

COUNCIL MINUTES

May 18, 2026

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in the Study Session room at City Hall, 20 East Main Street, on May 18, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mark Freeman
Scott Somers
Rich Adams*
Jennifer Duff
Alicia Goforth
Francisco Heredia
Dorean Taylor

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

OFFICERS PRESENT

Lisa Anderson
Scott Butler
Jim Smith

(*Participated in the meeting through the use of video conference equipment.)

Mayor Freeman conducted a roll call.

1. Review and discuss items on the agenda for the May 18, 2026, regular Council meeting.

All of the items on the agenda were reviewed among Council and staff and the following was noted:

Conflict of interest: None

Items removed from the consent agenda: None

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Somers regarding agenda Items 11-a, (**Staff recommended ordinance for ZON25-00635 "Ascension," 40± acres located at the northeast corner of East Brown Road and North 32nd Street. Rezone from Agricultural (AG) to Single Residence-15 with a Planned Area Development Overlay (RS-15-PAD). This request will allow for a 46-lot single residence development. Brown Road Citrus, LLC, Owner; Baylee Lopez, Wood, Patel & Associates, applicant. (District 1)), and 11-b, (P&Z Board recommended ordinance for ZON25-00635 "Ascension," 40± acres located at the northeast corner of East Brown Road and North 32nd Street. Rezone from Agricultural (AG) to Single Residence-15 with a Planned Area Development Overlay (RS-15-PAD). This request will allow for a 47-lot single residence development. Brown Road Citrus, LLC, Owner; Baylee Lopez, Wood, Patel & Associates, applicant. (District 1))**), on the Regular Council meeting agenda, City Attorney Jim Smith explained that the applicant had requested to withdraw Item 11-b and move forward with only 11-a, which reflects staff's recommendation for the lower-density product and is consistent with the sub-area plan. He confirmed that, according to House Bill 2721,

the applicant would not be able to change to a middle housing product without returning through the rezoning process and obtaining Council approval.

2-a. Hear a presentation and discuss the current enhanced services provided by the Downtown Mesa Association (DMA), FY2025-2026 accomplishments, and the proposed DMA workplan for FY2026-2027 enhanced services funded through the Special Improvement District 228 assessments.

Manager of Urban Transformation Jeff McVay introduced Jimmy Cerracchio, President & Executive Director of the Downtown Mesa Association, and displayed a PowerPoint presentation. **(See Attachment 1)**

Mr. Cerracchio provided a brief overview of history and purpose of the DMA. He pointed out that the DMA district covers approximately one square mile of downtown Mesa and is bordered by University Drive, Broadway Road, Mesa Drive, and Country Club Drive. He stated that the district is an enhanced municipal services area that provides services above and beyond those already provided by the City of Mesa (COM). He explained that the district is divided into four zones, with Zone 1 paying the highest assessment rate because it includes the area with the greatest activity, primarily along Main Street. He highlighted DMA's priorities, which include enhancing the appearance and safety of downtown Mesa; maintaining a clean and welcoming environment; managing parking; keeping the public and businesses informed; activating downtown through events and placemaking activities; and engaging with businesses to support their continued health and growth. (See Pages 2 through 4 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Cerracchio discussed the DMA's day-to-day operations, which focus primarily on cleanup, beautification, parking, and maintenance throughout downtown. He explained that the Clean Team consists of six staff members who maintain a visible presence and provide services to all four downtown zones. He stated that while service requests may be submitted, the Clean Team takes a proactive approach by addressing trash, illegal dumping, graffiti, stickers, and posters as they are identified. He pointed out that over the past year the team removed approximately 29 tons of trash. He attributed the trash removal decrease, in part to increased trash bag pulls that help prevent downtown trash cans from becoming overfilled. He confirmed that graffiti removal has decreased and stated that the team's prompt removal efforts help prevent additional tagging and related activity. He commented that DMA has expanded landscaping maintenance efforts at Mesa City Plaza, The Post, and the Neon Garden. (See Pages 5 through 7 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Cerracchio identified additional beautification projects completed during the year, including restoration of the clock tower at MacDonald and Main Street. He reported that DMA maintains 32 public art pieces located along and near Main Street and stated that twice a year, DMA coordinates volunteer groups and businesses to work with the Clean Team to clean and maintain the artwork. (See Pages 8 and 9 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Cerracchio stated DMA's parking management responsibilities include managing public parking garages and lots, enforcing on-street parking spaces, and administering the downtown parking permit program. He stated that more than 2,000 parking permits had been issued for downtown businesses and residents. He explained that parking enforcement includes monitoring parking areas to ensure vehicles are parked in appropriate zones and do not exceed posted time limits. He reported that approximately 2,600 tickets were issued over the past year and noted that DMA generally provides up to three warnings before issuing a citation to avoid creating a negative downtown visitor experience. (See Page 10 of Attachment 1)

Discussion ensued regarding downtown parking, including areas that see frequent repeat parking offenses, student parking, and utilizing the post office as a potential pathway to downtown.

Mr. Cerracchio provided an overview of DMA's special event parking operations at the Sirrine Garage during large Mesa Arts Center events. He explained that managing special event parking allows DMA staff to help direct attendees to appropriate parking spaces, including preserving accessible and ground-level spaces for individuals who need them. He noted that DMA updated its event parking operations by providing staff with identifiable uniforms, including parking shirts and reflective vests, and using tablets for payment processing to improve the payment process and the ability to track event transactions. (See Page 11 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Cerracchio highlighted DMA's marketing and promotional efforts to share information about downtown businesses, events, parking, available commercial space, and other downtown activities. He stated that website traffic continues to increase, with most visits coming from Google searches, direct website visits, and DMA's e-newsletter. He reported increased social media activity, including growth on Instagram, renewed activity on TikTok, and the launch of the "Meet Me in Mesa" video campaign highlighting downtown businesses. He noted DMA's continued partnership with Evolve PR, which has generated positive media coverage with an estimated media value of nearly \$7 million from a \$30,000 investment. He discussed DMA's bi-weekly public newsletter, advertising efforts, partnership with the Mesa Tribune for downtown-related feature stories, and the downtown banner program. (See Pages 12 through 18 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Cerracchio provided information on DMA's events and activation efforts, stating that events are intended to attract a wide range of audiences and encourage residents and visitors to experience downtown Mesa. He highlighted recurring events, noting that free, family-friendly programming has received positive community feedback and supports downtown business activity. He pointed out that Pacer.ai data showed that approximately 20,000 visitors attended the two-day Barbecue Classic. He stated that Mesa Amplified received more than 500 band applications, with more than 100 bands selected to perform on 19 stages in and around downtown businesses. He reported that downtown businesses saw increased activity during the event. (See Pages 19 through 22 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Cerracchio outlined the DMA's business engagement efforts, which are focused on supporting downtown businesses and encouraging customer activity. He stated that DMA conducts several business promotions each year, including the holiday shopping passport, Taco Trail, and bar crawl events, to support a variety of downtown merchants. He also discussed DMA's quarterly merchant meetings, merchant newsletters, business visits, and ribbon cutting events, which help maintain communication with business owners and promote new businesses. He explained that the downtown gift card program includes approximately 40 businesses, and DMA plans to expand participation to encourage spending in downtown Mesa. (See Pages 23 through 25 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Cerracchio recognized new DMA administration staff and reported DMA held a property owner mixer to introduce new leadership, connect property owners with board members, and support communication as DMA reviews its bylaws for possible restructuring. (See Pages 26 and 27 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Cerracchio discussed upcoming DMA initiatives intended to encourage Mesa residents to visit and experience downtown. He stated that DMA has begun conversations with the Mesa Arts Center (MAC) and Media and Immersive eXperience (MIX) Center regarding programming opportunities that would highlight downtown spaces, feature downtown merchants, and reinforce

downtown as a communitywide destination. He reviewed plans for growing signature events and enhancing marketing and advertising, particularly during the summer months, to help increase customer traffic to downtown businesses. (See Pages 28 and 29 of Attachment 1)

Mr. McVay explained that DMA's work program and services are included in a professional services contract with the COM. He confirmed that the contract includes services funded through the property owner assessment, the COM's self-assessment for City-owned downtown properties, and enhanced services funded by the COM. He outlined the baseline services funded through the property owner assessment and enhanced services funded through the professional services contract. He verified that parking management is a significant part of the enhanced services and stated that DMA provides the service more cost-effectively than if handled by the Police Department. He pointed out that if approved, DMA's total budget would be approximately \$982,000, which includes funding for additional parking enforcement support. (See Pages 30 through 33 of Attachment 1)

Responding to a question from Councilmember Adams, Mr. Cerracchio stated that DMA has a strong working relationship with Visit Mesa, including regular communication, sharing information and social media posts, identifying sponsors, and coordinating resources to promote downtown events. He noted that events such as the BBQ Classic and bluegrass-related programming help provide attractions that encourage visitors to stay engaged downtown and enhance their overall experience. He explained that the Mesa Chamber of Commerce produces the banners and DMA installs them, with the organizations working together to ensure they are displayed.

In response to a question from Councilmember Taylor, Mr. Cerracchio explained that DMA communicates with downtown businesses in several ways, including by phone, text, email, newsletters, and in-person visits. He noted that in-person communication is especially helpful for businesses that may not regularly check email or are unable to leave their businesses, and that direct contact helps reinforce information about upcoming events and opportunities. He stated that DMA also uses surveys as a key metric, particularly after events, and the team is currently working on a survey related to the Mesa Amphitheatre. He added that DMA currently serves more than 100 businesses across four zones, with approximately 40 participating in the gift card program. He clarified that businesses must opt in to the gift card program so the card can be set up and tested for use. He confirmed that Phoenix, Tempe, Chandler, Mesa, Tucson, and Flagstaff have similar downtown models, though not the same. He added that DMA also participates in the International Downtown Association to exchange ideas and learn best practices from downtown organizations across the country and around the world.

Mr. McVay added that the DMA is funded through Special Improvement District No. 228, which is a property owner assessment district. He clarified that the assessment is paid for by more than 500 parcels within downtown Mesa.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Heredia, Mr. McVay stated that Transportation has been regularly replacing signage throughout downtown to reflect the new parking hours, including the three-hour minimum time limit in most areas. He confirmed that the blue parking signs are now more consistent throughout downtown, and the next phase includes updating parking garage signage and time-zone signage along Main Street and nearby areas to create greater consistency. He discussed the need for improved wayfinding signage to better direct drivers to public parking garages and noted that the COM has begun reviewing costs as part of an ongoing effort to address parking, pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle wayfinding. He pointed out that signage will generally remain a COM responsibility; however, there may be opportunities to

partner with DMA to deliver certain wayfinding improvements more efficiently through its professional services contract.

In response to a question from Mayor Freeman, Mr. McVay addressed the two letters of opposition that were received and confirmed that the overall feedback from the property owners was positive.

Mayor Freeman thanked staff for the presentation.

3. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of various boards and committees.

3-a. Planning and Zoning Board Study Session held on April 8, 2026.

3-b. Planning and Zoning Board Public Hearing held on April 8, 2026.

It was moved by Vice Mayor Somers, seconded by Councilmember Heredia, that receipt of the above listed minutes be acknowledged.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Freeman–Somers–Adams–Duff–Goforth–Heredia–Taylor

NAYS – None

Carried unanimously.

4. Current events summary including meetings and conferences attended.

Mayor Freeman and Councilmembers highlighted the events, meetings, and conferences recently attended.

5. Scheduling of meetings.

City Manager Scott Butler stated that the schedule of meetings is as follows:

Thursday, May 21, 2026, 7:30 a.m. – Cadence Community Facilities District Board

Thursday, May 21, 2026, 7:30 a.m. – Eastmark Community Facilities District No. 1 Board

Thursday, May 21, 2026, 7:30 a.m. – Eastmark Community Facilities District No. 2 Board

Thursday, May 21, 2026, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

MARK FREEMAN, MAYOR

ATTEST:

LISA ANDERSON, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 18th day of May 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

LISA ANDERSON, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

sr
(Attachments – 1)

Downtown Mesa Association

FY 2025-26

Accomplishments

FY 2026-27 Workplan

Jimmy Cerracchio, President &
Executive Director, Downtown Mesa
Association

Jeff McVay, Manager of Urban
Transformation



Introduction

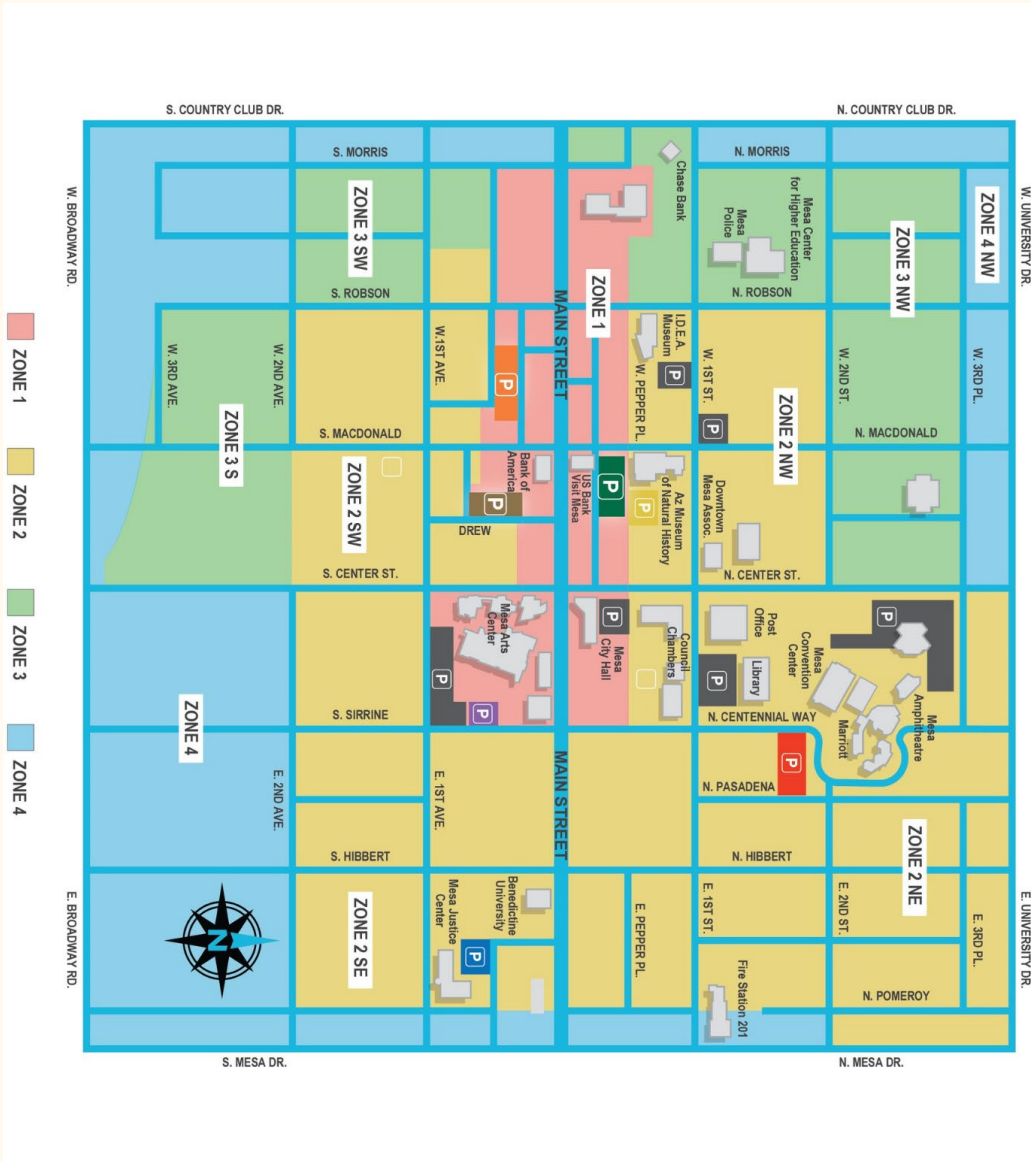
What is DMA

- Enhanced Municipal Services District
- Formed in 1985
- 501c6

Mission

To provide vision and leadership for Downtown Mesa, establishing our community as a clean, safe, and dynamic regional destination through activation, beautification, and communication.

Introduction

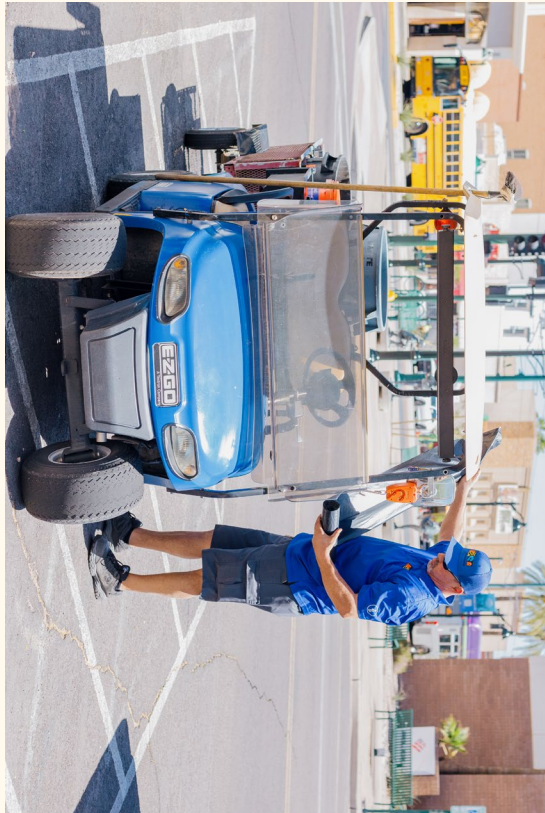


- 1 Sq Mile
- Legally defined geographic boundary
- Enhanced Municipal Services District
 - Services above and beyond general municipal services
 - Commercial Properties
 - Zones for Level of Service

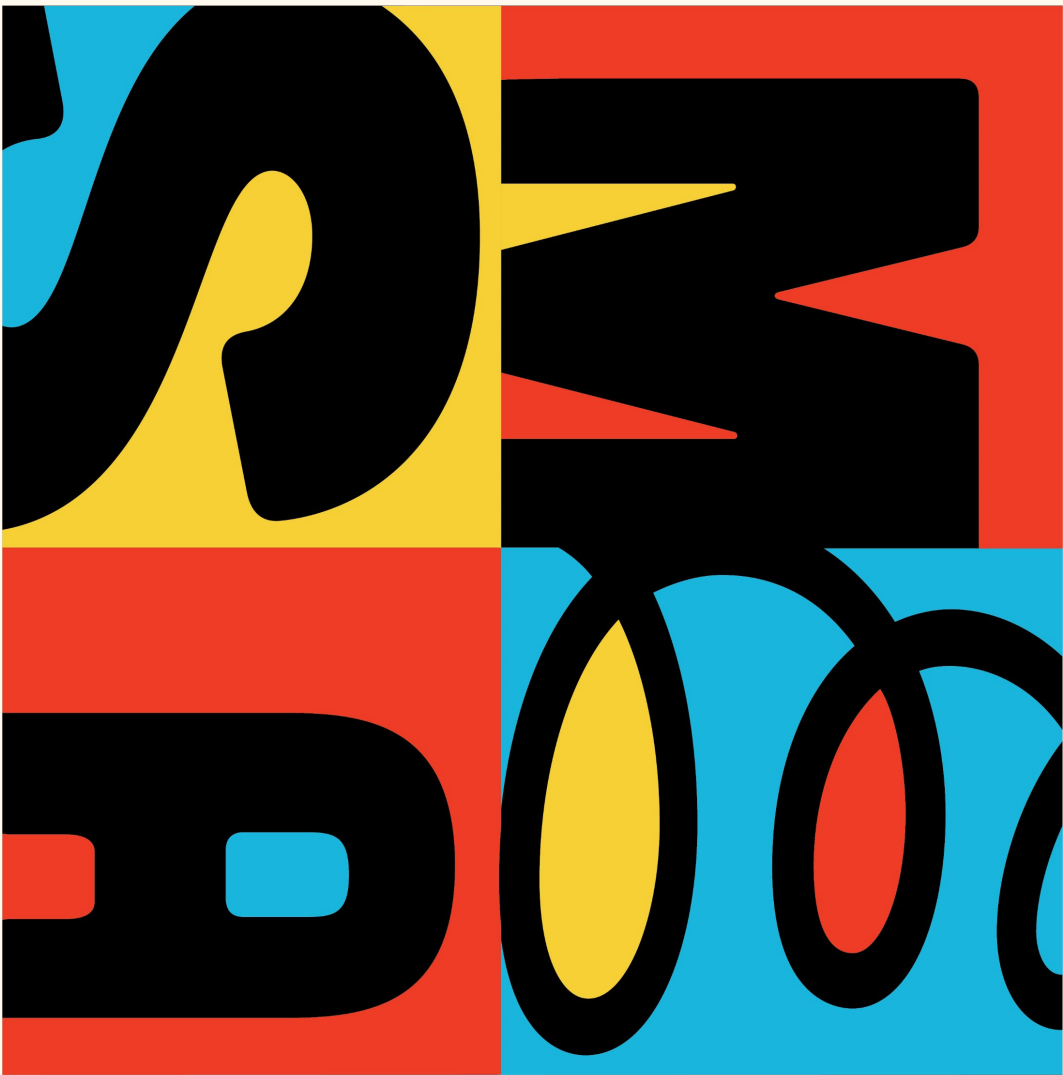
Introduction

Priorities

- Appearance and Safety
- Parking Management
- Communications
- Activation and Placemaking
- Business Engagement



Operations



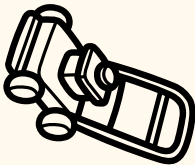
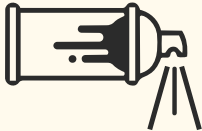
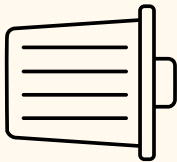
DOWNTOWNMESA

Clean Team

- 6 Full-Time Team Members
- Provide Service 7 Days a Week
- Visible Presence On-Street
- Pro-Active Service
- Also Maintains Parking Lots, Garages, City Plaza, The Post, and Neon Garden



Clean Team



Service Category	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Trash Removal (Tons)	14.86	31.44	29.4
Trash Bags Pulled	4460	6208	7749
Graffiti Removal	481	511	339
Pressure Washing Service Hours	336	406	468
Plaza & Neon Garden Maintenance Hours	N/A	N/A	244

Clock Tower Repair



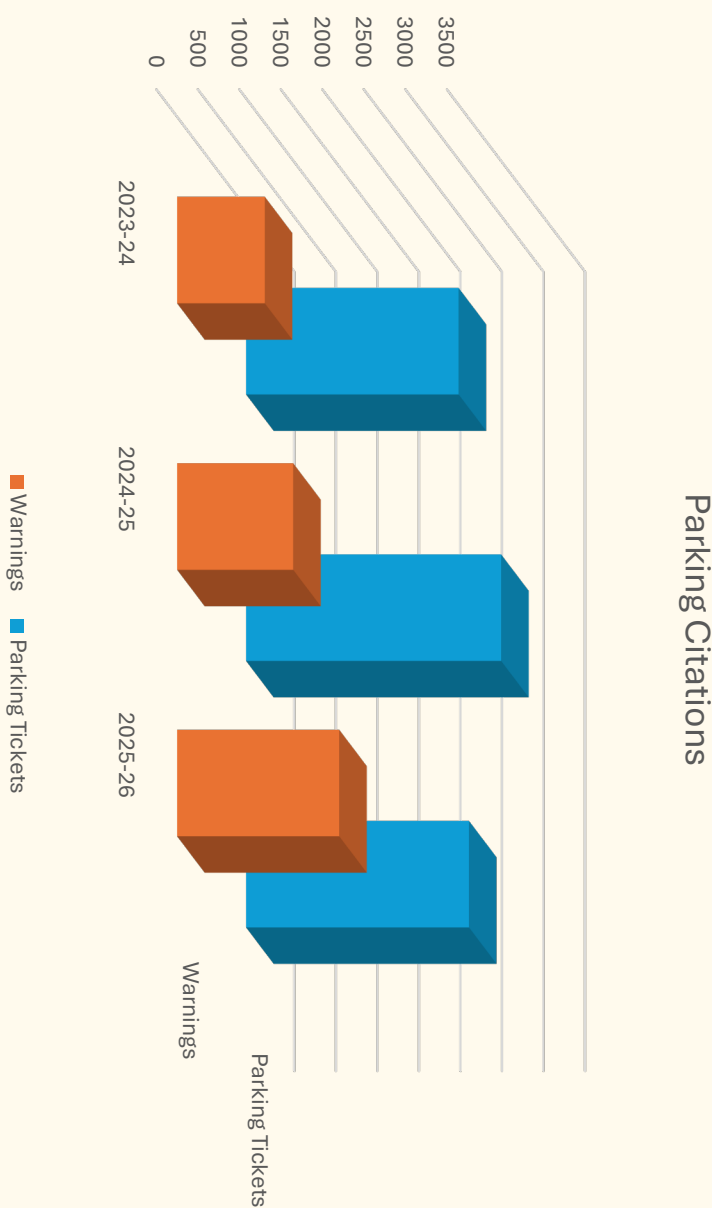
- 100th Anniversary of the Mesa Town Center Clock
- Replaced Clock Mechanism
- Replaced Signage
- Replaced Interior Lights
- Revealed Copper
- Painted Base

Statue Cleaning

- Purpose: Preserve and Maintain Downtown's Public Art
- Twice Annually (April & October)
- 32 Art Pieces
- 50 Volunteers
- Business Support = Discounts & Free Items for Volunteers



Parking Permits and Enforcement



- On-Street Spaces and 13 Garages and Lots Monitored
- 2155 Permits Managed
- 2685 Tickets Issued
- 1954 Warnings Issued

Special Event Parking

- Sirrine Garage
- 94 Events
 - 13,399 Cars Parked
- New Tablets
- New Uniforms



Marketing and Promotions



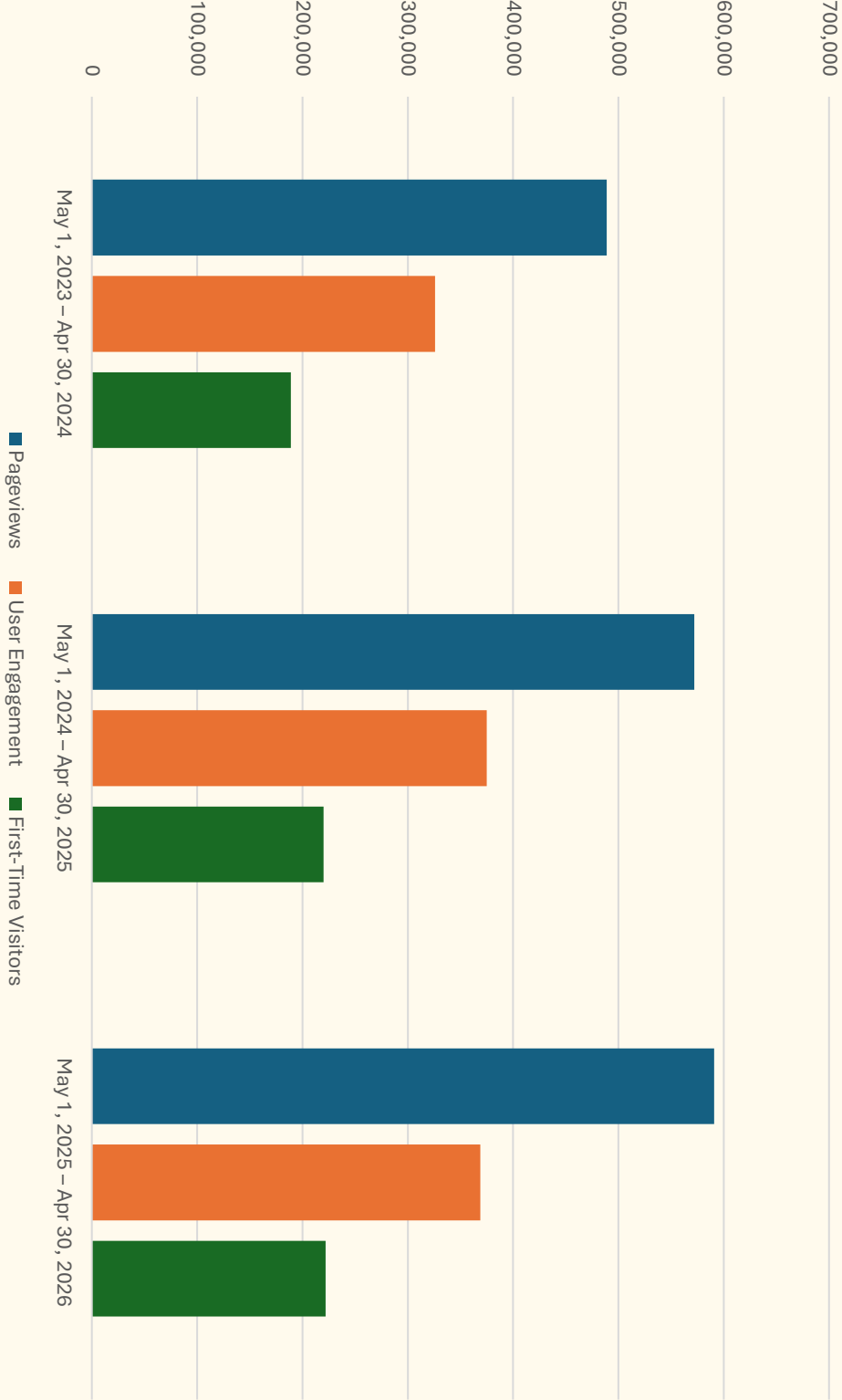
DOWNTOWNMESA

Website

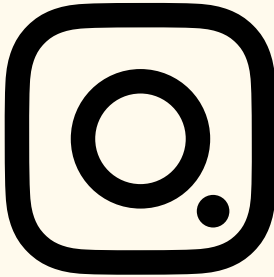
DowntownMesa.com

2025-26

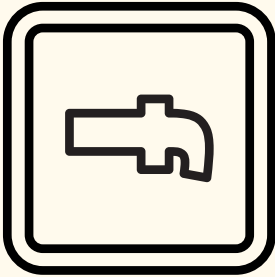
- 591k Pageviews
- 369k User Engagement
- 222k First Time Visitors



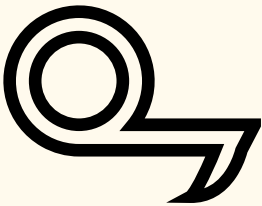
Social Media



Followers: 24,100
Total Views: 553,000 Since January 2026



Followers: 19,286
Total Views: 80,900



Followers: 1,600
Total Views: 29,000



Meet Me in Mesa Campaign
Walk in introduction video
6 videos completed
60,800 views

Advertising

- Spring Training Guide
- Tribune
- BBQ Classic
- Holiday Shopping Passport
- Noon Year’s Eve
- Baseball Block Party
- Mesa Amplified



**PREGAME...
POSTGAME...**

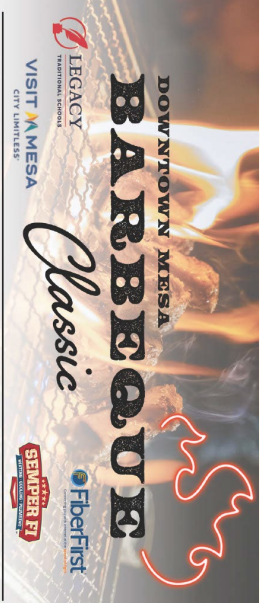
**We're a
HOMERUN!**



DOWNTOWNMESA.COM







BBQ • BEER • LIVE MUSIC • VENDORS

Bear Garden, Giga Lounge, Food and Retail Vendors, Mechanical Bull and More!

NOVEMBER 7th & 8th

MACDONALD & MAIN ST., MESA, AZ
DOWNTOWNMESA.COM/BBQ

Free Entry!
Family Friendly

5:00 PM-9:00 PM FRIDAY 11:00 AM-5:00 PM SATURDAY

Dessert & Appetizer Competition \$2 tasting tickets while supplies last
Four Meat Competition \$2 tasting tickets while supplies last
Kids Q Come see the next generation of grill masters

Mesa Tribune Partnership



- Contribute Content for Publication
- Downtown Focused Public Interest Stories
 - DMA Events
 - Restaurant Features
 - Visitor Guides

Banner Program

- 106 Banner Locations
 - Center St, Main St, Macdonald, Robson
- Rotating Displays
 - Supporting community events, branding, and messaging
- Partners Include:
 - City of Mesa
 - Benedictine University
 - Mesa Arts Center
 - Hohokams
 - Mesa Public Schools
 - Mesa Chamber

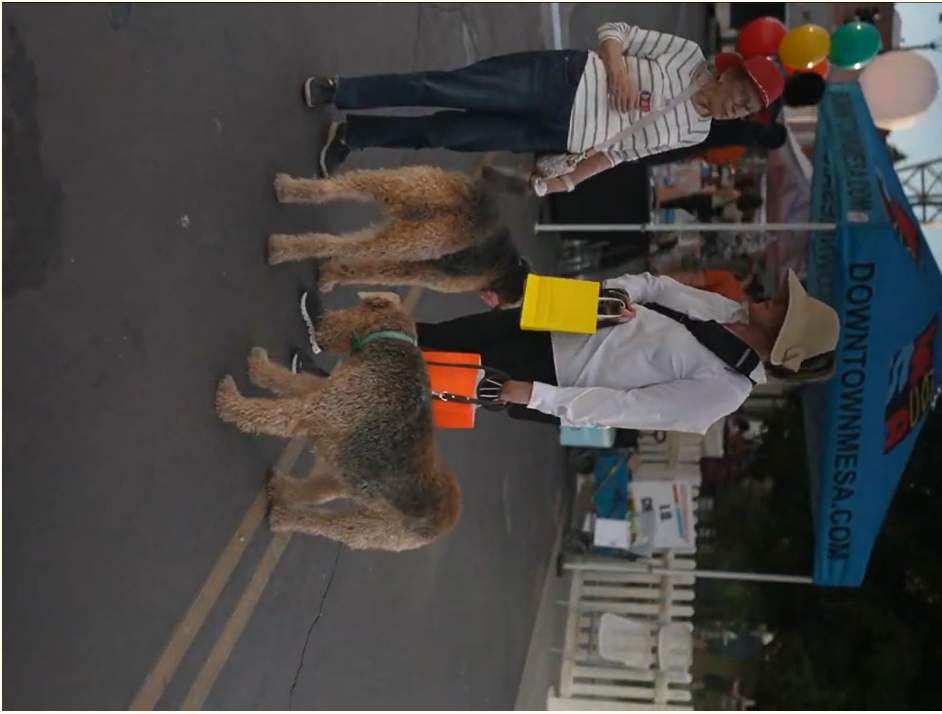


Events



DOWNTOWNMESA

Events



Events

Event Name	Number of Recurrences/ Days	Estimated Attendance
Sunset Market	9	5,400
Storytime	28	3,000
Halloween	1	1,500
BBQ Classic	2	3,500
Merry Main Street Market	1	3,000
Noon Years Eve	1	1,500
Baseball Block Party	1	2,000
Easter	1	2,000
Mesa Amplified	2	27,600*

MESA AMPLIFIED

MUSIC, CULTURE & COMMUNITY



Over 100 Bands

27.6k people in Downtown

19 Stages

4x Web Traffic

Business Engagement



DOWNTOWNMESA

Business Engagement

- 5 business promotions
- Quarterly merchant meetings
- Bi-weekly Merchant Newsletters
- Business Visitations
- Flyer & Notice Delivery
- 3 Ribbon Cutting Events
- 4 Walking Tours & Presentations



Gift Card Program



- 2025-26 Sales = \$11,384.00
- 40 Businesses Participating

Administration



DOWNTOWNMESA

Administration

New Staff

- New Executive Director
- New Marketing, Events, & Engagement Team

Property Owner Mixer

- Opportunity to introduce current board members and new leadership

Reviewing Board Structure/ Bylaws



2026-2027 Priorities



DOWNTOWNMESA

2026-27 Priorities

- Engage Mesa Residents
 - District Focused Events
 - Meet Your Neighbors Nights
- Grow Signature Events
 - Bluegrass & BBQ
 - Mesa Amplified
- Enhance Marketing Efforts
 - Summer Ad Campaign
- Alley Activation Pilot



City Participation



DOWNTOWNMESA

Professional Services Agreement

- DMA is contracted with the City of Mesa through a Professional Services Agreement
- The Professional Services Agreement includes the following services

Baseline Services

Funded through the annual SID 228 assessment and City voluntary self-assessment

- Clean team ambassadors
- Pressure washing
- Promotion/ marketing
- Weed control/ graffiti abatement
- Business development

Enhanced Services

Funded through the Professional Services Agreement

- Parking management and enforcement
- Promotional programming
- Banner & kiosk program
- Special event production – 3 per year minimum
- Enhanced public space management
- Maintenance of Plaza at Mesa City Center

Professional Services Agreement

Funding for the Professional Services Agreement comes from three primary sources:

- Annual SID 228 Assessment
- City-owned property voluntary contribution
- Enhanced Services

Annual SID 228 Assessment – Commercial Properties \$351,293.45	City Voluntary Self-Assessment – City-Owned Property \$230,577.77	Enhanced Services \$400,604.05
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Plaza, Neon Garden, & The Post Landscaping & Maintenance Up to \$58,032.00
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Professional Services Agreement

2026-27

DMA Annual Budget Amount
\$982,475.27

Special Event Parking Fund
Allotment
\$50,000