



PLANNING DIVISION
STAFF REPORT

Planning and Zoning Board

January 12, 2022

CASE No.: ZON20-00141	PROJECT NAME: Tech Center at Ellsworth
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Owner's Name:	NEC E&G, LLC and ELLSWORTH 92, LLC
Applicant's Name:	Jesse Macias, M3 Design, LLC
Location of Request:	Within the 7200 to 7400 blocks of South Ellsworth Road (east side). Located south of Pecos Road on the east side of Ellsworth Road.
Parcel No(s):	304-62-004V & -004Q
Request:	Site Plan Review; Special Use Permit. This request will allow for development of a large commercial center.
Existing Zoning District:	Light Industrial (LI)
Council District:	6
Site Size:	4.5± acres
Proposed Use(s):	Restaurants with drive-thru facilities, Restaurants, and Minor Automobile Repair.
Existing Use(s):	Vacant
P&Z Hearing Date(s):	January 12, 2022 / 4:00 p.m.
Staff Planner:	Cassidy Welch, Senior Planner
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions

HISTORY

On **January 18, 1989**, the City Council annexed approximately 3,346± acres of property, including the subject site, into the City of Mesa (Ordinance No. 2473); and subsequently zoned the property to Single Residence 43 (Case No. Z90-007, Ordinance No. 2496).

On **June 21, 2004**, the City Council approved a rezone of 315± acres of land, including the subject site, from RS-43 to Light Industrial to allow for future development of industrial uses (Case No. Z04-001, Ordinance No. 4208).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background:

The applicant is requesting Site Plan Review of an initial site plan to allow the development of four (4) commercial pad buildings on two vacant parcels in the Light Industrial (LI) zoning district. The subject site is currently vacant and is located south of Pecos Road on the east side of Ellsworth Road. The existing zoning of Light Industrial (LI) on the subject site was established in 2004 (Case No. Z04-001, Ordinance No. 4208). A condition of approval for Ordinance No. 4208 required review and approval by both the Planning and Zoning Board and City Council of the development plans for uses proposed on the property.

Per Table 11-7-2 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO), restaurants, accessory drive-thru facilities, and minor automobile repair facilities are permitted uses in the LI zoning district. The applicant is also requesting approval of a Special Use Permit to reduce the amount of required parking for the proposed development.

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 primary focus of the Employment character area designation is to provide for a wide range of employment opportunities in high-quality settings. Examples of employment-type land uses include areas for large manufacturing facilities, warehousing, and business park-type land uses. Supportive commercial may also be considered consistent with the intent of the Employment character area. The proposed commercial and minor auto repair will be supportive to future industrial uses in the area. Overall, the request is consistent with the review criteria outlined in Chapter 15 (pg. 15-1&2) of the Mesa 2040 General Plan.

Gateway Strategic Development Plan:

The site is also located within the Logistics and Commerce District of the Mesa Gateway Strategic Development Plan area. Per the Plan, the Logistics and Commerce District should provide a high-quality employment environment that is compatible with increasing over-flight activities. Light industrial and commercial uses will be the predominant uses in this district. The subject request for commercial uses conforms to the purpose and intent of the Mesa Gateway Strategic Development Plan.

Zoning District Designations:

The subject property is zoned Light Industrial (LI). Per Section 11-7-1 of the MZO, the purpose of the Light Industrial zoning district is to provide for areas of limited manufacturing, warehousing and wholesaling. This district also provided for a full range of commercial activities, on a limited scale. Per Section 11-7-2 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO), restaurants, accessory drive-thru facilities, and minor automobile repair facilities are permitted in the LI district.

Airfield Overlay – Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO) Article 3, Section 11-19:

Per Section 11-19 of the MZO, the property is located within the Airfield (AF) Overlay District. Specifically, within the Airport Overflight Areas Two and Three (AOA 2 & AOA 3). The location

of the property within the AOA 2 and AOA 3 is due to its proximity to the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. Per Section 11-7-2 of the MZO, the proposed uses are permitted in the AOA 2 and AOA 3.

Site Plan and General Site Development Standards:

The proposed site plan shows development of four commercial pad buildings ranging in size from approximately 3,800 to 9,600 square feet, totaling approximately 22,900 square feet. Pads A and D contain drive-thru facilities which meet all requirements of Section 11-31-18 of the MZO. Pad B is intended to be developed for a Minor Automobile Repair Facility and meets the requirements of Section 11-31-6 of the MZO.

Primary vehicular access will be directly from Ellsworth Road on the west side of the site through shared access drives. The proposed site plan includes cross-access with adjacent developments to the north and east. The buildings are oriented towards Ellsworth Road with parking adjacent to the street and pedestrian connections to both Ellsworth Road and adjacent future developments. Overall, the proposed site plan conforms to the requirements of the MZO including the review criteria for Site Plan Review in Section 11-69-5.

Special Use Permit – MZO Article 7, Section 11-70:

Section 11-66-2(C)(2) of the MZO allows the Planning and Zoning Board to hear and take action on a SUP when requested in conjunction with another request requiring action or recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Board.

Per Section 11-32-3 of the MZO, 217 parking spaces are required for the proposed development. The applicant is requesting to reduce the number of parking spaces from 217 to 197, a 20-space reduction. Section 11-32-6 of the MZO establishes criteria for approval of a SUP to allow the reduction in the number of parking spaces. Below is a summary of the criteria for the SUP and findings:

Parking Reduction Required Findings (MZO Section 11-32-6)	Findings
1. Special conditions – including but not limited to the nature of the proposed operation; proximity to frequent transit service; transportation characteristics of persons residing, working, or visiting the site exist that will reduce the parking demand at the site.	The proposed development consists of four commercial buildings. Two are intended to be developed as restaurants with drive-thru facilities, one as a sit-down restaurant, and the final building for automobile repair. The subject property will have shared access with the adjacent developments to the north and east proposed to be developed with commercial and industrial uses. The subject site and proposed commercial development to the north were designed to function as unified commercial center. Based on this intent and the cross access provided the applicant believes that 197 parking spaces will be sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed development.

2. The use will adequately be served by the proposed parking.	Per the applicant, it is anticipated that the proposed commercial users, within the subject development and to the north, will share customers. The proposed parking reduction is consistent with other commercial developments in the area and will adequately serve the proposed development.
3. Parking demand generated by the project will not exceed the capacity of or have a detrimental impact on the supply of on street parking in the surrounding area.	According to the applicant, the parking demand is not anticipated to exceed the capacity provided or impact the supply of on-street parking in the area.

Design Review:

On November 9, 2021, the Design Review Board discussed the proposed elevations and landscape plan for the development. They recommended minor modifications to the building design. Staff is working with the applicant to address those comments.

Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:

Northwest (Across Ellsworth Road) LI Convenience Store with an associated Fuel Station	North LI Proposed Commercial	Northeast LI Vacant
West (Across Ellsworth Road) LI Convenience Store with an associated Fuel Station, Car Wash & Restaurant with Drive-Thru	Subject Property LI Vacant	East LI Proposed Industrial
Southwest (Across Ellsworth Road) LI Vacant	South LI Vacant	Southeast LI Vacant

Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses:

The subject site is located south of a proposed commercial development that is currently under review for site plan approval (Case No. ZON20-00139). East of the subject site is a proposed industrial development and a proposed self-storage facility also currently under review (Case No. ZON20-00139 and ZON21-00644). Across Ellsworth Road, are existing commercial uses including a convenience store with an associated car wash and fuel station, and restaurant with a drive-thru facility. The proposed development will provide supportive commercial for future adjacent industrial development and is compatible with surrounding areas.

Neighborhood Participation Plan and Public Comments:

As part of the completed Citizen Participation Process, the applicant mailed notice letters to property owners within 1,000 feet of the site, as well as nearby HOAs and neighborhood associations. As of the writing of this report, neither the applicant nor staff have received any comments or concerns from surrounding property owners. Staff will provide the Board with any new information during the January 12, 2022 Study Session.

Staff Recommendation:

Based on the application received and the preceding analysis, staff finds that the subject request is consistent with the General Plan, meets the review criteria for Site Plan Review outlined in Section 11-69-5 of the MZO, and the Special Use Permit approval criteria of Sections 11-32-6 and 11-70-5 of the MZO; therefore, staff recommends approval with the following conditions.

Conditions of Approval:

1. Compliance with final site plan submitted.
2. Compliance with all requirements of DRB20-00140.
3. Compliance with requirement of Z04-001, except as modified by this request.
4. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations.

Exhibits:

Exhibit 1-Staff Report

Exhibit 2-Vicinity Map

Exhibit 3-Application Information

3.1 Project Narrative

3.2 Site Plan

3.3 Landscape Plan

3.4 Elevations

3.5 Citizen Participation Plan

Exhibit 4-Citizen Participation Report