



PLANNING DIVISION
STAFF REPORT

Design Review Board

April 9, 2024

CASE No.: DRB23-00745	PROJECT NAME: Central Mesa Reuse Pipeline
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Owner's Name:	City of Mesa
Applicant's Name:	Brian Border, City of Mesa
Location of Request:	Within the 3600 block of East Thomas Road (north side) and within the 3600 block of North Val Vista Drive (east side). Located east of Val Vista Drive on the north side of Thomas Road.
Parcel No(s):	141-22-006
Request:	Design Review to allow for the development of a Major City Utility
Existing Zoning District:	GI
Council District:	1
Site Size:	1± acres
Proposed Use(s):	Major City Utility
Existing Use(s):	Vacant
DRB Meeting Date(s):	April 9, 2024 / 4:30 p.m.
Staff Planner:	Chloe Durfee Daniel
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions

HISTORY

On **February 17, 1981**, the City Council annexed 438± acres, including the subject site. (Ordinance No. 1465).

On **August 17, 1981**, the City Council approved a rezoning of 105± acres, including the subject property, from Rural 43 to M-2 (now General Industrial (GI)) (Case No. Z81-058, Ord. No. 1509).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background:

The applicant is requesting Design Review approval for a new major utility site on an approximately 1± acre undeveloped lot along Val Vista Drive and Thomas Road. Per Section 11-71-2 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO), municipal projects require approval from the Design Review Board. Approval of an Initial Site Plan, Council Use Permit, and a rezoning from GI to Public Semi-Public with a Bonus Intensity Zone Overlay (PS-BIZ-CUP) will be considered by the Planning and Zoning Board and City Council (Case No. ZON23-00743).

General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals:

The property is located within the Neighborhood Village character area designation of the City's General Plan. Per Chapter 7 of the General Plan, the goal of the Neighborhood Village character area is to provide for the regular shopping and service needs of the nearby population while serving as the focal points for the surrounding neighborhoods. The subject request conforms to the goals of the character area by continuing to provide essential services to the surrounding community.

Falcon Field Sub Area Plan:

The property is located within the Falcon Field Sub-Area. The unique characteristics of the Falcon Field Sub-Area include, but are not limited to, the Falcon Field Airport, airport operations, and the strong business linkages to the airport. This area also includes an abundance of high-quality employment for professionals, technical experts, and highly skilled labor. The proposed project conforms with the intent of the Falcon Field Sub-Area by providing required infrastructure support for the wide range of opportunities for the employment of professionals, technical experts, and high-skilled labor in high-quality settings.

Zoning District Designations:

The subject property is zoned General Industrial (GI). The request is a rezoning from GI to Public Semi-Public with a Bonus Intensity Zone Overlay and a Council Use Permit (PS-BIZ-CUP) (Proposed Project). Per Section 11-10-2 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO), the use of the property for a Major Utility is allowed within the PS zoning district with the approval of a Council Use Permit. The applicant is requesting Bonus Intensity Zone overlay to allow for a reduction in setbacks and other development standards.

Site Plan and General Site Development Standards:

The applicant is proposing a new approximately one-acre major water utility facility. The proposed site plan shows a 25-foot tall steel reclaimed water storage tank with a volume of approximately 0.5 million gallons, a 13-foot tall 13,300 gallon horizontal surge tank to accommodate potential pipeline pressure surges and to protect the Central Mesa Reuse Pipeline (CMRP) system infrastructure, a 17-foot tall masonry electrical building providing the secured storage for pump motor starters, variable frequency drives, and monitoring and control equipment, in addition to various other equipment on site surrounded by an eight foot wall to match the development to the south, across Thomas Road. Access to the site is provided off of Thomas Drive and will be visited once per day or less by a City of Mesa truck.

Design Review:

This request is required to be reviewed and approved by the Design Review Board per Section 11-71-2(A)(7) of the MZO. The proposed elevations and landscape plan meet the review criteria for design review approval outlined in Section 11-71-6 of the MZO. The proposed utility service facility will provide a needed infrastructure for residents in Mesa while also addressing and minimizing the visual impacts on the surrounding community.

Alternative Landscape Plan:

This proposed project includes an Alternative Landscape Plan (ALP) requesting a reduction in the minimum percentage of vegetative ground coverage from the required 50% to 37% and does address seven of the required design principles as required including plant variety, naturalistic design, compatibility with surrounding uses, water efficiency, storm water management, plant viability and longevity, and overhead utility line easements.

Per Section 11-33-7(C)2 of the MZO, the Design Review Board shall find upon sufficient evidence when making a decision on alternative landscape plan that:

1. There are unique characteristics of the property, site design, or use that warrant special consideration to modify or deviate from the requirements of this Section and that these characteristics are not self-created.

The property is a unique size and shape with a unique site design and use that warrants special consideration to modify requirements of this section. The site constraints are pre-existing on the site and are not self-created.

The request meets this criteria.

2. The ALP meets or exceeds the minimum requirements of this section, while recognizing the unusual site design or use restraints on the property.

The ALP and the requested BIZ addresses the minimum requirements of this section while also recognizing and addressing the unique site configuration, use, and design.

The request meets this criteria.

3. Approval of an ALP will provide for both increased consistency and compatibility with adjacent properties.

The approval of an Alternative Landscape Plan will help increase the compatibility and consistency of the Proposed Project with the neighboring site and the surrounding community.

The request meets this criteria.

4. The ALP conforms to the allowable modifications listed in subsection B and no exceptions to the limitations on the standards that may be modified are requested.

The Alternative Landscape Plan does conform to the allowable modifications listed in subsection B and no exceptions to the limitations on the standards that may be modified are being requested through this alternative landscape plan.

The request meets this criterion.

Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:

Northwest (Across Val Vista Drive) ADOT Land East 202 Red Mountain Frwy	North ADOT Land East 202 Red Mountain Frwy	Northeast ADOT Land East 202 Red Mountain Frwy
West (Across Val Vista Drive) GI Office/Warehousing	Subject Property GI Vacant	East ADOT Land East 202 Red Mountain Frwy
Southwest (Across Thomas Road) RM-2 Citrus Grove	South (Across Thomas Road) RM-2 Single Residence	Southeast (Across Thomas Road) RM-2 Single Residence

Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses:

There are a variety of uses in the immediate vicinity of the subject site. The property on the north side of Thomas Road west of Val Vista Drive is zoned General Industrial. On Marh 4, 2024, the Planning Director approved a site plan for a warehouse and manufacturing building (Case No. ZON23-00836) with a maximum height of 31'. This project was also heard by the Design Review Board at their February 13, 2024 work session. On the northwest corner of the intersection of Thomas Road and Val Vista Drive is an existing 67' tall cell tower that was originally approved in 2006. Additionally, a single residence subdivision is under construction on the south side of Thomas Road east of Val Vista Drive, directly south of the subject. This subdivision was approved with a mix of one and two-story product. The two-story product approved has a maximum height of 30 feet to the peak of the roof.

The proposed City Water Utility Service Facility with associated water tank on the property will not be out of character with the scale of surrounding development and is compatible with the surrounding uses in the area.

Neighborhood Participation Plan and Public Comments:

As part of the completed Citizen Participation Process, the applicant mailed notification letters to property owners within 1,000 feet of the site, Homeowner Associations (HOAs) within ½ mile of the site, and registered neighborhoods within one mile of the site. As of the writing of this report, staff has not received any comments or concerns from surrounding property owners.

Staff Recommendation:

The subject request is consistent with the General Plan, meets the review criteria for Design Review outlined in Section 11-71-6, and meets the review criteria for Alternative Landscape Plan outlined in Section 11-33-7(C)2; therefore, staff recommends approval with the following conditions:

Conditions of Approval:

1. Compliance with the final elevations and landscape plan submitted, including opportunities for taller trees on Val Vista Drive.
2. Compliance with Zoning Case No. ZON23-00743.
3. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations.
4. Prior to the issuance of any Building Permit, the Engineering Department shall submit proposed art, including visual screening of exterior tank appurtenances, for the site and tank for Planning Director review and approval.

Exhibits:

Vicinity Map

Site Plan

Landscape Plan

Elevations

Renderings

Colors and Materials

Alternative Landscape Plan Request

Project Narrative