



PLANNING DIVISION
STAFF REPORT

City Council Meeting

November 18, 2024

CASE No.: ZON23-00935	PROJECT NAME: Mesa Shopping Center – Final Phase
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Owner’s Name:	Red Mountain Asset Fund II LLC, Red Mountain Asset Fund I LLC and MacFrugals’s Plaza LLC
Applicant's Name:	John Clay, Red Mountain Group
Location of Request:	Within the 300 block of East Southern Avenue (south side) and within the 1200 block of South Mesa Drive (west side). Located west of Mesa Drive and south of Southern Avenue.
Parcel No(s):	139-48-293A, 139-48-295A, 139-48-297C and 139-48-297D
Request:	Major Site Plan Modification
Existing Zoning District:	Limited Commercial (LC)
Council District:	4
Site Size:	7.5± acres
Proposed Use(s):	Limited Service Restaurant with drive-thru facilities
Existing Use(s):	Commercial Center
P&Z Hearing Date(s):	October 23, 2024 / 4:00 p.m.
Staff Planner:	Charlotte Bridges, Planner II
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions
Planning and Zoning Board Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions (6-0)

HISTORY

On **January 6, 1962**, the City Council annexed 81± acres, including a portion of the project site, into the City of Mesa and subsequently zoned C-2 (equivalent to Limited Commercial [LC]) (Ordinance No. 428).

On **December 8, 1962**, the City Council annexed 34± acres, including the remainder of the project site, into the City of Mesa and subsequently zoned C-2 (equivalent to Limited Commercial [LC]) (Ordinance No. 444).

On **November 18, 1985**, the City Council approved a site plan for 8.3± acres, including the proposed project site, to allow the development of a group commercial center in the LC District (Case No. SPR85-018).

On, **October 2, 2024**, the Board of Adjustment approved a Development Incentive Permit (DIP) to allow for deviations from certain development standards for a limited service restaurant with drive through facilities on Pad A and a Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit (SCIP) to allow for deviations from certain development standards for site improvements associated with the development of a limited service restaurant with drive-thru facilities occurring on the larger commercial center property adjacent to Pad A (Case No. BOA24-00435).

On **October 10, 2024**, the Design Review Board reviewed the building elevations and landscape plan. Staff will work with the applicant to address comments.

On **October 23, 2024**, the Planning and Zoning Board recommended that City Council approve the Proposed Project (Case No. ZON23-00935).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Major Site Plan Modification to the previously approved site plan to allow for the development of a limited service restaurant with drive-thru facilities on Pad A and associated site improvements within an existing group commercial center (Proposed Project).

In 1985, City Council approved a site plan for a group commercial center at the southwest corner of Mesa Drive and Southern Avenue. The group commercial center was developed except for two Pad sites, Pad A and Pad B (Case No. SPR85-018). The previously approved site plan showed the construction of a 2,024 square foot, minor automotive/vehicle service and repair use with a pull-thru service bay and parking spaces to the north, west, south and east adjacent to Mesa Drive.

The Proposed Project includes the construction of a 1,265 square foot, limited service restaurant with drive-thru facilities on Pad A and the reconfiguration of the drive aisles and parking spaces to the west and south of Pad A within the adjacent commercial center. No improvements are proposed for Pad B as part of this request.

On October 2, 2024, the Board of Adjustment approved a Development Incentive Permit (DIP) to modify the development standards for Pad A. The DIP reduced the required building setback and landscape yard along Mesa Drive to allow for a four to six feet landscape screen of the drive-thru within the required building setback and landscape yard. The DIP also reduced the required plant material in the landscape yard adjacent to Mesa Drive. The approved deviations from the MZO development standards ensure the Proposed Project will comply with the other requirements for the site while also allowing development on an infill parcel.

The Board of Adjustment approved a Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit (SCIP) for the larger commercial center property to bring the site into substantial conformance. Because of existing conditions, achieving full conformance with the MZO would require significant alterations, including partial demolition of the existing building, on-site parking spaces and circulation. Chapter 11-73 of the MZO establishes the SCIP process and review criteria to allow a non-conforming site to be brought into substantial conformance without having to bring the entire site into full conformance.

The existing commercial center was constructed in the mid 1980’s in accordance with the building and zoning code in effect at the time; however, some of the existing site improvements do not conform with the current development standards of Section 11-6-3 of the MZO and the site is considered legal non-conforming. The applicant is reconfiguring the parking spaces and drive aisles to the west and south of Pad A, installing a new dumpster enclosure, replacing plant material within the required perimeter landscape yards and parking lot landscape islands and providing a pedestrian connection to Mesa Drive.

General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals:

The Mesa 2040 General Plan Character area designation on the property is Neighborhood Village Center. Per Chapter 7 of the Plan, the goal of the Neighborhood Village Center character area is to provide for the regular shopping and service needs of the nearby population, serving as the focal point for the surrounding neighborhoods. The existing commercial center and the proposed improvements advance the goals and objectives of the Mesa 2040 General Plan by providing retail and service options to meet the needs of the surrounding population.

The Proposed Project is consistent with the criteria for review outlined in Chapter 15 (pg. 15-1) of the Mesa 2040 General Plan.

Zoning District Designations:

The proposed project site is zoned Limited Commercial (LC). Per Section 11-6-2 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO), the Proposed Project is permitted in the LC zoning district, subject to the additional development standards in Section 11-31-18 of the MZO.

Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:

Northwest (Across Southern Avenue) LI Commercial	North (Across Southern Avenue) LI and LC Commercial	Northeast LC Commercial
West LI Commercial and Industrial	Project Site LC Commercial	East (Across Mesa Drive) LC and RM-2 Commercial and Multi-Residences
Southwest RS-6	South RS-6	Southeast (Across Mesa Drive) RS-6

Single Residences	Single Residences	Single Residences
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Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses:

The proposed project site is surrounded by existing commercial development to the north, west and south. Across Mesa Drive to the east, are existing single residences.

The Proposed Project is compatible with the surrounding land uses.

Site Plan and General Site Development Standards:

The Proposed Project site is located at the southwest corner of Mesa Drive and Southern Avenue. Pad A is located approximately 200 feet south of Southern Avenue and immediately adjacent to Mesa Drive. The area of the commercial center being considered by this request is 7± acres, including Pad A, which is 0.28± of an acre.

The center is developed with multi-tenant commercial buildings totaling approximately 51,975 square feet. Access to the center is provided by two drive entrances along Southern Avenue and three drive entrances along Mesa Drive. A total of 335 parking spaces are provided within the commercial center, where 291 parking spaces are required, including Pad A. No parking spaces are provided on the Pad A site. Instead, the 14 parking spaces required for Pad A are accounted for in the 335 provided parking spaces, which are considered “shared” parking by the commercial center’s CC&R’s. A new sidewalk provides a pedestrian path from the east side of the commercial center to Mesa Drive.

The Proposed Project includes the construction of a 1,265 square foot limited service restaurant building with a 200 square foot covered patio along the west elevation and a covered pick-up window on the north elevation. The drive-thru lane entrance for the restaurant is to the south of the building, then it wraps around the east side of the building and exits on the north side of the building. The portion of the drive-thru lane adjacent to the east elevation is covered by a trellis and screened from Mesa Drive by a wall with “hit and miss” brickwork. The remainder of the drive-thru lane, where adjacent to Mesa Drive, is screened from view from the right-of-way by a landscape screen, which is four to six feet in height.

Throughout the commercial center trees and shrubs are planted in the parking lot landscape islands and shrubs are planted in the perimeter landscape yards. Within Pad A, trees and shrubs are planted in the foundation base areas around the building and shrubs and a minimal number of trees are planted in the perimeter of the drive-thru lane.

Additional standards for drive-thru facilities, including circulation, stacking, screening and buffering, and standards are included in Section 11-31-18 of the MZO.

With the approval of the DIP and the SCIP by the Board of Adjustment, the Proposed Project complies with the drive-thru standards found in Section 11-31-18 of the MZO and the review criteria for Site Plan Review in Section 11-69-5 of the MZO.

Neighborhood Participation Plan and Public Comments:

The applicant completed a Citizen Participation Process which included mailing letters to property owners within 500 feet of the site, HOAs within ½ mile and registered neighborhoods within one mile of the site. As of writing this report, no comments from surrounding property owners have been received by the applicant or staff.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff finds that the Proposed Project is consistent with the Mesa 2040 General Plan, meets the development standards of Section 11-31-18 of the MZO for drive-thru facilities, and meets the review criteria for Site Plan Review outlined in Section 11-69-5, as required for a Major Site Plan Modification in Section 11-69-7 of the MZO.

Staff recommends approval with the following **Conditions of Approval:**

1. Compliance with the final site plan submitted with this request instead of the site plan approved with case SPR85-018.
2. Compliance with all requirements of the Board of Adjustment Case BOA24-00435.
3. Compliance with all requirements of the Design Review Case DRB23-00934.
4. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations.

Exhibits:

Exhibit 1 - Presentation

Exhibit 2 - Resolution

Exhibit 3 - Resolution Map

Exhibit 4 - Vicinity Map

Exhibit 5 - Site Plan

Exhibit 6 - Minutes

Exhibit 7 - Submittal Documents