



**CHICANOS
POR LA CAUSA**

Mesa Royale – Project Narrative

For a Quality Affordable Multifamily Development

Case No. ZON24-00602 & DR24-00603

Rezone, Council Use Permit, Site Plan, and Design Review
For a High-Quality Affordable Multifamily Residential Development

Located Near the Northwest Corner of
North Date and West Main Street

644 West Main Street

Parcel Nos: 135-57-027, 135-57-031, 135-57-032,
135-57-029A, 135-57-069, 135-57-070, 135-57-071,
135-57-074, 135-57-086, and 135-57-125

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I. DEVELOPMENT TEAM

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II. INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

The law firm of Quarles & Brady LLP ("**Quarles**") submits this formal application for a rezoning case, Council Use Permit approval, Site Plan approval, and Design Review approval on behalf of Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc. ("**CPLC**" or the "**Applicant**"). The Applicant intends to construct a new high-quality multifamily development consisting of 2 residential buildings with a total of 89 new apartment units. The maximum building height is three-stories or 34 feet. The proposed development, ("**Mesa Royale**" or the "**Development**") is located along West Main Street, along the Metro Light Rail ("**Light Rail**").

The ongoing redevelopment of the surrounding area, including other CPLC properties, will benefit from the introduction of a new high-quality multifamily development. This will bring the necessary influx of residents to support new and emerging commercial and retail uses in Downtown Mesa. Additionally, CPLC's new residents will create a dependable employee base within walking distance to surrounding and future commercial establishments, as emphasized in this application.

Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc. is a mission-driven developer, preserver, and owner of affordable housing throughout Arizona and the Southwest. CPLC's principals and development staff have considerable experience in affordable housing and development. This has resulted in the CPLC team forming extensive and deep relationships with lenders, financial partners, and governmental agencies in Arizona. The proposed multifamily affordable housing will be the third CPLC development in the area, following the previously approved Residences on Main and Mesa Royale townhomes. Notably, Residences on Main will include 22,134 square feet of retail and commercial space, in addition to market-rate housing, at the northwest corner of West Main Street and North Country Club Drive.

The Development has been carefully designed to not only be compatible with the neighboring retail and restaurant uses, but also maximize the walkability and opportunity for the new residents to patronize these commercial uses. Multi-story, multifamily housing communities meet an essential housing need and attract renters across a wide variety of demographic groups who desire a sense of community within this vibrant area of Mesa. Many prospective renters are looking for affordable housing opportunities that allow them to patronize businesses within close proximity.

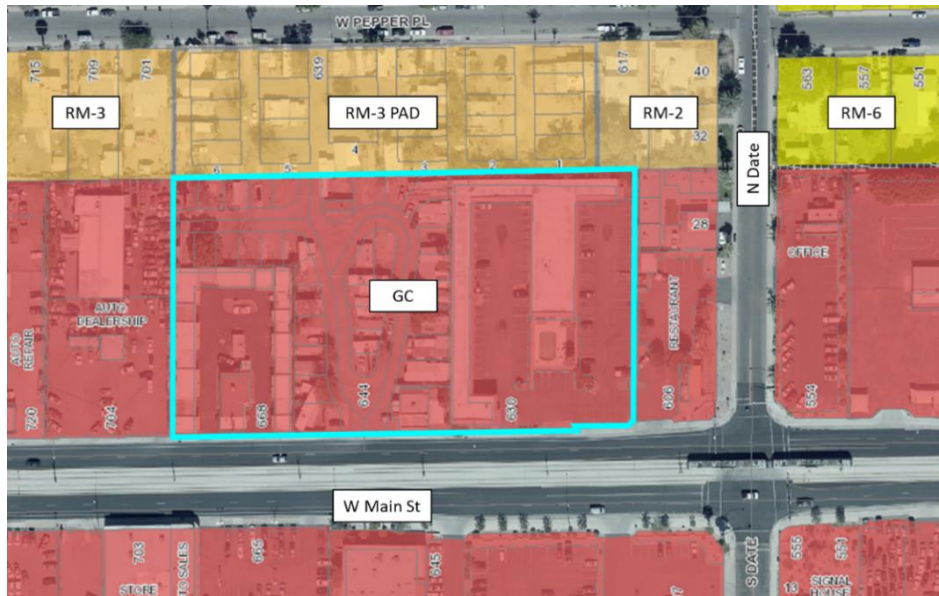
To achieve the proposed Development, the Applicant is requesting: **(1)** to rezone from General Commercial ("**GC**") to a GC with a Planned Area Development overlay ("**GC-PAD**"); **(2)** approval of a Council Use Permit ("**CUP**") to allow residential uses on a commercially zoned property; **(3)** Site Plan approval; and **(4)** Design Review approval.

III. PROPERTY OVERVIEW AND EXISTING ZONING ENTITLEMENTS

The Development will be located on the North side of West Main Street between North Country Club Drive and North Alma School Road and encompasses approximately 3.21 gross acres (the "**Property**"). The Property is only 1,500 feet west of the nearest Light Rail Station at Country Club Drive. The Property consists of 10 separate parcels (Parcel Nos. 135-57-027, 135-57-031, 135-

57-032, 135-57-029A, 135-57-069, 135-57-070, 135-57-071, 135-57-074, 135-57-086, and 135-57-125). The new affordable housing units will replace former hotel properties and will not displace any existing commercial or retail buildings.

Graphic 1: Property Outline



Parcels

135-57-027
 135-57-031
 135-57-032
 135-57-029A
 135-57-069
 135-57-070
 135-57-071
 135-57-074
 135-57-086
 135-57-125

Existing Zoning Designation

The property is currently zoned General Commercial (“**GC**”). The proposed affordable housing development is permitted within the GC district with the approval of a Council Use Permit (“**CUP**”), as outlined in Section 11-31-31: Residential Uses in Commercial Districts of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (“**MZO**”).

Based on initial meetings with City staff, it is the City's preference that CPLC apply for the CUP while retaining the GC zoning, rather than rezoning the Property to a multifamily zoning district. CPLC supports this approach, understanding that the City will need to approve a significant reduction in the required commercial and retail space in exchange for providing affordable housing.

General Plan 2040 Designation

The Mesa General Plan 2040 (“**GP 2040**”) designates the Property as Neighborhood District character area. The primary focus of the Neighborhood District is to provide safe places for people to live where they can feel secure and enjoy their surrounding community. The Transit Corridor specialty district overlays the Neighborhood District to focus development into a pedestrian-oriented, urban environment, particularly within walking distance of transit stops.

IV. ENTITLEMENT REQUEST

As part of the proposed Development, the Applicant is requesting the following approvals from the City of Mesa:

- Rezoning from GC to GC PAD
- CUP Approval
- Site Plan Approval
- Design Review Approval

Rezoning and PAD Development Standards

The Development will create 89 rental units within two rows of 3-story buildings on approximately 3.2 acres with a density of approximately 28 dwelling units per acre ("**du/ac**"). The multifamily use is permitted within the GC District with the approval of a CUP. The Site Plan Review request will include review and approval for the site plan, building elevations, landscaping and other aspects of the Development.

Additionally, the Applicant is requesting a PAD overlay, in conjunction with the GC rezoning request, in order to provide for variations to certain building and landscaping setbacks and parking calculations. The proposed development standards, which differ from the GC zoning district, are in **bold** in the table below.

Table 1: Proposed PAD Development Standards

| Development Standard | GC (C-3) | Proposed GC PAD Development Standard |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Maximum Height | 30-ft | 34-ft |
| Landscape Yard: | 15-ft | 8-ft |
| Maximum Residential Density (dwelling units/net acre) | 25 | 28 |
| Private Open Space Area: | 2-bed require 100 SF 3-bed require 120 SF | 2-bed - 67 SF 3-bed - 70 SF |
| Private Open Space Dimensions: | Ground level: min 10 feet | Ground Level: 6-feet in one direction |
| Required Parking: | 187 spaces 89 units = 2.1 spaces/unit | 104 spaces total 89 units = 1.2 spaces/unit (including office/retail area) |
| Covered: | 1 space per unit: 90 spaces | Provided: Canopies: 0 spaces |
| Materials: | No more than 50% of the total facade may be covered with one single material. | Bldg 1: 60% Stucco (East Elevation) Bldg 1: 67% Stucco (West Elevation) Bldg 2: 62% Stucco (East Elevation) Bldg 2: 65% Stucco (West Elevation) |

Parking Demand

The current site plan, unit count, and parking ratio supports the City's goal of focusing on urban style density, walkability to nearby businesses, and availability of transit. The total number of parking spaces provided matches the minimum number required based on the proximity to the Light Rail Station at Country Club Drive.

The Property does not fall within the 1,320-foot boundary to qualify for an automatic parking reduction. However, the Property is 1,500-feet away, exceeding the required distance by only 180-feet. Therefore, reducing the required parking with the PAD, and providing 104 spaces based on the calculation of 1.2 spaces per unit, is consistent with the parking demands associated with: **(1)** the bus stop adjacent to Building A; **(2)** the practical proximity to the Light Rail Station; and **(3)** the other affordable housing developments constructed and operated by CPLC.

Site Access

Vehicle access includes a primary ingress/egress from West Main Street and onsite circulation that includes a two-way loop-style drive aisle behind the buildings. Due to the Light Rail line within the West Main Street right-of-way ("**ROW**"), access will only be right-in, right-out from each driveway.

V. PLANNED AREA DEVELOPMENT JUSTIFICATIONS

Mesa Royale aligns with the intent of a Planned Area Development ("**PAD**"). It offers a creative, high-quality development for both residents and the surrounding area, providing new employees and customers for nearby businesses. The site plan includes a community center focused on small business development, serving as an amenity for residents. Additionally, on-site amenities include an active interior courtyard with a large open space area.

Deviations from the GC Development Standards, identified above in Table 1 of Section IV, reflect the tools available to the City within the PAD ordinance to take advantage of this unique opportunity to redevelop the Property on the edge of Downtown Mesa.

In requesting these deviations, the Applicant proposes a redevelopment that supports one of Mesa's oldest business districts and provides community amenities and open space that exceed the minimum standards within the MZO. The following elements are used throughout the site plan to create a high-quality multifamily housing community:

- Mesa Royale includes a large amenity courtyard and management office areas to provide easy access to residents throughout the development.
- The site plan exceeds the required Minimum Outdoor Living Area of 150 SF/unit) by providing 280 SF/unit in the 25,000 SF courtyard. Mesa Royale includes a total of 350 SF of public and private open space per unit.
- The private open space is provided within the patios attached to each unit.
- As noted in the PAD table, the site plan does not include covered parking spaces. Due to the use of landscape islands and the heights of both the Mesa Royale 3-story apartments and the adjacent 3-story townhomes, the majority of parking spaces will be shaded throughout the day. Trees are strategically located to provide ample shade, a visual transition between the Site and adjacent uses, and frame elements of the architecture.
- The South building will be brought forward against Main Street to create an attractive street frontage. The East and West elevations of buildings are relatively small and have a minimal visual impact. The larger building elevations (South side of Building 1 and North

side of Building 2) comply with the required material mix and are designed with a high-quality and attractive façade.

- The site location offers and encourages connections to the nearby community with street-facing units and pedestrian walkways linking to Main Street.

As indicated on the site plan, the Development falls below the maximum lot coverage, exceeds the minimum open space area requirements, provides indoor and outdoor amenities beyond the typical multifamily development, and provides private patios. CPLC envisions Mesa Royale as a home to residents of all ages, with access to Downtown Mesa to create a symbiotic and economically beneficial relationship between nearby commercial/retail uses and the new residents.

VI. COUNCIL USE PERMIT

The Property's GC zoning allows for residential uses with the approval of a CUP. The Development proposal meets or exceeds the standard review criteria for CUP approval set forth in Section 11-70-6 of the MZO, as shown below. Moreover, the approval of the request will not be detrimental to any adjacent properties or uses – in fact, the use represents the optimal utilization of the Property and provides value to the surrounding community.

- 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."**
 - a. The Transit Corridor specialty district overlays the Neighborhood District to focus development into a pedestrian-oriented, urban environment, particularly within walking distance of transit stops.
 - b. Mesa will be able to attract new businesses and developers looking to capitalize on the increased population serving as a strong pool of new employees and commercial/retail/restaurant customers in West Mesa.
- 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 with any other applicable City plan or policies."**
 - a. New residents drawn to the area will capitalize on the shared policies and strategies of the West Main Street Area Plan ("**WMSAP**") and the Central Main Street Area Plan ("**CSMAP**") to be a walkable environment near existing commercial, retail, and service industries, while helping to invigorate both Downtown Mesa and West Mesa.
- 3. "The proposed project will not be injurious or detrimental to the adjacent or surrounding properties in the area of the proposed project or improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the City."**
 - a. The Development is appropriately situated within the commercial areas and buffered from the nearby single-family residential areas.

4. **"Adequate public services, public facilities and public infrastructure are available to serve the proposed project."**
 - a. Due to the Development's location along Main Street as a redevelopment proposal, the Property is fully served by all necessary infrastructure needs.

In addition to the review criteria for CUP approval set forth in Section 11-70-6 of the MZO, residential uses in a commercial zoning must also comply with the following review criteria set forth in Section 11-70-6 of the MZO.

1. **"The use is found to be in compliance with the General Plan, Sub-Area Plans and other recognized development plans or policies, and will be compatible with surrounding uses."**
 - a. While falling under two different Area Plans, the Development is uniquely located to implement the shared policies and strategies to create a high intensity, transit-oriented development that complements the established pedestrian-oriented development.
2. **"A finding that a plan of operation has been submitted, which includes, but is not limited to, acceptable evidence of compliance with all zoning, building, and fire safety regulations."**
 - a. Evidence of compliance with all zoning, building, and fire safety regulations, in compliance with the plan of operation, submitted with this request, is shown in the site plan data table and on the site plan and fire safety plan attached to this application.
3. **"A finding that a "good neighbor policy" in narrative form has been submitted, which includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of acceptable measures to ensure ongoing compatibility with adjacent uses; including measures to assure that commercial activity will remain as a viable activity on this site."**
 - a. A separate good neighbor policy has been submitted which demonstrates how Mesa Royale will be a community that fits in with the adjacent townhomes to the North and the small businesses along Main Street.
4. **"Evidence that acceptable documentation is present demonstrating that the building or site proposed for the use is in, or will be brought into, substantial conformance with all current City development standards, including, but not limited to, landscaping, parking, screen walls, signage, and design guidelines."**
 - a. The concurrent applications packets to rezone to GC-PAD, for a CUP, Site Plan approval, and Design Review approval include comprehensive plans sets. The applications include a site plan to demonstrate the development standards. The landscape plan and elevations show how the overall design complies with the Mesa Quality Design Standards.
5. **"The overall project conforms to the intent and character of the zoning district and is part of a well integrated mixed-use project."**

- a. The application demonstrates how this Property is only one part of a larger variety of housing options and mixed-use developments CPLC is bringing to this stretch of West Main Street. For example, located only 1,100 feet east of the Property at the intersection West Main Street and North Country Club Drive, CPLC is developing Residences on Main, which will provide 19,000 SF of commercial/retail in addition to market-rate housing.

Section 11-31-31 of the MZO identifies the standards for residential uses in commercial districts, which includes the minimum required commercial floor area in relation to the proposed residential areas and the maximum allowed density. Section 11-31-31(E) outlines the right to modify these standards with the approval of a CUP. As part of the Applicant's request for a CUP to allow for a multifamily residential use within the GC Zoning District, we have outlined the necessary modifications as shown in the table below.

Table 2: Proposed CUP Development Standards

| Section 11-31-31 | Development Standard Applied to the Development | Proposed Development Standard |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (A)(1) Commercial Floor Area (B)(I). A minimum of 60 percent of the gross floor area (GFA) of all the buildings for the project is reserved for commercial uses; | 122,071 sf GFA 122,071 SF GFA x 60% = 73,242.6 SF | <u>Community Center:</u> 4,542 SF Total Commercial Area: 4,542 SF Total % of GFA: 3.7% |
| (A)(1) Commercial Floor Area (B)(II). A minimum of 65 percent of the ground floor of each multi-story building is reserved for commercial uses. | Bldg. 1: 20,753 SF x 65% = 13,489 SF Bldg. 2: 20,492 SF x 65% = 13,319 SF | Bldg. 1: 4,542 SF Bldg. 2: 0 SF Total % of Ground Floor Area: 11.0% |
| (A)(2) <i>Maximum Density</i> 25 du/ac in GC districts | 25 du/ac x 3.21ac = 80 dwelling units | 28 du/ac x 3.21 ac = 89 dwelling units |

The site plan will include 7,736 SF of commercial area on the ground floor of the southern building. In lieu of providing additional commercial and retail uses, CPLC will provide high-quality affordable housing and community services that benefit woman-owned start-ups and businesses. These nonresidential areas will facilitate the leasing/business office and a community center with business training services operated by CPLC. Within this Development, CLPC will support the residents on the site and continue promoting strong families by empowering parents, and woman business owners, to thrive, thereby creating communities where parents have the skills to raise healthy and successful children. Additional on-site resident amenities may include gathering areas and children's play areas. Vehicle access includes a single entrance from West Main Street. Site circulation is comprised of parking aisles along the west property line, wrapping around the North side of the Property.

The financial constraints associated with the affordable housing funding mechanism known as Low Income Housing Tax Credits ("**LIHTC**") limit the nonresidential area within the Development to be significantly less than 60% of the gross floor area ("**GFA**"). The LIHTC mechanism simply does not support a mixed-use development with such a significant allocation of commercial/retail uses, as the focus is to provide affordable housing units.

Due to the size and shape of the property, reserving 65% of the ground floor for each building is not an appropriate design for the site plan. As part of the CUP application, we will demonstrate how this Property is only one part of a larger variety of housing options and mixed-use developments CPLC is bringing to this stretch of West Main Street. For example, located only 1,100 feet east of the Property at the intersection of West Main Street and North Country Club Drive, CPLC will be developing Residences on Main, which will provide 19,000 SF of commercial/retail in addition to market-rate housing. CPLC's overall investment in this area of Mesa along Main Street will implement the GP2040, WMSAP, and CMSAP with affordable housing, balanced with an appropriate amount of commercial and retail space.

VII. CONFORMANCE WITH THE GENERAL PLAN 2040

General Plan 2040

GP 2040 designates the Property as Neighborhood District character area where the primary focus is to provide safe places for people to live where they can feel secure and enjoy their surrounding community. The Transit Corridor specialty district overlays the Neighborhood District to focus development into a pedestrian-oriented, urban environment, particularly within walking distance of transit stops.

Further implementing the GP2040, the property also falls in a small part of the City that is overlapped by the WMSAP and CMSAP. While falling under two different Area Plans, the Development is uniquely located to implement the purpose and intent of both plans as part of the outer edge of the Mesa Downtown area and along the early extensions of the Light Rail line. The shared policies and strategies include higher intensity, transit-oriented development pattern, utilizing pedestrian-oriented development creating a greater sense of place for current and future residents, achieving greater energy efficiency, and improving sustainability.

West Main Street Area Plan and the Central Main Street Area Plan

Supporting the goals of the GP 2040, the Property falls within both the WMSAP and CSMAP, which both provide the detailed vision and goals for growth in this area. Downtown Mesa is reemerging as one of Mesa's important business districts featuring cutting-edge industry clusters, skilled workforce, easy market access, extensive infrastructure, and ample executive hotel accommodations. Within the

The Development serves to strengthen the Transit Corridor and the Neighborhood Character Area and is consistent with the criteria below as listed in Chapter 15 of the GP 2040.

a. "Providing appropriate infill development"

- i. The Property consists of 10 vacant parcels along West Main Street, which is surrounded by the longstanding, fully developed area of Mesa.

- b. "Removing development that is deteriorated and/or does not contribute to the quality of the surrounding area"**
 - i. The Property was formerly occupied by three different hospitality businesses that were in various forms of degradation and dilapidation.
 - ii. The Development represents a high-quality that will add to the employee and customer base of nearby businesses and major employers, thereby helping improve the economic stability of this area.

- c. "Adding to the mix of uses to further enhance the purpose and intent of the character area"**
 - i. The Development represents a new housing mix within the redevelopment area and will blend in with the existing and growing commercial businesses.
 - ii. The proposed apartments are adding housing options so working age adults can live within a short distance to Banner Desert Medical Center, ASU's Media and Immersive eXperience ("MIX") Center, and the other Downtown Mesa redevelopment efforts.

- d. "Improving the streetscape and connectivity within the area"**
 - i. The Development will have a streetscape-activating building and is within walking distance of the nearby Light Rail Station.

- e. "Add to the sense of place"**
 - i. Residents within the Development will have community gathering areas with a collection of amenities and a site design that encourages a cohesive feel.
 - ii. The large influx of new residents will help the City with the Downtown Mesa redevelopment efforts.

- f. "Meet or exceed the development quality of the surrounding area"**
 - i. The architectural design provides a wonderful visual appeal with decorative veneer, a modern color scheme, creative roof lines that also serve to screen air conditioning units, and enhanced landscaping along Main Street.
 - ii. The open space within the Development exceeds the MZO and incorporates active open space with a large courtyard amenity area.

- g. "Provide appropriate transitions between uses."**
 - i. The Development creates high-quality, affordable housing options near commercial areas.

VIII. DESIGN REVIEW

The City also requires the Applicant to submit for formal review by the Design Review Board ("DRB") for all developments exceeding a density of 15 du/acre. The Mesa Royale design adheres to and implements the primary focus of the "Multiple Residence" section for Site Design in Mesa Quality Development Design Guidelines. "Multiple residence buildings should promote a

walkable, healthy neighborhood by engaging the street, offering sidewalks and pedestrian paths, and using attractive design that reflects the scale and character of adjacent buildings. Multiple residence buildings in mixed use districts support the density of an urban center and create vibrant, active, walkable neighborhoods to live, work, socialize, and relax.”

As a multifamily residential community, amenities are proposed for the residents, which include a large interior courtyard amenity area and onsite community services that benefit woman-owned start-ups and businesses. The design is consistent with these policies and serves to comply with the Quality Development Design Guidelines criteria outlined in Section 4.A, as shown below.

A. Site Design

1. Neighborhood Character. The overall character of the development utilizes materials and forms that are influenced by the architectural character found in Downtown Mesa. The site plan provides connectivity to Main Street. In addition, the architectural pallet complements the adjacent and neighboring properties. Common open space areas and amenities are provided as a focal point for residents to congregate. Common open spaces also provide a sense of community that tenants can utilize throughout all the sections of the site.
2. Building Placement and Orientation. Working with City Staff, building placement and orientation have been developed to interact with the streetscape and adjacent developments by varying the roof lines and styles, providing balconies and courtyards, amenities and landscape features, and architectural detail.

By bringing the building forward, the rear drive aisle and parking area serves to buffer the adjacent townhomes. The pedestrian walkways connect individuals throughout the site, buildings, parking areas, and directly to Main Street.

3. Parking. Vehicle access includes a primary entrance/exit from Main Street. Site circulation is comprised of parking aisles along the west property line, wrapping around the North side and east side to reconnect as an exit back onto Main Street.
4. Landscape and Shading. The Development’s landscape is designed to provide residents and visitors a sense of community with a strong sense of place. The landscape calls attention to entryways. The plant palette for the development is comprised of vegetation that will complement the fabric of Mesa and integrate the Site into the context of the surrounding area and support sustainable use of water in an arid environment.

B. Architectural Design.

1. Primary Entries. While the Property takes access from Main Street, the Site Plan includes a vehicular drive aisle that wraps around the buildings and pedestrian access to Main Street.

2. Massing and Scale. The building form utilizes a blend of simple lines with the careful selection of both traditional & contemporary materials. The primary architecture will include themes and embellishments to compliment the character that carries throughout Downtown Mesa and sets the tone as redevelopment continues along West Main Street.
3. Articulation. Window trim, window recesses, veneer, and changes in material create highly accented building façades visible from a public right-of-way and common areas. The building façades articulate, protruding in and out, to avoid any blank, windowless walls visible from Main Street or main pedestrian areas.
4. Materials. In line with sustainable practices and materials, the Developer intends to construct the buildings with an efficient building process that significantly reduces energy costs.

IX. CONCLUSION

The proposed Development aligns with the General Plan 2040 goal of increasing housing variety and transforming long-underutilized sites into viable residential areas that support existing and future commercial growth. This site is uniquely appropriate for a Council Use Permit to allow residential development within commercial zoning due to the Property's lack of commercial viability and the availability of other retail options nearby. What has long stood as unfilled and neglected land will be revitalized into quality housing along the edge of Downtown Mesa.

Mesa Royale will provide high-quality affordable multifamily housing into an area where this product is in high demand. The Development will help to address the shortage of housing in the area and provide a reliable source of employees and customers for surrounding commercial, retail, and restaurant uses. This Development meets the needs of those for whom homeownership is currently financially out of reach while still offering high-quality attractive housing. With many exciting changes on the horizon for this area, the introduction of 89 new multifamily units will ensure the continued success and stability of Main Street.