



City Council Staff Report

Date	March 23, 2026	
Case No.	ZON25-00326	
Project Name	RMDC Dance Studio	
Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rezone from Limited Commercial (LC) to Limited Commercial with a Bonus Intensity Zone Overlay (LC-BIZ) Site Plan Review to allow for the development of a 15,344± square foot commercial building. 	
Project Location	Located approximately 350± feet east of the southeast corner of East Warner Road and South Mountain Road.	
Parcel No(s)	304-33-990D	
Project Area	1± acres	
Council District	District 6	
Existing Zoning	Limited Commercial (LC)	
General Plan Designation	Neighborhood Center	
Applicant	Benjamin Hought, Red Rock Contractors	
Owner	MMJM Ventures LLC	
Staff Planner	Chloe Durfee Daniel, Planner II	
Proposition 207 Waiver Signed	Yes	

Recommendation

Staff Recommendation:

Staff finds that the Proposed Project is consistent with the Mesa 2050 General Plan, the criteria in Chapter 21 regarding Bonus Intensity Zone (BIZ) overlays, and the review criteria for Site Plan Review outlined in Section 11-69-5 of the MZO.

Staff recommends approval with conditions.

Planning & Zoning Board Recommendation:

On February 25, 2026, the Planning and Zoning Board **voted (6-0)** to recommend that City Council **approve** the proposed project.

Project Overview

Request:

The applicant is requesting approval for a rezoning from Limited Commercial (LC) to Limited Commercial with a Bonus Intensity Zone Overlay (LC-BIZ) and Site Plan Review to allow for the development of a 15,344± square foot commercial building (Proposed Project).

Concurrent Applications:

- **Design Review:** Design Review Board meeting was held on February 10, 2026 to review the proposed elevations and landscape plan (DRB25-00734). Staff will work with the applicant to address recommendations from the DRB.

Site Context

General Plan:

- The Placetype for the project site is Neighborhood Center and the Growth Strategy is Evolve.
- A mixed-use commercial development with retail and personal services is a principal land use in the Neighborhood Center Placetype.
- The Proposed Project is designed to a size and scale compatible with surrounding areas with two-story building oriented towards the street and is connected to the surrounding area.
- The Proposed Project is consistent with the Neighborhood Center Placetype and furthers the implementation of, and is not contrary to, the Vision, Guiding Principles, Strategies, and applicable elements of the Mesa 2050 General Plan. Per Section 11-86-4 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO), Small-Scale Commercial Recreation uses are less than 50,000 square feet in size and include activities such as dance studios, exercise studios, health

clubs, yoga studios, dance halls. Small-Scale Commercial Recreation uses are consistent with the Neighborhood Center Placetype.

- Supporting General Plan Strategies:
 - N2. Promote adaptive reuse and infill as tools to rejuvenate and revitalize established neighborhoods.
 - LU3. Encourage infill and redevelopment to meet the community’s strategic needs.

Zoning:

- The project site is zoned Limited Commercial (LC).
- Retail and Small-Scale Commercial Recreation are permitted uses within the LC District.

Surrounding Zoning & Use Activity:

The proposed Retail and Small-Scale Commercial Recreation are compatible with surrounding land uses, which include residential, commercial, and School land.

Northwest (Across Warner Rd.) RS-7 Residential	North (Across Warner Rd.) RS-7 Residential	Northeast (Across Warner Rd.) RS-7 Residential
West LC Commercial	Project Site LC Vacant	East RS-6-PAD Residential
Southwest LC Commercial	South RS-6-PAD City Well Site/School	Southeast RS-6-PAD City Well Site/Residential

Site History:

- **December 12, 2000:** City Council annexed 229.3± acres, including the project site, into the City of Mesa (Ordinance No. 3843).
- **August 6, 2001:** City Council approved a rezoning for 225.6± acres, including the project site, from Maricopa County Rural 42, R1-35 RUPD, R1-18 RUPD, and R1-10 RUPD to City of Mesa Single Residence-43 (R1-43) [equivalent to RS-43], R1-35-PAD [equivalent to RS-35-PAD], R1-15-PAD [equivalent to RS-15-PAD], and R1-9-PAD [equivalent to RS-9-PAD] (Case No. Z01-031; Ordinance No. 3915).
- **December 18, 2006:** City Council approved a rezoning from R1-43 to Limited Commercial (C-2) [equivalent to LC] and Site Plan Review for 4.7± acres for a commercial development (Case No. Z06-089; Ordinance No. 4651).

- **September 21, 2016:** The Planning and Zoning Board approved a request for Site Plan Review for 3.9± acres, including the project site, to allow for a shell commercial building (Case No. Z16-048).

Project/Request Details

Site Plan:

- **Building Design:** The 15,344 square-foot retail and small-scale commercial recreation building will be a two-story structure oriented towards the street. Entrances to the various tenant spaces are located along the east and west sides of the building and an entry plaza on the northwest side of the building connects with a pedestrian path to the public sidewalk along Warner Road.
- **Access:** The site has two entrances on the north side, one of which is shared with the rest of the group commercial development to the west.
- **Parking:** Per Table 11-32-3.A of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO), 41 parking spaces are required. The proposed project is providing 41 parking spaces on site, which will be located to the sides and rear of the building.
- **Landscaping:** The building features landscaping in excess of what is required per code as justification for the BIZ and alternative landscape plan. Landscape planters are provided in a front entry plaza, foundation base, along the perimeter of the site as well as within the parking area.

Bonus Intensity Zone Overlay:

Per Section 11-21 of the MZO, the purpose of a BIZ overlay is to provide for variation from the application of residential densities and other development standards to allow greater intensity of development and encourage unique, innovative developments of superior quality. The BIZ overlay must demonstrate that the resulting development will further the goals and objectives of the General Plan, Specific Plans, and Council policies and will provide significant social or economic benefits to the City.

Development Standards	MZO Required	BIZ Proposed
Setback of Cross Drive Aisles MZO Section 11-32-4(A)	50 feet	24 feet

Development Standards	MZO Required	BIZ Proposed
Required Landscape Yards – MZO Section 11-33-3(B)(1)(a) and (B)(2)(a)(ii) -Adjacent to Single Residence Districts (East Side) -Adjacent to other Non-Single Residence Districts (South Side Adjacent to the Well Site)	20 feet 15 feet	6 feet 0 feet

Per MZO Section 11-21-3(B), The City Council may approve modifications to the underlying district standards proportionate to number of items and degree of compliance for projects that comply with a combination of the criteria for the BIZ. This includes a combination of either:

- Criteria (1) Providing distinctive, superior quality designs. (See Section 11-31-32, Superior Design) and Criteria (2) Addressing environmental performance standards; or
- Criteria (1) Providing distinctive, superior quality designs. (See Section 11-31-32, Superior Design) and Criteria (3) Providing documented evidence that the building(s) will meet or exceed nationally recognized environmental performance standards. For purposes of this criterion, buildings that are designed to earn Green Globes, LEED™ Silver, or to be in compliance with the International Green Construction Code and/or equivalent third-party criteria, are considered to be energy efficient and no higher standard shall be required.

The Proposed Project includes a few modifications to development standards and is required to comply with a lower percentage of criteria as staff evaluates the project and makes a recommendation.

The following summarizes an evaluation of each criteria for the BIZ overlay request.

1. Provide distinctive, superior quality designs. (See Section 11-31-32, Superior Design)
 Per MZO Section 11-31-32, for a project to reflect Superior Design it will incorporate all of the following elements:
 - A. **Holistic Approach to Project Design.** Varied, high-quality, regionally-appropriate building materials, used in distinctive building forms, building massing and detailing that result in a note-worthy example of holistic site design, architecture, landscaping and signage; and

The Proposed Project includes the required proportions of building materials, used in distinctive building forms and detailing including a mix of round and rectangular forms, large, shaded walkways with wood beams and

detailing. Additionally, the required numbers of trees and shrubs provided exceed the MZO requirements for this size of development.

- B. **Responsive Approach to Site and Sub-Area Context.** Architectural and landscape architecture details and features that reflect the character defined in Sub-Area Plans or the General Plan's Placetype urban design characteristics, that are harmonious with adjacent development patterns, integrate with the physical conditions of the immediate site, and create a unique sense of place; and

The Proposed Project includes varied architectural forms that are harmonious with the area and has most of the suite entrances facing west towards the larger group commercial center. The dance studio entrance is facing east but is located further to the rear of the site to reduce any potential impact on the adjacent residential areas.

- C. **Sustainable Design.** Site design, architecture and landscaping features that address the local climate to reduce summer sun penetration and provide summer sunshade protection for pedestrians, promote energy and water conservation, promote the preservation or creation of open space, provide for and encourage the use of multiple modes of transportation, utilize existing infrastructure, and create the opportunity for social interaction; and

The Proposed Project provides continuous shade canopies over pedestrian areas to reduce solar heat gain and lower cooling demand. Paved areas are broken up with landscaping and shaded foundation areas, and high-efficiency windows also reduce the heat impact on the site.

- D. **Exceeds Standards.** Provision of details and features that exceed the criteria and standards specified in Sections 11-5-3, 11-5-5, 11-6-43, 11-6-4 (as applicable), 11-7-3, 11-8-5, 11-8-6 and Chapters 30 through 34, where applicable; and

The Proposed Project exceeds standard requirements through enhanced architectural, landscape, and site design. Foundation base calculations exceed base requirements through use of averaging and provide fully shaded walkways on both the east and west sides of the building. Material quality and façade articulation including varied parapet heights, brick and stucco banding, metal accents, glazing, and shade canopies further elevate the project above baseline commercial standards.

- E. **Great Public Spaces.** Details and features that create attractive, comfortable environments for pedestrians; ensure safe, useful and well-integrated open or public spaces; and include high quality amenities.

The Proposed Project includes well-designed public spaces that enhance the pedestrian experience. A shaded patio along the west side of the building provides a comfortable outdoor gathering area serving both the dance studio and adjacent tenant suites. Extended canopies provide year-round shade and weather protection. An expanded pedestrian plaza at the

southeast tower feature provides a clear and welcoming entry point, with generous circulation space, shade, and visibility.

Based on the above, staff finds that the Proposed Project complies with Criteria 1 required for approval of a BIZ overlay.

2. Address environmental performance standards outlined below:

A. Site selection criteria. Sites shall meet one or more of the following criteria.

- i. Redevelop and rehabilitate economically distressed properties (particularly greyfield sites), damaged sites or environmentally contaminated 'brownfield' sites.

The project site is an infill parcel that is currently vacant.

The Proposed Project meets this Criteria.

- ii. Utilize areas with existing utility and transportation infrastructure and existing community services. This criterion is preferred for higher density and higher intensity development, when feasible.

The site has access to City of Mesa utilities and direct access to Warner Road. Both of these roadways include detached sidewalks that connect the proposed development to adjacent neighborhoods.

The Proposed Project meets this Criteria.

- iii. Utilize locations within ½ mile of a planned light rail line or ¼ mile from an existing or planned bus stop. This criterion is preferred for higher density and higher intensity development, when feasible.

The Proposed Project is not within ½ mile of a planned light rail line or ¼ mile from an existing or planned bus stop.

The Proposed Project does not meet this Criteria.

B. Site design criteria. Designing the site to facilitate alternative modes of transportation and to reduce onsite environmental impacts.

- i. Provide safe and secure storage for bicycles. For residential projects, safe and secure bicycle storage areas shall be provided on-site for a minimum 15% of the residents.

The proposed development includes bicycle racks for use by customers and employees that are directly accessible from Warner Road.

The Proposed Project meets this Criteria.

- ii. Include priority location parking for low-emission vehicles in parking areas.

The Proposed Project does not include priority parking for low emission vehicles.

The Proposed Project does not meet this Criteria.

- iii. Provide priority location parking spaces for carpool or vanpool vehicles.

Priority parking locations for carpool or vanpool vehicles are provided on the east side of the building.

The Proposed Project meets this Criteria.

- iv. Provide the number of parking spaces designed to serve a development site consistent with the number of spaces required to meet the minimum parking ratio. Parking spaces over the minimum number is discouraged.

Per Table 11-32-3A of the MZO, 41 parking spaces are required for the proposed development. The site plan submitted shows 41 parking spaces being provided on site.

The Proposed Project meets this Criteria.

- v. For greenfield sites, protect or restore natural areas on site with native vegetation to encourage biodiversity and for enjoyment by people. For previously developed sites, restore areas with native or adapted vegetation to encourage biodiversity and for enjoyment by people. The size of the space should be appropriate for the size of the site and the activity level or use of the site.

Although the site is undeveloped, native vegetation was removed many years ago. The landscape plan for the Proposed Project includes drought tolerant and regionally appropriate plant species.

The Proposed Project meets this Criteria.

- vi. Design the project to be energy efficient including, but not limited to, designed to reduce summer heat gain, reduce winter heat loss, utilize day lighting strategies and provide the opportunity for occupants to take advantage of renewable energy. The design also mitigates the effects of solar exposure for users and pedestrians. For purposes of this criterion, buildings that have efficient HVAC systems, incorporate passive solar heating, cooling and day lighting strategies within an efficient building envelope, as recommended by the Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) section, including buildings designed to earn the EPA ENERGY STAR or designed to meet LEED™ Silver or equivalent third-party criteria are considered to be energy efficient and no higher standard shall be used

The architectural design proposed includes shaded walkways at all pedestrian entries, which help to mitigate the effects of solar exposure for employees and visitors to the site. This increased shading of the windows also reduces heat gain within the building.

The Proposed Project meets this Criteria.

- C. Provide documented evidence that the building(s) will meet or exceed nationally recognized environmental performance standards. For purposes of this criterion,

buildings that are designed to earn LEED™ Silver, Green Globes, and/or equivalent third-party criteria, and no higher standard shall be required. Avoid sites considered inappropriate, such as prime farmland, land identified as habitat for endangered species, and wetlands or riparian areas associated with wildlife.

The building proposed for the site is not designed to LEED standards.

The Proposed Project does not this Criteria.

- D. Utilize areas with existing utility and transportation infrastructure and existing community services. This criterion is preferred for higher density and higher intensity development, when feasible.

The site is in close proximity to existing utility infrastructure and is located to support the surrounding area of schools, commercial spaces and residential areas with additional commercial uses.

The Proposed Project meets this Criteria.

- E. Redevelop and rehabilitate economically distressed properties (particularly greyfield sites), damaged sites or environmentally contaminated 'brownfield' sites.

While the site is not considered a greyfield or brownfield site, it is not operating at its highest and best economic use. The development of this site will be a positive economic benefit both within the immediate area as well as the larger City of Mesa.

The Proposed Project meets this Criteria.

- F. Utilize locations within ½ mile of a planned light rail line or ¼ mile from an existing or planned bus stop. This criterion is preferred for higher density and higher intensity development, when feasible.

The Proposed Project is not within ½ mile of a planned light rail line or ¼ mile from an existing or planned bus stop.

The Proposed Project does not meet this Criteria.

3. Provide documented evidence that the building(s) will meet or exceed nationally recognized environmental performance standards. For purposes of this criterion, buildings that are designed to earn Green Globes, LEED™ Silver, or to be in compliance with the International Green Construction Code and/or equivalent third-party criteria, are considered to be energy efficient and no higher standard shall be required.

The building proposed for the site is not designed to LEED standards.

The Proposed Project does not this Criteria.

Based on the above analysis, staff finds that the Proposed Project is consistent with the purpose of a BIZ overlay as outlined in MZO Section 11-21. The BIZ overlay provides for variation from the application of residential densities and other development standards to allow greater intensity of development and encourage unique, innovative developments of superior quality.

The Proposed Project is a small, mid-block, urban infill parcel, which has been vacant for many years. It is anticipated to demonstrate the unique, innovative design and superior quality required by Section 11-21 of the MZO to justify the number of requested deviations.

Citizen Participation

The applicant conducted a Citizen Participation process, notifying surrounding property owners, HOAs, and registered neighbors.

Neighborhood Meeting:

A neighborhood meeting was held on February 2, 2026, where the sole attendee expressed excitement for both the project and the quality.

Required Notification:

- Property owners within 1,000 feet, HOAs within ½ mile, and registered neighborhoods within one mile of the project site were notified of the public hearing.
- Staff received no calls on the Proposed Project. No opposition was expressed.

Conditions of Approval

Staff recommends **approval** of the Rezone and Site Plan Review, subject to the following conditions:

1. Compliance with the final site plan as submitted.
2. Compliance with all requirements of Design Review Case No. DRB25-00734.
3. Installation of all off-site improvements and street frontage landscaping during the first phase of construction.
4. Compliance with all requirements of Chapter 19 of the Zoning Ordinance including:
 - a. Owner must execute the City's standard Avigation Easement and Release for Mesa Gateway Airport prior to or concurrently with the recordation of the Final Plat or the issuance of a building permit, whichever occurs first.
 - b. Due to the proximity to Mesa Gateway Airport, any proposed permanent or temporary structure, as required by the FAA, is subject to an FAA filing for review in conformance with CFR Title 14 Part 77 (Form 7460) to determine any effect to navigable airspace and air navigation facilities. A completed form with a response by the FAA must accompany any building permit application for structure(s) on the property.
 - c. Prior to the issuance of any building permit, provide documentation by a registered professional engineer or registered professional architect demonstrating compliance with the noise level reductions required in Section 11-19-5 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance.

- d. Provide written notice to future property owners that the project is within 3 miles of Mesa Gateway Airport.
 - e. All Final Plats must include a disclosure notice in accordance with Section 11-19-5(C) of the Zoning Ordinance which must state in part: “This property, due to its proximity to Mesa Gateway Airport, will experience aircraft overflights, which are expected to generate noise levels that may be of concern to some individuals.”
5. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations, except the modification to the development standards as approved with this BIZ Overlay as shown in the following table:

Development Standards	BIZ Approved
Setback of Cross Drive Aisles MZO Section 11-32-4(A)	24 feet
Required Landscape Yards –MZO Section 11-33-3(B)(1)(a) and (B)(2)(a)(ii)	
-Adjacent to Single Residence Districts (East Side)	6 feet
-Adjacent to other Non-Single Residence Districts (South Side Adjacent to the Well Site)	0 feet

Exhibits

- Exhibit 1 - Presentation
- Exhibit 2 - Ordinance
- Exhibit 3 - Ordinance Map
- Exhibit 4 - Vicinity Map
- Exhibit 5 - Site Plan
- Exhibit 6 - Minutes
- Exhibit 7 - Submittal Documents