



**PLANNING DIVISION
STAFF REPORT**

Board of Adjustment

January 6, 2021

CASE No.: BOA20-00803	CASE NAME: Fiesta Plaza UEI Parking Reduction
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Owner's Name:	BTT Fiesta Plaza LLC
Applicant's Name:	Jessica Sarkissian
Location of Request:	Within the 1300 to 1400 blocks of West Southern Avenue (north side) and the 1100 block of South Longmore (east side).
Parcel Nos:	134-28-674B, 769, 770, 771, 772 and 773
Nature of Request:	Special Use Permit (SUP) to allow for a reduction in the number of required parking spaces associated with a trade school.
Zone District:	Limited Commercial (LC)
Council District:	3
Site size:	13± acres
Proposed use:	Trade School
Existing use:	Group Commercial Center
Hearing date(s):	January 6, 2021 / 5:30 p.m.
Staff Planner:	Jennifer Gniffke
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions

HISTORY

In **May of 1981**, Mesa City Council approved a site plan for Fiesta Plaza, a group shopping center (SPR81-001). Shared Parking Agreements were developed among all but two of the lots in the development.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background:

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to allow for a reduction in the number of required parking spaces for a trade school. Per Section 11-32-3 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO), high schools, academies, colleges, universities, trade or vocational schools must provide one parking space per 200 square feet of building square footage. The proposed school is 30,000 square feet and therefore requires 150 parking spaces. The applicant is requesting a reduction of 80 parking spaces and has provided a parking study to demonstrate that the proposed use can be served by the onsite parking along with shared parking within the group commercial center (*see Exhibit 5-Parking Study*).

General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals:

The General Plan character area designation on the property is Mixed Use Activity District and Transit Corridor. Per Chapter 7 of the General Plan, Mixed Use Activity Districts are large scale (typically over 25 acres) community and regional activity areas that usually have a significant retail commercial component including shopping areas such as malls, power centers, or lifestyle centers that are designed and developed to attract customers from a large radius. These districts often include other uses such as office, entertainment and residential. The goal is to help these districts be strong and viable centers of commercial activity that attract people to unique shopping and entertainment experiences.

The Transit Districts character type includes the light rail corridor, bus rapid transit corridors, and areas designated for a consistent high level of transit options. 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.

The property is also located within the Fiesta District, which has its own Design Guidelines. The guidelines encourage pedestrian-friendly development, especially along Southern Avenue. The City of Mesa has invested significantly in the area and has applied the guidelines with the completion of streetscape improvements along Southern Avenue, which will benefit the students of the proposed trade school as they utilize local public transit options.

The requested Special Use Permit for a parking reduction conforms with the intent of the Mixed Use Activity District and with the Transit Corridor overlay.

Site Characteristics:

The subject site is located within a group commercial center (Fiesta Plaza) on the northeast corner of Southern Avenue and Longmore. The group commercial center consists of inline shops and pad sites. The applicant intends to lease Suite D, a single-story building with approximately 30,000 square feet floor area. The group commercial center has an established shared parking and cross access agreement with the exception of two pad sites located at 1346 and 1460 W. Southern Avenue.

Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:

Northwest RM-4 The District at Fiesta Park Apartments	North RM-4 Indian Springs Apartments	Northeast RM-4 Indian Springs Apartments
West (across Longmore) LC Group Commercial/Offices	Subject Property LC Group Commercial	East (across Stewart) RM-5 PAD and LC PAD Multi-residential and retail commercial
Southwest (across Longmore & Southern Avenue) LC BIZ Target	South (Across Southern Avenue) LC Fiesta Mall	Southeast (across Southern Avenue) LC Fiesta Mall

Mesa Zoning Ordinance Requirements and Regulations:

Per Section 11-32-5 of the MZO, the Zoning Administrator may reduce the required parking for one use up to 100% if the following criteria is met:

1. That the various activities will have peak parking demands at different periods of the day or week; and

The parking study provided by the applicant contained a shared parking analysis which calculated the net parking demand for the commercial center tenants during weekday and weekend peak hours. The analysis showed that at the highest peak hour, the shopping center will have 32 vacant spaces. The proposed trade school will offer classes Monday through Friday 8 am through 10:30 pm with the lightest attendance during afternoon sessions.

The proposal meets this criteria

2. Based on competent evidence provided by the applicant, that there is no substantial conflict in the principal operating hours of the uses for which the sharing of parking is proposed.

The other tenants in the group commercial center are a mix of restaurants with drive thrus and retail shops. While operating hours overlap, peak operating hours for other tenants is late morning and evening. Staff does not anticipate that the principal operating hours of these tenants will create a shortage in parking.

The proposal meets this criteria.

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;

Per the narrative provided, a large percentage of the proposed trade school students take public transportation, and the location was selected in part for its proximity to the major bus lines along Southern Avenue.

The proposal meets this criteria.

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

Per the parking study submitted by the applicant, the site contains adequate parking for the group commercial development including the proposed trade school.

The proposal meets this criteria.

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.

Per the parking study submitted, the site contains adequate *on-site* parking for the group commercial development including the proposed trade school. There is no on-street parking in the immediate vicinity. Staff does not foresee overflow parking to occur in nearby neighborhoods.

The proposal meets this criteria.

Per Section 11-70-5 of the City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance, the Board of Adjustment shall find upon sufficient evidence when making a decision on a SUP that:

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 General Plan character area designation on the property is Mixed Use Activity District and Transit Corridor. Per Chapter 7 of the General Plan, the goal is to help these districts be strong and viable centers of commercial activity that attract people to unique shopping and entertainment experiences. The focus in the Transit Corridor character type is to develop a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, urban environment, particularly within walking distance of transit stops.

The property is also located within the Fiesta District, which has its own Design Guidelines. The guidelines encourage pedestrian-friendly development, especially along Southern Avenue.

The proposal meets this criteria.

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;

The proposed trade school conforms to the land use requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and the General Plan character type designation.

The proposal meets this criteria.

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 proposal does not involve changes to the site, and per the parking study will not cause additional parking on adjacent streets, and therefore the requested SUP should not be injurious or detrimental to the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the City.

The proposal meets this criteria.

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

The proposed SUP will not add a significant burden to the public services, facilities or infrastructure. The bus lines along Southern Avenue and other public services and facilities are already existing.

The proposal meets this criteria.

Findings:

- A. The request is consistent with the goals of the General Plan, and is in conformance with the LC zoning district designation on the property.
- B. Allowing a reduction in the number of required parking spaces will not be injurious or detrimental to adjacent properties.
- C. Adequate public services will be provided to the site.
- D. The request conforms with the criteria for granting a parking reduction as outlined in Section 11-32-6 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance.
- E. This request conforms with the criteria for the granting of a SUP as outlined in Section 11-70-5(E) of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance.

Neighborhood Participation Plan and Public Comments:

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

Staff Recommendation:

Based upon the application received and preceding analysis, Staff find that the requested Special Use Permit for a reduction to the required number of parking spaces for a trade school complies with criteria a, b, and c for approving Special Use Permits for parking reductions per Section 11-32-6 of the MZO, and complies with criteria a, b, c, and d for approving Special Use Permits per Section 11-70-5(E); and therefore, recommends approval of the request with the following conditions.

Conditions of Approval:

1. Compliance with all requirements of case SPR81-001.
2. Obtain administrative approval for any other minor exterior changes other than signage.
3. Compliance with all applicable City of Mesa Development Codes and regulations.

Exhibits:

Exhibit 1 – Vicinity Map

Exhibit 2 – Staff Report

Exhibit 3 – Narrative/Justification Statement

Exhibit 4 – Site Plan

Exhibit 5 – Parking Study