



**PLANNING DIVISION  
STAFF REPORT**

**Design Review Board**

**June 13, 2023**

CASE No.: DRB23-00303

PROJECT NAME: **Golfland/Sunsplash Height**

**Exception**

Owner's Name:	Mesa Golfland Properties Associates LTD
Applicant's Name:	Stephen Carlston
Location of Request:	Within the 100 to 400 blocks of West Hampton Avenue (south side). Located east of Country Club Drive and south of Southern Avenue.
Parcel No(s):	139-47-971
Request:	Request for a height exception to allow an 80-foot tall water slide tower.
Existing Zoning District:	General Industrial (GI)
Council District:	4
Site Size:	12± acres
Proposed Use(s):	New 80-foot tall water slide tower
Existing Use(s):	Large-Scale, Outdoor Commercial Recreation
DRB Hearing Date(s):	June 13, 2023 / 4:30 p.m.
Staff Planner:	Charlotte Bridges, Planner II
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

**Background:**

The subject request is for a height exception to allow an 80-foot tall water slide tower in the General Industrial (GI) zoning district. The subject site is the Golfland/Sunsplash Water Park, which is located north of US-60, east of Country Club Drive and on the south side of Hampton Avenue. Per Section 11-7-2 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO), the maximum allowed height in the GI district is 50 feet. Per Section 11-30-3(C) of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO), a request for a height exception requires approval by the Design Review Board.

### **General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals:**

The Mesa 2040 General Plan character area designation on the property is Employment. Per Chapter 7 of the General Plan the goal of the Employment character area is to provide for a wide range of employment opportunities in high-quality settings. The existing water park contributes to the employment opportunities and economic vitality of the City of Mesa and conforms to the intent of the Employment character area.

### **Zoning District Designations:**

The property is zoned General Industrial (GI). Per Section 11-7-2 of the MZO, a large-scale commercial recreation use is not permitted in the GI district. The existing water park was developed in the early 1980's in compliance with the zoning code in effect at the time and is considered legal, non-conforming. Per Section 11-36-3(A) of the MZO, a nonconforming use shall not be expanded to any other structure or lot that it did not occupy on the enactment date of this Ordinance. Since the new water slide is being constructed within the existing boundary of the water park's lot, construction of the new water slide is allowed.

### **Site Plan and General Site Development Standards:**

The Golfland/Sunsplash Water Park is located north of US-60, east of Country Club Drive and on the south side of Hampton Avenue. Access to the water park is provided by four drive entrances along Hampton Avenue. The parking field for the water park is located south of Hampton Avenue, along the north side of the water park. The proposed 80-foot tall water slide tower is being integrated in the existing water park site and will be located to the southeast of the existing wave pool, approximately 55 feet from the west property line and 300 feet from the north property line. Currently there is an existing 58-foot tall water slide with a 53-foot tall stair tower to the east of the proposed 80-foot tall water slide tower.

Additionally, existing trees and shrubs are planted around the perimeter of the water park site. A combination of palm and canopy trees, and shrubs are planted along the Hampton Avenue frontage and the south property line to buffer the property from US-60 freeway.

### **Exceptions to Height Limits – MZO Section 11-30-3:**

The applicant is requesting to exceed the height limitation in the GI district to allow an 80-foot tall water slide tower. Per Section 11-7-2 of the MZO the maximum allowed height in the GI district is 50 feet.

Section 11-30-3(C) of the MZO allows the Design Review Board to approve exceptions to the specified height limits if it is determined by the Board that the proposed project meets two of the listed findings. The findings must include a determination that the development does not exceed the maximum number of stories in the zoning district in which the project is located. Further, the findings must also include one of the following criteria is present: 1) The increased setbacks, enhanced landscaping or other screening measures effectively mitigate the impact of the building height; 2) The exception is necessary to accommodate the proposed uses or activities within the building or structure; or 3) The architectural style of the building or structures places the exceptions at a central point or in a limited area such as a dome, sphere, or other geometric solid.

The applicant's proposal meets two of the listed findings for approving a height exception per Section 11-30-3(C) of the MZO. The proposed water slide tower elevations show that the proposed structure will be single story and will not exceed the number of stories allowed within the GI zoning district, per Table 11-7-3 of the MZO. According to the submitted site plan, the proposed water slide is integrated into the water park site and at least 300 feet from Hampton Avenue and 53 feet from the west property line. In addition, to the south, a large drainage canal separates the water park from the US-60 freeway and existing plant material mitigates the impact of the water slide tower height.

**Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:**

<b>Northwest</b> (Across Hampton Avenue) GC Existing commercial development	<b>North</b> (Across Hampton Avenue) GC, LI and GI Existing commercial and office development	<b>Northeast</b> (Across Hampton Avenue) GI Existing industrial development
<b>West</b> GC Existing commercial development	<b>Subject Property</b> GC and GI Large-scale, outdoor commercial recreation	<b>East</b> GI Existing industrial development
<b>Southwest</b> US-60 freeway	<b>South</b> US-60 freeway	<b>Southeast</b> US-60 freeway

**Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses:**

The surrounding properties to the west, north and east are all zoned GC, LI and GI and developed with commercial or industrial uses. The existing large-scale, outdoor commercial recreation use is compatible with the surrounding land uses.

**Neighborhood Notification and Public Comments:**

The applicant mailed notification letters to property owners within 500 feet of the site, as well as HOAs within  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile and registered neighborhoods within one mile of the site. As of writing this report, neither the applicant nor staff has received any comments/concerns from surrounding property owners.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Based on the application received and the preceding analysis, staff finds that the subject request meets the review criteria for a height exception outlined in Section 11-30-3 of the MZO. Therefore, staff recommends approval with the following conditions:

**Conditions of Approval:**

1. Compliance with all requirements of Design Review.
2. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations.
3. Landscaping must comply with the landscape plan approved with case no. DR01-013 and all dead, dying, and missing landscape materials must be replaced with landscape materials of similar type and size.

**Exhibits:**

- Exhibit 1 – Staff Report
- Exhibit 2 – Vicinity Map
- Exhibit 3 – Project Narrative
- Exhibit 4 – Site Plan
- Exhibit 5 – Elevations
- Exhibit 6 – Landscape Plan