modified by the SUP;*
3. *Compliance with all requirements of Design Review for case DRB19-00198;*
4. *The parking reduction shall apply to the data center facility use only. Any future change of use shall comply with required parking as outlined in Chapter 32, Table 11-32-3(A) of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance.*

Exhibits:

Exhibit 1-Staff Report

Exhibit 2-Zoning Map/Aerial Map

Exhibit 3- Applicant Information

- 3.1 Applicant Written Narrative
- 3.2 Applicant Overall Site Plan
- 3.3 Applicant Parking Memo