Red Rock Design Build
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RMDC Dance Studio Alternative Landscape Plan

Purpose of the Alternative Landscape Plan (ALP)

This Alternative Landscape Plan is submitted in accordance with Mesa Zoning Ordinance §11-33-7 to address site-specific conditions that limit uniform application of prescriptive landscape standards. These conditions include adjacency to the City-owned municipal well parcel, required easements, an existing subdivision wall, and the irregular configuration of the site.

The ALP requests approval of the following alternative landscape conditions, which are limited in scope and localized to constrained areas adjacent to the well site and building geometry:

- Reduction of an 8-foot-wide landscape island to 6 feet adjacent to the well site along the east side of the site
- Approval of a 0-foot landscape island on the west side of the site adjacent to the well site
- Approval of no planting within the 0-foot landscape island
- Reduction of the required 5-foot rear (south) foundation base to 4 feet at the tower base

Landscape area is redistributed to deeper foundation bases and expanded planting pockets elsewhere on the site, and enhanced planting design techniques are applied to achieve equal or greater functional performance than prescriptive compliance.

Prescriptive Standards vs ALP Performance

The requested alternative landscape conditions are performance-based and limited to areas where site constraints prevent full dimensional compliance. Reduced and zero-width landscape islands adjacent to the well site are intentionally addressed through redistribution of landscape area, increased planting density, vertical layering, and the use of plant species appropriate for constrained soil volumes. The absence of planting within the 0-foot landscape island is intentional and does not diminish overall site landscape performance.

Along the rear (south) building elevation, a 4-foot foundation base is provided where a 5-foot minimum is otherwise required. This minor reduction occurs at the tower base and is mitigated through deeper foundation base areas along other building elevations that exceed minimum requirements, as well as through plant selection and irrigation design focused on long-term plant health and performance. Overall, the Alternative Landscape Plan provides equal or superior landscape performance consistent with the intent of §11-33-7.

Design Principles

This narrative demonstrates compliance with more than six of the design principles outlined in Mesa Zoning Ordinance §11-33-7 and therefore shows that the intent of Chapter 33 is exceeded in whole or in part. The following principles are utilized:

1. Innovative Design:
    a. Multi-tiered “micro-bosque” landscape pockets are used throughout the site, consisting of clustered groupings of 3 to 5 trees with layered understory plantings.
    b. Sculpted and faceted planting beds are curved along linear paths and building edges to enhance the pedestrian experience, introducing form, color, shadow, and seasonal variation.

c. Fragrant planting beds utilizing Honeysuckle and Rosemary are provided at the Dance Studio entry and Tenant 2 entry to reinforce a sense of place.
d. Layered vertical landscape screening is provided behind screen walls using Texas Mountain Laurel, Texas Sage, and Trailing Lantana to enhance depth and visual interest.
e. A bloom succession strategy is employed to ensure year-round visual interest and variation.
f. Landscape lighting is integrated with plant massing to enhance night safety and expression.

2. Plant Variety:

a. Tree Types:
   i. Southern Live Oak: Use north/west deep foundation bases (25'-33' zones) and along Warner. The evergreen offers structure and shade year-round.
   ii. Red Push Pistache: Used exclusively in deeper landscape pockets that exceed minimum soil volume requirements. Intentionally excluded from narrow planters, foundation bases under 10 feet in width, and residential boundary buffer zones. Provides seasonal interest and fall color.
   iii. Desert Willow: Used within east boundary micro-bosque clusters and as visual breaks near parking areas. Selected for long bloom season, suitability for constrained spaces, and low litter characteristics.
   iv. Swan Hill Olive: Use along west patio edges and architectural accents near the tower. The evergreen provides structure and form without fruit drop.
   v. Medjool Date Palm: Palms are intentionally limited to select corner nodes along the site frontage, where vertical accent and skyline definition are desired. They are used strictly as punctuation elements and are not relied upon for shade, buffering, or canopy coverage. Excluded from residential adjacency zones, interior parking islands, narrow foundation base areas, and pedestrian-oriented landscape zones to ensure that required screening, shading, and naturalistic performance is achieved through appropriate canopy tree species.

b. Layered shrubs:
   i. Natal Plum 'Tuttle' (Carissa macrocarpa): Use for shading of walls, continuous evergreen mass for deep green, glossy, clean evergreen structure understory.
   ii. Rio Bravo Sage (Leucophyllum langmaniae): Use at linear runs along east and north. Purple bloom cycles.
   iii. Dwarf Yaupon Holly (Ilex vomitoria 'Nana'): Use at foundation base near entries for tight, architectural mounds. Contrast with free-form shrubs.
   iv. Mexican Honeysuckle (Justicia spicigera): Use at shaded porch-adjacent areas. Orange bloom for seasonal interest under overhangs.
   v. Texas Ranger 'Compacta' (Leucophyllum frutescens): Use for accent pockets along east wall. Provides a different texture than Rio Bravo and avoids monoculture within the Leucophyllum family.

c. Groundcovers & ornamental grasses: Seasonal movement, color shifts, bloom interest. Intentional species placement by microclimate. Used at the hot reflected east wall, shaded porch zones, high-visibility frontage, basin edges, parking islands, and for vertical layering behind screen walls.
   i. Regal Mist (Muhlenbergia capillaris): Use at the base of walls, east boundary, and parking edges. Provides dramatic pink fall bloom.
   ii. Silver Bush Morning Glory (Convolvulus cneorum): Use toward the front edge of faceted beds. Adds to texture variety with silver foliage.

iii. Trailing Lantana (Lantana montevidensis): Use to cascade over low walls in foundation base. Provide a long bloom season.
iv. Deer Grass (Muhlenbergia rigens): Use for massing in pockets along east wall.

3. Naturalistic Design: Plantings are arranged in drifts and clusters with varied heights, textures, and spacing. Layered evergreen, deciduous, and flowering species create depth and seasonal interest. Shrubs and grasses are staggered to avoid linear patterns, and subtle grade variations enhance the naturalistic character. This exceeds Mesa's minimum standards by creating a more organic, resilient, and visually dynamic landscape. How the site satisfies Naturalistic Design:
    a. Deep foundation bases on 2 sides.
    b. Use "drifts" and "clusters" instead of rows :
        i. Use tree clusters
        ii. Mounded shrub/grass pockets
        iii. Faceted planting beds
        iv. Layered vertical greens
    c. Vary plant spacing:
        i. 24–36" spacing in some shrub masses
        ii. 30–48" spacing in grasses
        iii. 10–20' irregular spacing in tree clusters
    d. Layer species for height + texture + color variety
    e. Use subtle grade modulation
        i. Micro-swales
        ii. Slight mounding
        iii. Shallow depressions
    f. Blend plant families/materials at transitions
    g. Avoid a one-species "wall"
    h. Use palms as *accents*, not dominant naturalistic elements

4. Water Efficiency: The Alternative Landscape Plan improves water efficiency by reducing potable water demand and maximizing on-site stormwater utilization. The plan utilizes an entirely low-water, desert-adapted plant palette, eliminates turf, and organizes plantings into consistent hydrozones to prevent over-irrigation. The east property line functions as an ultra-low-water landscape zone planted with drought-tolerant species including Desert Willow, Sage, Natal Plum, and ornamental grasses, while wider foundation planting areas along the north and west elevations create shaded microclimates that reduce irrigation demand. Roof runoff is directed to landscaped planting areas, and stormwater is conveyed to a retention basin located along the southern portion of the site, where runoff is retained and infiltrated to support adjacent landscape areas and reduce reliance on supplemental irrigation. All planting areas are irrigated exclusively with high-efficiency drip systems with no overhead spray, and decomposed granite mulch is used throughout to reduce evaporation and retain soil moisture. Despite reduced landscape widths in certain locations due to site constraints, the plan results in a lower total irrigated area, reduced long-term water demand, and superior water-performance outcomes consistent with the intent of §11-33-7 and Mesa's water-efficiency principles.

5. Storm Water Management: The Alternative Landscape Plan enhances on-site stormwater performance by distributing landscape areas and plant massing to slow runoff, increase infiltration, and stabilize soil. Along the east property line—where landscape width reductions are necessary due to existing site constraints—the ALP introduces a densely planted vegetated filter zone composed of shrubs, ornamental grasses, and

clustered Desert Willow trees. This layered planting intercepts sheet flow, reduces runoff velocity, and improves infiltration more effectively than a wider but sparsely planted prescriptive landscape strip. Deeper foundation base areas along the north and west elevations accommodate larger canopy trees and substantial shrub and grass massing, increasing interception and evapotranspiration during storm events. Micro-contouring and shallow planting depressions further enhance infiltration while maintaining compatibility with the site's approved grading and drainage patterns. All planting areas are finished with decomposed granite or mulch to reduce erosion and stabilize surface flow. Collectively, these measures provide equal or superior stormwater management performance compared to strict dimensional compliance, satisfying the intent of §11-33-7.

6. Site-Specific Attributes: The Alternative Landscape Plan responds directly to unique site conditions the City-owned municipal well parcel, and access easements serving the well site. The ALP enhances functional performance by utilizing constrained areas as targeted screening zones with layered vegetation, including evergreen shrubs, flowering shrubs, ornamental grasses, and clustered shade trees scaled appropriately to the available soil volume. Landscape depth is intentionally redistributed to the north and west elevations, where wider foundation base zones support canopy trees and pedestrian-oriented planting. Along the Warner Road frontage, the ALP reinforces the arterial-edge character through structured canopy trees, palms limited to corner nodes only, and massed low-water shrubs and grasses that provide shade, identity, and visual continuity. The plant palette is selected specifically for the site's solar exposure, reflected heat conditions, and residential adjacency, demonstrating that the ALP provides equal or superior performance compared to prescriptive dimensional standards in accordance with §11-33-7.
7. Tree Substitution: The Alternative Landscape Plan incorporates targeted tree substitutions to improve canopy performance, water efficiency, and compatibility with adjacent residential uses. Species such as mesquite and palo verde, which provide limited canopy coverage and higher litter and maintenance demands, are replaced with Southern Live Oak, Red Push Pistache, and Desert Willow. These substituted species deliver greater shade, more consistent canopy structure, and enhanced seasonal interest. Desert Willow is utilized along the east property line where constrained conditions require upright, adaptable species, while Red Push Pistache is limited to deeper landscape pockets with adequate soil volume. Along the north and west elevations, evergreen Southern Live Oaks provide superior shade and microclimate benefits in pedestrian-oriented areas. Male Date Palms are used sparingly and exclusively at corner nodes along Warner Road as architectural accents and are not relied upon for shade or buffering. Collectively, these substitutions provide equal or superior canopy coverage, improved compatibility with surrounding uses, and reduced long-term water demand, consistent with the intent of §11-33-7.
8. Plant Viability and Longevity: The Alternative Landscape Plan is designed to ensure long-term plant health by selecting species adapted to site-specific microclimates, heat exposure, and soil conditions. Along the east property line—where landscape width reductions occur due to non-owner-created constraints—the ALP utilizes upright, heat-tolerant species such as Desert Willow supported by evergreen screening shrubs and ornamental grasses well suited to narrow root zones and reflected heat environments. Wider foundation base areas along the north and west elevations provide adequate growing space for Southern Live Oak and Swan Hill Olive, whose mature canopy and root systems benefit from deeper soil volumes. All planting

areas are organized into consistent hydrozones and irrigated using high-efficiency drip systems to maintain stable soil moisture. Mulch and decomposed granite reduce evaporation and soil temperature fluctuation, while fruitless species selections minimize maintenance impacts that can compromise plant health. These measures ensure equal or superior long-term plant viability and resilience compared to strict dimensional compliance, meeting the intent of §11-33-7.

Summary of Compliance

The Alternative Landscape Plan meets or exceeds the intent of Mesa Zoning Ordinance §11-33-7 by redistributing landscape areas to perform more effectively than prescriptive standards. There is no net reduction in the total number of required trees. Quantity of plants and the planting area exceed standards. Through enhanced planting density, targeted tree substitution, water-efficient design, stormwater functionality, compatibility buffering, and long-term plant viability strategies, the ALP achieves equal or superior landscape performance and warrants approval.

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RMDC Dance Studio Landscaping

Trees

Southern Live Oak


Red Push Pistache



Desert Willow



Swan Hill Olive


Medjool Date Palm

Shrubs

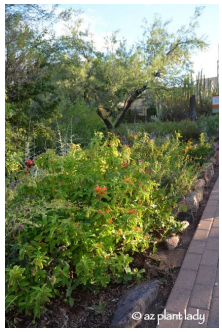
Natal Plum 'Tuttle'


Rio Bravo and Texas Ranger 'Compacta' Sage


Dwarf Yaupon Holly



Mexican Honeysuckle


Groundcovers & Grasses

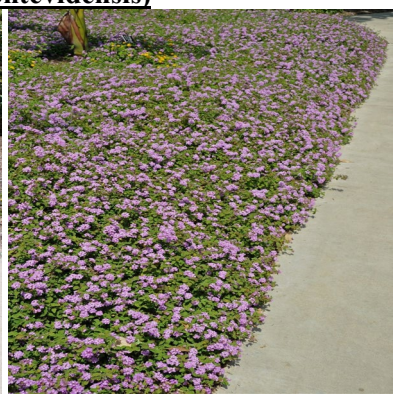
Regal Mist (Muhlenbergia capillaris)



Silver Bush Morning Glory (Convolvulus cneorum)



Trailing Lantana (Lantana montevidensis)


Deer Grass (Muhlenbergia rigens)