NARRATIVE

MERIT PARTNERS LEGACY BUSINESS PARK PROJECT
DESIGN REVIEW

LOCATION: EAST OF ELLSWORTH ROAD AND NORTH OF PECOS ROAD

(PARCEL NUMBER: A PORTION OF MARICOPA COUNTY APN 313-25-859N)

Overview

Merit Partners, Inc. ("Merit") is proposing to develop ± 45 acres, a portion of Maricopa County APN 313-25-859N (the "Property"), located east of Ellsworth Road and north of Pecos Road. Merit is planning to develop the Property into an institutional-quality Class A industrial project (the "Legacy Business Park Project"). The proposed development is being positioned to support a variety of light industrial and employment-type uses, such as manufacturing and processing, wholesaling, research, warehousing, e-commerce, data centers, and distribution activities.

The Property is currently being annexed and rezoned (Cases: ANX22-00266 & ZON22-00268). The proposed zoning will be to Light Industrial (LI) with Planned Area Development ("PAD") overlay to amend typical/commonly requested industrial development standards (e.g., parking, setbacks, design, etc.).

The Request

This Design Review submittal package will finish off the requisite entitlements for the proposed Legacy Business Park Project. Pursuant to the City of Mesa's review process (11-71-6: - Review Criteria) the proposed project conforms with the criteria outlined below.

1. The project is consistent with:

a. Applicable goals, objectives and policies of the general plan and any applicable sub-area or neighborhood area plans;

b. All of the development standards of this ordinance;

c. Other adopted Council policies, as may be applicable; and

d. Any specific conditions of approval placed on the zoning of the property.

Responses to 1a.-1d:

The Property is designated as Mixed-Use Activity within the City's 2040 General Plan and abuts the City's Pecos Advanced Manufacturing Zone (PAMZ) south, which envisions the area developing with high-skilled technical manufacturing and ancillary uses. The Property is also within the Gateway Area Business District and the Mesa Gateway Strategic Development Plan – the "Logistics and Commerce

District." Finally, the Property is located within Airfield Overflight Area-2 ("AOA-2"), due to its general proximity to the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. The Airfield Overflight Area is an overlay zone to provide compatibility and airspace protection for the airport. AOA-2 corresponds to those areas exposed to long-term future noise (DNL 60 to DNL 65) and identifies incompatible uses such as: residential, hospitals, schools, etc. The proposed use fits within the AOA-2.

The City's LI zoning district provides a desired level of uses and development standards for the project, while the PAD overlay will provide for appropriate modifications for the specific proposal and intended end users. The proposed LI PAD zoning is consistent with the City's General Plan and the zoning of nearby properties. Merit's proposed industrial project is well-suited for the immediate area and compatible with planned and existing development. The Property is ideally located just south and east of Mesa Gateway Airport – the second major airport serving the Greater Phoenix metro region – and within easy access to the nearby State Route 24 freeway extension and Loop 202 freeway, which are important regional transportation corridors. The proposed uses within the Legacy Business Park Project are consistent with the desired land uses for the area as identified in the City's planning and policy documents, which include manufacturing facilities, large warehouses, distribution facilities, planned employment parks and other similar uses. Uses should be compatible with the increasing over-flight activity of the adjacent airport.

The proposed development will be in complete conformance with these goals by providing for appropriate, airport-adjacent uses including large distribution, warehouse, and manufacturing facilities or similar uses.

2. The overall design of the project including its scale, massing, site plan, exterior design, and landscaping will enhance the appearance and features of the project site, the street type, and surrounding natural and built environment.

Response:

The massing and scale of the buildings will be broken up using wall texture, color, material changes, shadow lines, and other façade treatments. The building massing and scale is compatible with existing and anticipated developments in the area which will primarily be industrial and manufacturing in nature. Plant material has been selected for color, texture, scale, and seasonal flowering and placed in a thematic pattern to reinforce the landscape theme throughout the project.

Moreover, the common/amenity areas will be designed and arranged as usable, functional spaces and be furnished with shaded and open eating, seating, and gathering amenities such as tables, benches, chairs, waste receptacles, and planters. Thus, the overall design of the project will enhance the appearance and features both onsite and offsite for the betterment of the area/city.

3. The overall design will create a distinctive and appealing community by providing architectural interest in areas visible from streets, sidewalks, and public areas.

Response:

The overall project design will contribute to the creation of an inviting and interesting employment hub. The project is responding to the neighboring development, i.e., the new Legacy Sports Complex, by orienting the building entrances and additional pedestrian activity on the north end of the site that would generally be reserved for truck loading and parking. In addition, the building design is creating an attractive street frontage by including enhanced building entrances facing Pecos Road as well as plenty of open landscaped areas that connect to the street.

4. The project site plan is appropriate to the function of the project and will provide a suitable environment for occupants, visitors, and the general community.

Response:

The buildings have been oriented to provide a strong relationship with the street while screening internal truck loading dock areas from public right-of-way. Outdoor public spaces for sitting, eating, gathering, etc. have been provided within the site. Buildings have been placed on the site in a coordinated manner to provide order to employees and visitors.

As opposed to a large single parking lot providing the dominant visual feature of the site, the proposed parking areas has been dispersed throughout the site. Drive aisles and corresponding widths have been specifically designed to separate car and truck traffic to minimize the potential for accidents and provide a safe environment for cars and pedestrians. Perimeter parking areas will be buffered landscaped setbacks and screen walls, obscuring views of the parking areas while still providing a line of sight to the buildings beyond.

The proposed entry drives will be enhanced with ornamental landscaping, low-level decorative walls, monument type signs, and/or decorative/stamped paving/asphalt to emphasize site access locations. Loading and service areas will be clearly delineated to avoid conflicts with pedestrians, employee/visitor vehicles or bikes.

5. Project details, colors, materials, and landscaping, are internally consistent, fully integrated with one another, and used in a manner that is visually consistent with the proposed architectural design and creates a safe, attractive and inviting environment at the ground floor of buildings on sides used by the public.

Response:

The proposed robust buildings and landscaping design provides a successful combination of aesthetics and function. These elements provide interest, safety, etc. for vehicles and pedestrians alike.
The exterior wall design is concrete tilt panel construction, with large semi-uninterrupted volumes, with focus on the corners of the building for the suite and office entry points. Suite entry points have large, recessed storefronts with canopy that overhang the envelope of the building. The use of texture, color, material changes, shadow lines, and other façade treatments will be used to add visual interest and avoid large monotonous facades. Texture is provided with board

formed concrete in a natural concrete color left unpainted. To contrast, smooth concrete of desert-based earth tones will form the basis for the building masses. In addition, striated metal panel cladding will add another texture and color tone providing an overall material palette that has a natural earthen feel.

The short sides (non-dock area) building panels will have articulated panels to help break up the building mass. On the long sides of the building, the panels are broken up with articulation near the entry points. At the loading dock doors, the exterior panels are enhanced using paint colors, reveals and segmented parapet design. The building colors have been selected to create a modern design that will last for years.

The proposed landscape theme has been prepared to illustrate the layout, quantities, and sizes of plant material. The landscape plan has been prepared to provide a level of detail to illustrate the landscape theme for the common open space areas and the foundation landscape. Placement and massing are intended to show compatibility with the project's architectural design theme.

6. The project is compatible with neighboring development by avoiding big differences in building scale and character between developments on adjoining lots in the same zoning district and providing a harmonious transition in scale and character between different districts.

Response:

The larger area (i.e., south of the future freeway north) is planned for industrial/employment types of uses. The proposed development and their concomitant buildings, landscaping, etc. (i.e., design) is compatible with the proposed uses being developed and will blend well with those future uses too due to the quality of the overall design. Thus, it is envisioned that additional similar zoning cases will continue in the area with similar styles of development types/designs providing for a harmonious transition in scale, as applicable.

7. The project contributes to the creation of a visually interesting built environment that includes a variety of building styles and designs with well-articulated structures that present well designed building facades on all sides, rooflines, and building heights within a unifying context that encourages increased pedestrian activity and promotes compatibility among neighboring land uses within the same or different districts.

Response:

The buildings are designed to provide flexibility within the interior volume as well as exterior. Screening of any rooftop mechanical equipment will be provided by the parapets.

The design provides architectural interest and variety that relate to the human scale in the following ways.

- *Changes in plane - As identified on the elevations and on the building plans with enlarged plan details. Recessed entries in the facades create additional visual depth.*

- *Change in texture - Through use of concrete patterns, both smooth and patterned with lines.*

- *Pattern - Reveals are utilized to significantly break up large wall expanses.*

- *Windows - Storefront glass, low windows and clerestory windows are utilized.*

- *Equivalent Elements:*

  <u>Overhead doors</u> – The overhead doors become an integral part of any industrial buildings and make up a significant percentage of the façade. They are a separate and distinct material from the concrete walls. The overhead doors subdivide the façade helping to reduce the scale.

Suffice to say, the buildings design is compatible with the proposed use (industrial), the zoning within the surrounding area, and both neighboring/future development projects in the area.

8. The project creates visual variety and relief in buildings and avoids a large-scale, bulky, or box-like appearance.

<u>Response:</u>

The exterior wall design is concrete tilt panel construction, with large semi-uninterrupted volumes, with focus on the corners of the building for the suite and office entry points. Suite entry points have large, recessed storefronts with canopy that overhang the envelope of the building. The use of texture, color, material changes, shadow lines, and other façade treatments will be used to add visual interest and avoid large monotonous facades.

Building facades and entries on the short sides are oriented towards, as much as possible, the future private drives, providing easily recognizable entry areas and providing a more attractive look. Additionally, lighting in the parking lot areas and along pedestrian walkways shall enhance the architectural features of the building structures and reinforce design concepts

The building massing and scale is compatible with existing and anticipated developments in the area which will primarily be industrial and manufacturing in nature.

9. The streetscapes, including street trees, lighting, and pedestrian furniture, are consistent with the character of activity centers, commercial districts and nearby residential neighborhoods.

Response:

The streetscape will blend with the adjoining palette/design/fixtures (i.e., the "theme" along Pecos Road) with the adjacent industrial user, which was approved in December and will be under construction soon. Moreover, the soon to be established "theme" will continue east towards the future CapRock industrial development. Suffice to say, this proposed development's design will be compatible with the proposed use, the proposed/surrounding zoning and neighboring projects which will complement the area.

10. Street frontages are attractive and interesting for pedestrians and provide for greater safety by allowing for surveillance of the street by people inside buildings and elsewhere.

Response:

The building design creates an attractive street frontage by including enhanced building entrances facing Pecos Road, including plenty of open landscaped areas that connect to the street. The project will also include a 10' high decorative screening wall to conceal the loading docks and landscaping to create a more appealing and inviting streetscape. The automobile parking has been sited to minimize conflict with truck maneuvering and to most directly serve the employee and visitor entries. The unique constraints of the site due to the storm drainage along Pecos Road has allowed the building and parking to be significantly setback from Pecos Road along with a decorative wall/landscaping, which minimizes the building size and creates a softer "edge" along the streetscape. Employee areas have also been located to be adjacent to the employee and visitor entries and to avoid utilitarian areas and provide visual interest to the street and adjoining properties.

11. The proposed landscaping plan is suitable for the type of project and site conditions and will improve the appearance of the community by enhancing the building and site design; and the landscape plan incorporates plant materials that are drought-tolerant, will minimize water usage, and are compatible with Mesa's climate.

Response:

Landscaping shall consist of all Low Water Use Plant Materials. A lush landscape appearance will be achieved through the careful placement of colorful shrubs, accents of spikey material and flowering ground covers. The trees will provide fast growing shade for the parking areas and entrances to the buildings. The landscape design is a combination of formal and semi-formal masses of singular plants in rows with colorful accent plants that will look good year-round and create a dynamic landscape theme. The project features well landscaped parking areas to create a shaded pedestrian friendly atmosphere. All parking areas include planted

islands. Thus, the impression is a well-designed, lush, and interesting/biodiverse landscape environment.

12. The project has been designed to be energy efficient including, but not limited to, building siting, and landscape design. The project also mitigates the effects of solar exposure for users and pedestrians. For purposes of this criterion, buildings that meet environmental standards such as LEED™, Green Globes, or equivalent third-party certification are considered to be energy efficient.

Response:

As previously stated, the buildings are designed to provide flexibility. However, the site lends itself nicely to allowing a north/south orientation, which is optimal in hot climates to minimize exposure along the hottest east/west elevations. Through this orientation the loading dock areas can also be screened internally, somewhat, by the buildings themselves, which allows for shade/cooling for workers.

The proposed landscape design provides screening, visual interest and shade to the site using low water use desert adapted planting material and is in compliant with City of Mesa code requirements, ADA requirements and crime prevention through environmental design guidelines. Screening to the site from Pecos Road is achieved through a combination of dense plantings, as possible, within the approximately 180' setback between the street frontage and the parking.

As a result of the above, the buildings and landscaping will be a successful combination of both aesthetics and function, providing interest for vehicles and pedestrians on the street and the users of all the adjacent properties.

Alternative Compliance Request

It is worth noting, Merit Partners also proposes the following amendments to design standards.

1. Building facades that are in areas behind screen walls and gates shall **not** be considered 'publicly visible'.

2. Use of form liners for concrete wall panels are to be considered separate and distinct materials with different form liners considered separate and distinct from each other, smooth concrete wall panel finish to be considered separate and distinct from those using a form liner.

3. At least one-color variation to be considered as a separate and distinct material.

4. Horizontal reveal joints shall be considered 'parapet detailing'. Reveal joints shall be considered part of the subdividing of areas to meet wall articulation requirements.

In addition to all previously stated Amendment to Design Standards (IV.C.), Merit Partners is seeking Alternative compliance for the following Section 11-7-3.B of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance.

a. Publicly visible facades (i.e., viewed from rights-of-way or private property), may not have blank, uninterrupted wall lengths exceeding 50-feet without including at

least two (2) of the following: change in plane, change in texture or masonry pattern, windows, trellis with vines, or an equivalent element that subdivides the wall into human scale proportions.

b. Vary building height, providing at least two (2) changes in height or roof forms that are varied over different portions of the building through changes in pitch, plane, and orientation.

c. All parapets must have detailing such as cornices, moldings, trim, or variations in brick coursing.

d. Primary entrances along major facades shall be clearly defined with facade variations, porticos, roof variations, recesses or projections, or other integral building forms.

e. To reduce the apparent massing and scale of buildings, facades shall incorporate at least three (3) different and distinct materials.

f. No more than fifty percent (50%) of the total façade may be covered with one (1) single material.

Due to the large scale of industrial buildings and the standard method of construction for these buildings, it is challenging to create the same type of detailing that is used on smaller commercial buildings. Multiple changes in plane for the tilt-up walls create structural inefficiencies and are not conducive to the storage within the building. The design team has used a combination of design characteristics (i.e., form, color, texture and material) to give these buildings a considerable amount of visual interest and appropriate scale. The building facades and streetscape along Pecos Road have been designed to show additional forms, materials and glazing. We propose the following be considered as Alternative Compliance:

a. We propose a "change in articulation" distance of approximately 110-feet in lieu of 50-feet due to the function of the building. The buildings have been designed with varying parapet heights, changes in wall planes and articulation along the façade. This articulation includes changes in color, pattern, windows and trellises to enhance the human scale of the buildings. There is also further articulation, use of accent colors and deeper projections to define the entries and add visual interest. The "side elevations" are articulated as the street elevations with larger "articulation spacing" to efficiently raise the parapet height to coordinate with and conceal the ridgeline of the roof.

b. Building heights are varied over different portions of the building. There are two (2) different parapet heights. Change in plane happens at offset panels which create shadow lines and plane change. Changes in pitch, plane and orientation are achieved through the incorporation of colors, forms and textures into the façade design. The parapet detailing of the proposed design incorporates a "stepped back element" at the panels which are also incorporate a change in plane, height and color from the adjacent panels. We have designed the elevation to highlight this articulation with the panels in between acting as a background element. We feel that the addition of a cornice or cap element to these panels would weaken the massing and would minimize the "change in plane" that is in place.

c. The varied materials include “painted concrete”, “board form concrete”, “painted steel”, “rustic steel”, glass, and multiple colors and accent colors. As noted above, we are proposing that the textured concrete be treated as a distinct material and as has been utilized on similar projects. The proposed elevations include a table with a detailed breakdown of the various façade elements. It is worth noting, overhead doors are an integral part of industrial buildings and make up a significant percentage of the façade and they subdivide the façade helping to reduce the scale.

d. The proposed elevations have a table with a detailed breakdown of the various façade elements. The concrete tilt wall construction which is common for these types of buildings is somewhat limiting however the design team has worked diligently to ensure that there is there is no single color, material or texture that exceeds 50% of the façade.

Conclusion

With that being said, the approval of Merit Partners, Inc. design review package for this industrial development will set the stage for them to usher in a variety of light industrial and employment-type uses. The quality of the proposed overall design is appropriate/reasonable for the area as well as provides the necessary flexibility needed for the end-users. Special attention to screening (i.e., landscaping and interior loading views) along with unique/interesting building design features were of utmost importance.

To that end, we are pleased to submit the following enclosed design review materials for the proposed Merit Partners Legacy Business Park Project for review. In the meantime, if you have any questions regarding this request, please feel free to contact Dennis M. Newcombe, Gammage & Burnham P.L.C. at: (602) 256-4446 or via email: dnewcombe@gblaw.com.