

# PLAZA MESA

RETAIL SHOPPING CENTER

SWC Southern Avenue & Mesa Drive

# SPR, SCIP, DIP, & DR NARRATIVE

*Submitted by:*

**WELKER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES LLC**

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*On behalf of:*

**RED MOUNTAIN GROUP**

1234 E 17TH STREET

SANTA ANA, CA 92701

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## INTRODUCTION

Welker Development Resources, on behalf of Red Mountain Asset Fund II LLC (Owner), is pleased to submit this narrative for Site Plan Review, a Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit, a Development Incentive Permit, and Design Review for the approximately 7.808 acres located at the SWC of Southern Avenue and Mesa Drive (Property). The Property is further identified as Mesa Shopping Center Tracts I, III, & V and as Maricopa County parcel numbers 139-48-293A (PAD B), 139-48-295A (PAD A), and 139-48-297C & D (Tract V).

The Property is currently known as Plaza Mesa Shopping Center - an existing retail shopping center that was originally approved for development by the Mesa City Council in 1985 via SPR85-18. With 51,975 s.f. of leasable tenant space and two undeveloped pads on the north and east sides of the Property. The Owner requests approvals from the City of Mesa for Site Plan Review for PAD A, Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit for Property, Development Incentive Permit for PAD A, and Design Review for PAD A.

Figure 1 below shows the Property outlined in yellow & PAD A outlined in red.

*Figure 1 - Site Aerial*



## EXITING SITE CONDITIONS & SURROUNDING PROPERTIES

The Property is located at the SWC of Southern Avenue and Mesa Drive. Known as Plaza Mesa, it is an existing retail shopping center with over 50,000 s.f. of tenant space. PAD A is an undeveloped parcel within this retail campus. The Property is located in an area with characteristics that support the proposed use. Southern Avenue abuts the Property’s North property line and Mesa Drive abuts the East property line. The properties to the west are developed with existing commercial uses. The properties to the south are comprised of single family residential homes. Table 1 below identifies the existing and surrounding land uses and designations.

**TABLE 1 - EXISTING AND SURROUNDING LAND USES**

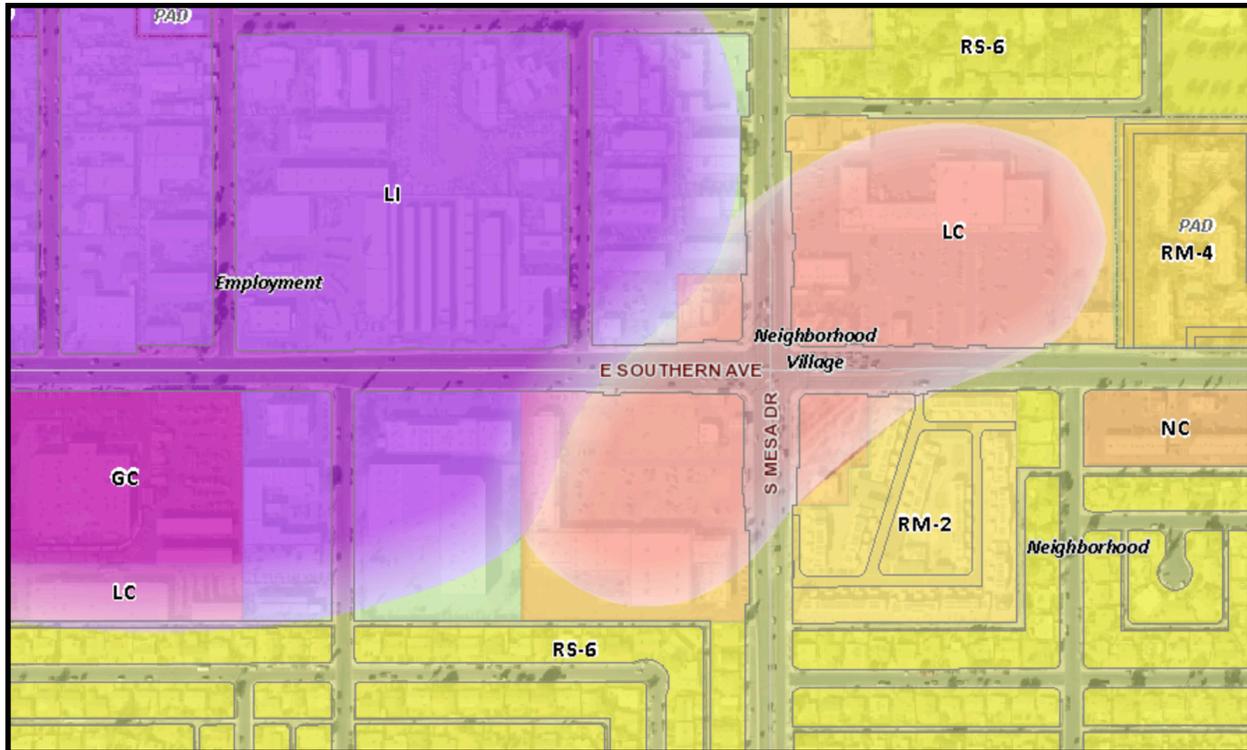
DIRECTION	GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION	EXISTING ZONING	EXISTING USE
PROJECT SITE 139-48-293A, 295A, 297C, & 297D	Neighborhood Village Center	LC	Plaza Mesa Shopping Center
NORTH SIDE 139-31-059A, 058B, 057A, & 067AB	Neighborhood Village Employment	LI & LC	Southern Avenue Commercial/Retail Uses
EAST SIDE 103-13-001L, 001M, & 001N	Neighborhood Neighborhood Village	LC, RM-2	Mesa Drive Retail & Multi Residential Uses
SOUTH SIDE 139-57-017 thru 023, 139-57-001	Neighborhood	RS-6	Melody Mesa Subdivision
WEST SIDE 139-48-232 & 238A	Employment	LI	Ikeda Commercial Park

## EXISTING GENERAL PLAN

Mesa’s General Plan Character Area Map (Figure 2 next page) designates the Property as predominantly Neighborhood Village Center. The primary focus of the Neighborhood Village Center character area designation is to provide for commercial and mixed-use nodes of activity, generally between 15 and 25 acres in size, that serve the surrounding neighborhoods. The Property is not within any Mesa Special Areas or Sub Areas.

The proposed development is consistent with the goals of Mesa's General Plan given that its primary use is retail businesses that serve the surrounding neighborhoods. The development will bring new high-quality users to the area which will complement the goals of the General Plan. This request will provide financial and patron stimulus for ongoing viability at the Plaza Mesa shopping center.

**Figure 2 - General Plan Character Area Map**



## GENERAL PLAN COMPLIANCE

Mesa's General Plan character area designation on the Property is predominantly Neighborhood Village. The proposed uses conform with Mesa's General Plan by providing new retail business services to the surrounding neighborhoods.

- "The Neighborhood Village Center District shopping areas are generally between 15 and 25 acres in size and are typically located at arterial intersections (General Plan pg 7-16)... The goal is to provide for the regular shopping and service needs of the nearby population." (pg. 7-16)... These centers typically support alternative transportation modes such as walking and bicycling by providing pedestrian and bike connections to surrounding areas (pg. 7-16)."

The proposed site plan complies with the General Plan intent. In addition, development of the long vacant PAD A as proposed will strengthen the future viability of the Plaza Mesa shopping center so that it can continue to serve the surrounding neighborhoods long into the future.

- Retail, personal services, and fast food drive-thrus are typical uses (pg. 7-17).

As demonstrated on the Preliminary Site Plan, the uses proposed for PAD A is consistent with the underlying zoning and their permitted uses.

## DIP & SCIP REQUESTS

As previously noted in this narrative, the Owner requests a Site Plan Review (SPR) for PAD A and Property, a Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit (SCIP) for Property, a Development Incentive Permit (DIP) for PAD A, and Design Review for PAD A to allow the development of an upscale drive-thru Starbucks coffee shop, with a patron walk-up window..

Nearly 40 years after the Property's development, enforcement of Mesa's current development standards are prohibitive for any allowed use. PAD A has been effectively bypassed, and remained vacant for decades. Assembly with adjacent parcels is not an option. Accordingly, the Owner is seeking a SCIP and DIP to help facilitate the practical development of the vacant PAD A within the Property. The table below shows requested deviations from the standard.

## DIP Request Qualifications & Criteria

PAD A qualifies for a DIP by meeting the City of Mesa definition for "infill" as follows:

- The site does not exceed 2.5 acres (0.282 net acres) and has been in it's current configuration for more than 10 years (39 years vacant).
- The site has access to the existing utility services and facilities that were approved to serve the Plaza Mesa shopping center, including PAD A, by Mesa in 1985 via SPR85-18. Said services and facilities are sufficiently sized and located to serve the proposed use.
- The surrounding developable properties within 1,200' do not have 25% vacant and more than 50% of these surrounding parcels have been developed for more than 15 years.

- As noted by staff in it's 1st review comments, and this narrative, this proposed development is consistent with the General Plan and permitted uses as specified by the Mesa Zoning Ordinance.
- The incentives requested are consistent with the existing Plaza Mesa development and the definition for an "infill" property.
- PAD A cannot reasonably develop without the requested incentives.
- The architectural elements, landscape design, and other site improvements are consistent with Mesa's Design Guidelines.

**Table 2 - DIP Incentives**

STANDARD	REQUIRED LC	INCENTIVES REQUESTED
Arterial Streets MZO Table 11-33-3.A.4	Provide a minimum of 1 tree and 6 shrubs per 25 linear feet of frontage on Mesa Drive	Requested 2 trees & 30 shrubs for entire 455-feet of frontage on Mesa Drive - which is impacted by existing bus stop
Minimum Setback from Mesa Drive (6-lane arterial) MZO Table 11-6-3	15'-feet setback adjacent to Mesa Drive	10-feet setback adjacent to Mesa Drive
Landscape Setbacks MZO 11-6-3(A)	15'-feet landscape setback adjacent to Mesa Drive	10-feet landscape setback adjacent to Mesa Drive
Drive-Thru Facilities Screening MZO 11-31-18(D)	Provide 40-inch high screen wall adjacent to public rights-of-way	4-feet to 6-feet high trellis/landscape screen

### SCIP Justification & Compatibility Statement

Due to the extremely small size of PAD A (0.282 net acres) required parking cannot be accommodated/located within PAD A's boundaries. The Owner proposes to locate the required 14 parking spaces within the boundaries of the "shared" parking area, covered by the CC&R's shared parking and cross-access agreement, and immediately adjacent to PAD A's west boundary.

A similar challenge exists for the required solid waste enclosure. The owner proposes to replace the existing non-conforming trash enclosure, that is in conflict with the proposed building, by constructing a fully compliant solid waste enclosure located near the northwest corner of PAD A.

In both cases, Mesa design criteria is achieved - albeit "off site". As a result of these two circumstances, the Owner is seeking a SCIP to accommodate these reasonable solutions.

The Property qualifies for a SCIP by the owner providing physical improvements to the existing development site that constitute the greatest degree of compliance achievable without the need to demolish or reconstruct significant areas of existing buildings and related parking areas. Such demolition or reconstruction would likely cause some existing and legally permitted uses to cease or be significantly and negatively impacted. The improvements that would be authorized by approval of this SCIP would result in a development on PAD A that is compatible with the existing Property uses and nearby neighborhoods. Approval would also create an scenario whereby long lost landscaping is replaced. Thus enhancing the character of the Property.

Since the original development in 1985, prior owners have allowed the landscaping to wither, die, and ultimately be removed. All that remains in these landscape areas is "decorative rock". The Owner proposes to supplement the "decorative rock" by restoring landscaping to these areas along the Southern Avenue and Mesa Drive frontages and in the existing islands and medians within the existing parking areas. Please note preliminary landscape plans attached to this submittal. All SCIP deviations required to accommodate the existing (39 year old) retail center's nonconforming improvements are identified in Table 3 below:

**Table 3 - SCIP Deviations**

MZO CITATION	MZO STANDARD	MZO DEVIATION
MZO Table 11-6-2	15-foot-wide landscape yard adjacent to Southern Ave and Mesa Dr.	10-foot landscape setback adjacent to Mesa Drive & Southern Ave will be re-landscaped
MZO Table 11-6-2	Maximum lot coverage is 80%	92.2% Lot Coverage Existing retail center cannot be revised to comply
MZO Section 11-30-8	Pedestrian Connections	No pedestrian connection to Southern Avenue Pedestrian connection will be provided to Mesa Drive

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ZON23-00935, BOA24-00435 & DRB23-00934

MZO CITATION	MZO STANDARD	MZO DEVIATION
MZO Section 11-30-13(A)	Minimum Distance from Residential District. Truck docks, loading, and service areas are not permitted within 50 feet of the boundary of any residential district or use	Existing loading dock is 34'-5" from residential district  Service areas cannot be relocated or reconstructed
MZO Section 11-32-4(A)	Setback of Cross Drive Aisles. Parking spaces along main drive aisles connecting directly to a street and drive aisles that cross such main drive aisles shall be set back at least 50 ft from the property line abutting the street	Existing throat depths: Southern Ave: west = 34'-11", east = 35" Mesa Dr: north 35'-8", middle = 23'-3", and south = 10'-8"  Existing parking fields cannot be revised. PAD A will comply
MZO Section 11-32-8	Bicycle Parking	No existing bicycle parking exists for the retail center and no new bicycle parking cannot be provided for the existing retail center  PAD A will provide 2 new bicycle racks w/4 bicycle parking spaces
MZO Table 11-33-3.A.4	Arterial Streets provide a minimum of 1 tree and 6 shrubs per 25 linear feet of street frontage Southern Avenue and Mesa Drive	Due to the location of the existing screen wall & bus stop shelter, compliance is not possible
MZO Section 11-33-3(B)(1)(a)(ii)	Provide a minimum 25-foot-wide landscape yard along the south property line adjacent to RS District	<b>Minimum 5-feet</b>  The prior 1985 approvals did not allow for this landscape setback and cannot be brought into compliance
MZO Section 11-33-3(B)(1)(c)(1)(ii)	Areas visible from public parking or drive aisles. A minimum of four (4) non-deciduous trees and 20 shrubs per 100 linear feet of adjacent property line shall be provided	<b>1 tree &amp; 75 shrubs provided</b>  The prior 1985 approvals did not require this landscape setback

MZO CITATION	MZO STANDARD	MZO DEVIATION
MZO Section 11-33-3(B)(2)(a)(ii)	Provide a minimum 15-foot wide landscape yard along the west property line adjacent to LI District	<p><b>Minimum 3'-3"</b></p> <p>The prior 1985 approvals did not require this landscape setback</p>
MZO Section 11-33-3(B)(2)(a)(i)	Provide a 7-foot wide landscape yard, except where cross access drive aisle occurs within the required landscape yard along the east & north property lines adjacent to LC District	<p><b>Existing: east property line = Minimum 3'-5" &amp; north property line = Minimum 3-feet</b></p>
MZO Section 11-33-3(B)(2)(c)	Number of Plants. A minimum of three (3) non- deciduous trees and 20 shrubs per 100 linear feet of adjacent property line shall be provided. In the event of fractional results, the resulting number will be rounded to the next highest whole number. Shrubbery and ground covers are not necessary if the area is not visible from public parking and drive aisles	<p><b>Proposed trees &amp; shrubs:</b></p> <p><b><u>West</u> property line (adjacent to LI district) = 0 trees &amp; 90 shrubs provided</b></p> <p><b><u>East</u> property line (adjacent to LC district) = 0 trees &amp; 0 shrubs provided</b></p> <p><b><u>North</u> property line (adjacent to LC district) = (Southern) 0 trees &amp; 0 shrubs provided</b></p> <p>The 1985 approvals did not require this compliance</p>
MZO Section 11-33-4(B)(1)	Provide parking lot landscape islands at each end of a row of stalls and in between for maximum 8 contiguous parking spaces.	<p>- 5 missing islands at the end of single row parking spaces</p> <p>- 2 missing double islands at the end of a double row of parking</p> <p>- Maximum of 21 contiguous single row parking spaces without an island</p> <p>- Maximum of 11 contiguous double row parking spaces without an island</p> <p>The 1985 approvals did not require this compliance</p>

MZO CITATION	MZO STANDARD	MZO DEVIATION
MZO Section 11-33-4(B)(2)	Landscape islands shall be a minimum of eight feet wide and 15 feet in length for single-row and 30 feet in length for double-row parking	5-feet is the smallest width of the single island. No double islands exist & they are angled  The 1985 approvals did not require this compliance
MZO Section 11-3-5(A)(1)	Exterior Walls with Public Entrance. A 15-foot-wide foundation base shall be provided, measured from face of building to face of curb along the entire length of exterior wall	<b>Existing: Minimum 14'-2"</b>  The 1985 approvals did not require this compliance. PAD A will comply
MZO Section 11-33-5(A)(2)(a)	Exterior Walls without a Public Entrance. A minimum 10-foot-wide foundation base shall be provided, measured from face of building to face of curb along the entire length of the exterior wall adjacent to parking stalls	<b>Existing: Minimum 6'-5"</b>  The 1985 approvals did not require this compliance. PAD A will comply
MZO Section 11-33-5(A)(2)(b)	Exterior Walls without a Public Entrance. A minimum 5-foot-wide foundation base shall be provided, measured from face of building to face of curb along the entire length of the exterior wall adjacent to drive aisles as illustrated	<b>Existing: Minimum 0'-0"</b>  The 1985 approvals did not require this compliance. PAD A will comply
MZO Section 11-33-5(B)(3)	Plant Material within Foundation Base	<b>Existing: No foundation base plan material</b>  The 1985 approvals did not require this compliance. PAD A will comply

## PERMITTED USES

The use proposed for PAD A is permitted under the zoning district for City of Mesa Limited Commercial (LC).

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PAD A has been designed to attract and serve area neighborhoods and commuters transiting to and from work. The design and character of PAD A is intended to blend cohesively and enhance the existing site elements and character of the Property. Circulation within the Property blends and functions with the proposed PAD A layout. On PAD A, the Owner proposes a 1,265 s.f. building (Starbucks), including a drive-thru and pick-up window for primary customer access. The proposed design effectively manages vehicle stacking during peak business hours and ensures the highest and best use of this small parcel. No new driveways are proposed onto Mesa Drive to facilitate ingress/egress. The existing trash enclosure near the NWC of the PAD A will be reconstructed and relocated to facilitate Mesa's current design/screening requirements.

In 2012/2013 the City of Mesa constructed new street improvements on Mesa Drive adjacent to the Plaza Mesa shopping center. This work included taking additional rights-of-way for a public transit bus stop shelter that would be served by a dedicated bus stop lane - all directly adjacent to pad A. The end result further compressed the already small site and visually blocked critical customer views of pad A. With the same project, the City of Mesa installed a landscape median in Mesa Drive that effectively eliminated 50% of the historic (39 years) customer ingress and egress. Further exacerbating the already difficult development challenges for pad A.

The proposed Starbucks coffee shop typically serves hot coffees, hot teas, hot drinks, blended beverages, cold coffees, iced teas, cold drinks, hot breakfast, bakery goods, and lunch snacks. The hours/days of operation would be 4:00 AM to 9:00 PM Monday thru Sunday. Typically, there are three or four employees working during the daily shifts. This Starbucks would primarily accommodate drive-thru patron services; however, a walk-up window is also provided where patrons can pick up orders they place on the Starbucks app, or if they want to park and place an order in-person. Owner anticipates a couple tables and chairs outside on a small patio for patrons use. There is no seating inside for customers.

The color palate of the building will be light warm tones, medium brown, with black accents. The building will utilize materials of brick veneer, EIFS, wood siding, and metal coping. Signage will be attached to the building, with a detached sign located on the pad near the entrance drive.

## PHASING

The PAD A proposed development (Starbucks) is scheduled to be completed as soon as construction plans are approved and permits issued.

## UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### WATER

The City of Mesa has an existing 8-inch public water mainline located within a 20-foot wide public utility easement on the Property. Said 8-inch public water mainline is intended, from the original 1986 development, to serve pads A and B. Said 8-inch public water mainline is looped through the Property and connected to 16-inch public water transmission lines in both Southern Avenue and Mesa Drive. Thus ensuring more than adequate domestic and fire service flows.

### WASTEWATER

The City of Mesa has an existing 8-inch gravity public sewer mains in Southern Avenue and Mesa Drive sufficiently sized and intended to serve pads A and B.

### GAS

The City of Mesa has existing 8-inch public gas mainline along the Property's Southern Avenue frontage and an existing 4-inch public gas mainline along the Property's Mesa Drive frontage. Both public gas mainlines are of sufficient size to provided service to both pads A and B.

### POWER

The area is served by Salt River Project for power through overhead 12 kV lines located on the south side of Southern Avenue and overhead lines along the west side of Mesa Drive.

### COMMUNICATIONS

COX Communications services the general area with lines being underbuilt on the overhead power poles on both the south side of Southern Avenue and the west side of Mesa Drive.

### PROPOSED UTILITIES SUMMARY

It is not anticipated that either pad A or B will require the extension of public water, sewer, or gas mainlines to serve the proposed uses. Rather, the existing public water, sewer, or gas mainlines on the Property are sized and located to provide adequate service. Salt River Project (SRP) power will need to be coordinated and designed to be brought onto pads A and B.

## CONCLUSION

The Red Mountain Group has a history of turning broken strip malls and blighted retail buildings into thriving local shopping centers, while forging relationships and bringing communities together. The core values of the City of Mesa General Plan for Neighborhood Village Centers like the Property (i.e. connecting people and places, sustainability, diverse neighborhoods, and strengthening the local economy) are directly addressed by the proposed development of PAD A. The general plan designation of "Neighborhood Village Center" allows for, and anticipates, this type of proposed use. The design concepts presented with this application follow Mesa's vision and urban design goals.

Mesa's Economic Development staff is supportive of this proposed use for PAD A. The building will incorporate color schemes and design materials from Mesa's Design Guidelines. Quality of design for the site plan and building design is a high priority. The building will also incorporate solar panels on the trellis and shade canopy structure to reduce its carbon footprint. The proposal will provide desirable services that will add great value to the Heritage Park Neighborhood. We look forward to working with City of Mesa staff, citizens and elected officials in developing these two bypassed and vacant parcels.

*See Owner's response memorandum, attached to this narrative, for information and specific replies to Mesa staff's 05 SEPTEMBER 2024 3rd Review Consolidated Comments.*