

# **NARRATIVE**

## **CAPROCK MESA LEGACY INDUSTRIAL PROJECT DESIGN REVIEW**

**LOCATION: NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE MERRILL ROAD EXTENSION AND  
PECOS ROAD**

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

### **Overview**

CapRock Partners, LLC is proposing to develop + 37.66 gross acres (+ 37.52 net acres), a portion of Maricopa County APN 313-25-859N (the “Property”), located at the northwest corner of the “Merrill Road” extension and Pecos Road. CapRock is planning to develop the Property into an institutional-quality Class A industrial project, consisting of two (2) concrete tilt-up buildings totaling approximately 624,000 square feet of building area (the “CapRock Mesa Legacy Industrial Project”). The proposed industrial buildings will be capable of supporting 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 vacant, undeveloped land within the jurisdiction of Maricopa County. The Property is proposed to be annexed into the City of Mesa and rezoned to the City’s Light Industrial zoning classification, with a Planned Area Development overlay. A companion annexation application was filed with the City (Case Number: ANX22-00020) and is progressing along. An application request to rezone the Property to Light Industrial (“LI”) with a Planned Area Development (“PAD”) overlay, and a Site Plan Review (“SPR”) has also been filed with the City (Case Number: ZON22-00085) and is also progressing along.

The proposed LI zoning 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. CapRock’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 2nd 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 Request**

This Design Review submittal package will finish off the requisite entitlements for the proposed CapRock Mesa Legacy Industrial 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 abutts the City's Pecos Advanced Manufacturing Zone (PAMZ), 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 proposed uses within the CapRock Mesa Legacy Industrial 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 buildings and landscaping are designed to provide for a high-quality built environment for such a large industrial development. The overall design fits nicely*

*and adds/continues the quality of design envisioned for the area. As adjoining properties develop the area will become a “hub” of activity, while as being aesthetically pleasing.*

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:**

*It is believed that the overall design creates a distinctiveness for this particular development proposal, while also functioning for the intended end-user(s). The end result is the creation of another interesting industrial development for this area of the city, while providing some consistency along the public street frontage (i.e., landscape palette/design) with other users developing in the area.*

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 corner entry locations, which include employee amenity areas and provide focal points to the buildings for visitors. The proposed landscape design provides comfort for those working and visiting the site.*

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.*

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 a maximum of flexibility in the interior volume. In order to balance the aesthetics of the development and achieve this goal the clear height of the building is 36 feet (excluding the area adjacent to the dock doors) and in order to provide this volume, the maximum parapet heights will be between 55 and 60 feet. Screening of any rooftop mechanical equipment will be provided by the parapets. 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.

**Response:**

*The buildings are designed to provide a maximum of flexibility in the interior volume as well as exterior (to some degree). Thus, the perimeter wall configuration is designed to provide visual interest and break up the longer elevations through the use of articulated concrete panels which vary in plane and height as well as the use of color, texture, fenestration and canopies. The corner entry locations, which include the employee amenity areas, provide focal points to the buildings, help identify the entry points and provide opportunity for future signage. This corner articulation includes further changes in plane, height and materials and is complementary to the massing of the overall building. All roof drains and similar items will be placed internally on all walls facing the streets and adjoining properties. The "shorter side elevations" are designed to continue a similar articulation to the longer elevations and provide variation in height and plane with the corners similarly articulated.*

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 west towards Ellsworth Road. 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 site has been configured to screen all of the utilitarian uses such as truck maneuvering, utilities and refuse from the adjoining streets and properties. 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 with the automobile parking screened with landscaping. 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:**

*The landscaping has been designed to be energy efficient and water efficient. The landscape palette chosen reflects the Sonoran Desert flora (indigenous native plants) as well as additional compatible drought tolerant species. Seasonal flowers, colors, forms and textures of plant materials were considered in the design to create an inviting and attractive place for users onsite and offsite. 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 a maximum of flexibility in the interior volume. 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 perimeter wall configuration is also paramount to the flexibility of the space and to this end the project is designed to provide visual interest and break up the longer elevations through the use of articulated concrete panels which vary in plane and height as well as the use of color, texture, fenestration and canopies. The corner entry locations, which include the employee amenity areas, provide focal points to the buildings, help identify the entry points and provide opportunity for future signage.*

*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 planting (40%) and landscape berm (60%) in 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, CapRock 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.), CapRock 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. Loading dock façades for all buildings are behind an 8-foot high privacy wall and only partially visible from adjacent properties and the public right-of-way, and therefore do not apply to this section of the code.

We propose a “change in articulation” distance of approximately 75-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 (i.e., utilizing formliners), windows and trellises to enhance the human scale of the buildings. There is also further articulation, use of accent colors and deeper recesses to give the Entries unique. The “side elevations” are articulated as the street elevations with larger “articulation spacing” in order to efficiently raise the parapet height to coordinate with and conceal the ridgeline of the roof. The change in parapet height is detailed at 4”-0” as we feel that this proportion is sympathetic with the scale of the building and the spacing of the variations.

- 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. Primary entrances are clearly defined with façade variations and recesses, enlarged plans and enhanced renderings have been included to help clarify.
- d. A chart with the percentage of materials has been added to the elevations. The varied materials include “base concrete”, “formliner patented concrete”, “reveal grided concrete”, glass, trellises and multiple colors and accent colors. “Formliner textured concrete” is proposed as a detail which has been included. As noted above we are proposing that the “formliner textured concrete” be treated as a distinct material similar to a CMU pattern and as has been utilized on past projects similar in nature. Elevations have 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.
- e. 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 work 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 CapRock Partners, LLC 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 CapRock Mesa Legacy Industrial 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](mailto:dnewcombe@gblaw.com).