

# **NARRATIVE**

## **HAWES COMMERCE CENTER**

### **SITE PLAN AMENDMENT AND PLANNED AREA DEVELOPMENT (PAD) OVERLAY**

**CASE: ZON21-00792**

**(5<sup>TH</sup> SUBMITTAL: JUNE 10, 2022)**

**LOCATION: 8400 BLOCK OF EAST GERMAN ROAD (NORTH SIDE)**

**- AND -**

**THE 7300 TO 7500 BLOCKS OF SOUTH HAWES ROAD (EAST SIDE)**

**(PARCEL NUMBER: 304-62-008L)**

#### **Overview**

StarPoint Properties, our client, is currently under contract to purchase the approximately 34 gross acres of vacant land located north of the northwest corner Germann Road and of 85<sup>th</sup> Place (the “Site”) for the development of quality, compatible industrial park (the “Hawes Commerce Center”) within proximity to the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. StarPoint Properties envisions the Hawes Commerce Center to be a hub for a range of business activities that will reflect the diverse ecosystem of commerce happening within the city of Mesa. The proposed buildings will feature superior design materials and layout to attract the highest quality tenants growing in the market. The future tenants will range from local, regional, and national businesses. Some examples of potential users are: e-commerce/high-tech logistics companies, warehousing, assembly, manufacturing, and research & development companies. Future tenants will be drawn to the area due to a number of factors including (most importantly) the proximity of the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and the Site’s adjacency to Skybridge. Moreover, combined with the access to an educated and diverse workforce located within the Southeast Valley, creates an ideal opportunity for a high quality/diverse development proposal.

The Hawes Commerce Center proposal is the result of a collaborative process with a top office and industrial design team, a construction team, and the best leasing brokers who know the city of Mesa market. Starpoint Properties is an Opportunity Zone investor looking for the right opportunities where the goals of job creation and community development are aligned to incentivize investment. Thus, by designing a site plan with diversity of building sizes with clear heights and includes adaptable “cold shell” offices and warehouse space allows for quickly adapting to the market and the specific needs of the tenant. For example, a manufacturer will have choices so they may select a space tailored to their unique needs for power, specialty equipment, truck loading, research and development.

The Site is currently vacant, undeveloped land within the city of Mesa. With that being said, the purpose of the proposed Site Plan Amendment and Planned Area Development (“PAD”) Overlay request is to better align the Site with a more reasonable/appropriate level of development (i.e.,

modifications) within the existing underlying Light Industrial (“LI”) zoning district (along with a Planned Area Development Overlay “PAD” for development standards modifications), while also maintaining the 150-foot Small Office (“OS”) zoning district buffer previously approved in 2009 (Case Z09-021, Ord. No. 4955). The proposed PAD will also allow the building height to be “inclusive of parapets” for screening via line-of-sight studies from the public rights-of-way (Enclosed Line-of-Sight Studies from the Public Rights-of-Way with Resubmittal: ZON21-00792), which will allow StarPoint Properties to maintain lower building heights than typically seen within the current market for industrial developments in Mesa (e.g., typically 50 or 60-feet). Thus, we are seeking up to a maximum total of 46-feet (inclusive of parapet height) at strategic locations and lower heights adjacent to 85<sup>th</sup> Place (i.e., 43-feet). By keeping the parapets height to a minimum facing 85<sup>th</sup> Place (i.e., 43-feet total) is optimal in keeping the “height down” for the abutting residential community and a goal discussed at the neighborhood meeting.

In addition, we are seeking a parking ratio modification as outlined in the parking study provided by CivTech (See Revised Parking Study Uploaded with this Resubmittal.) for an overall parking ratio of 1.70 parking spaces / 1,000 square feet of space or 931 parking spaces total (whereas 1,185 parking spaces is typically required). This is a nominal parking reduction (i.e., 254 parking spaces) for the industrial industry and consistent with similar, or less than, other industrial projects currently approved/being developed within the city of Mesa.

A concurrent Preliminary Plat request was submitted with this request. In addition, a design review case was also filed with the city of Mesa Development Services Department, Planning Division concurrently with this request (Design Review Case Number: DRB21-00926).

### **The Request**

The proposal is to develop a quality designed/flexible industrial park type setting with three (3) buildings that will provide a range of building footprints from 108,000 sq. ft. to 235,000 sq. ft. These buildings will allow for a plethora of users within the existing LI zoning district. More importantly, StarPoint Properties and their design team are proposing a generous 83-foot landscape setback along 85<sup>th</sup> Place abutting the Queens Park subdivision along with another 75-foot of parking setback and associated paving/maneuvering areas screened by a 6-foot screen wall. This total of approximately 158-feet is well in line with the existing OS zoning district/use. Thus, there will be no buildings located within this 150-foot, providing a nice buffer/transition from the Queens Park subdivision while allowing for the ultimate development of this vacant Site.

Pursuant to the city of Mesa Zoning Ordinance, *Chapter 69, 11-69-5: - Review Criteria*, the site plan amendment shall satisfy all of the following criteria:

- A. The project is consistent with and conforms to the adopted General Plan and any applicable subarea or neighborhood area plans (except no analysis of the use if it is permitted in the zoning district on the property), is consistent with the development standards of this Ordinance, and is consistent with and meets the intent of any applicable design guidelines.*

Pursuant to State Law and the city of Mesa Zoning Ordinance, all rezoning request shall be consistent (or in conformance) with the adopted *Mesa 2040 General Plan*. Thus, the

General Plan's Character Area designation for the Site is Employment, which includes large manufacturing facilities, warehousing, and business parks. The main goal of the Employment Character Area designation is to provide a wide range of employment opportunities in high quality settings, which the Hawes Commerce Center proposal will accomplish.

In addition, in 2008, the City adopted the *Mesa Gateway Strategic Development Plan* establishing the vision for the southeast Mesa area within the vicinity of the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. The Site is within the "Logistics and Commerce District" of the *Mesa Gateway Strategic Development Plan* and this area promotes uses that should include: manufacturing facilities, large warehouses, business park and commercial uses. The Hawes Commerce Center proposal fits nicely within this area plan.

Finally, the Site is located within the Airport Overflight Area Three ("AOA 3"). The purpose of the Airfield Overlay District is to acknowledge the proximity of the airport, the potential uses that should locate close to the airport, the impacts from the airport, and mitigating those impacts from the airport. The AOA 3 is the least restrictive and covers the largest amount of area surrounding the airport. However, future users encouraged by the airport, specifically for this Site, are industrial/commercial type of uses, which are more compatible with the operations of Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. With that said, there are no commercial or industrial use restrictions within the AOA 3 and the Hawes Commerce Center proposal fits within AOA 3.

The proposed site plan meets the LI and OS zoning districts development standards, except for the building height (i.e., to be increased), modifying parapet screening height/line-of-sight, and parking (i.e., modified parking ratio). These three (3) items are typical with the proposed type of employment/industrial development along with abutting a residential subdivision (i.e., the height) and as such the PAD overlay, as a part of this request, will allow for these modifications.

- B.** *The project is consistent with all conditions of approval imposed on the property whether by ordinance, resolution or otherwise.*

The 2009 site plan approval (i.e., film studio) is no longer viable and as such the Hawes Commerce Center proposal is a more appropriate and reasonable development plan for the area. Thus, the site plan amendment is required to realign this Site to realize the market potential and need in the area. The site plan design adheres to the zoning districts previously approved in 2009, which continues to provide for a buffer/transition from the Queens Park subdivision.

- C.** *The overall design of the project, including but not limited to the site layout, architecture of the buildings or structures, scale, massing, exterior design, landscaping, lighting, and signage, will enhance the appearance and features of the site and surrounding natural and built environment.*

The Hawes Commerce Center is proposed as an industry-leading, three (3) building development. This proposed industrial park provides a range of building footprints and clear heights on across a 34 gross acre property. These buildings are designed with the

highest-quality materials and architectural massing, with a mix of concrete formliners, horizontal steel shading devices, large expanses of storefront glazing, and a variety of steps in plane to achieve an attractive, pedestrian-scale development along both the Germann and Hawes frontages.

The site plan is laid out with superior landscape buffers and pedestrian circulation in mind. Each building provides outdoor amenity space for employees, with landscaped areas and site furniture available for gathering. An interlinked system of shaded sidewalks and crosswalks allows circulation between buildings for a campus feel. Ample screening is provided throughout the site to shield unsightly views from the public view. An 8-foot masonry screen walls and opaque sliding metal gates screen the truck courts from view, while parking screen walls along Hawes and Germann - blocking headlights from view along those frontages. A large, approximately 83-foot wide landscape buffer along 85<sup>th</sup> Place offers a significant separation from the residential subdivision adjacent to the Site, while the buildings are setback an additional 75-feet for a total of over 158-feet of building setback from 85<sup>th</sup> Place. Moreover, the associated paving/maneuvering areas in this area will also be screened by a 6-foot screen wall, providing additional visual/noise protection.

Each elevation of the building designs boasts a variety of changes in building height of at least 3-feet as well as steps in the panels to create inset areas of recess (both in prescriptive compliance with MZO Section 11-7-3.B.2.c.i). Typical large industrial buildings can reach heights of 60-feet, while buildings within the Hawes Commerce Center development are significantly lower in height, topping out at 46-feet. The proposed Hawes Commerce Center will be constructed of tilt concrete walls, the standard structural system and building envelope for industrial buildings. It is worth noting, great care was taken to provide a modern, class-leading design for industrial buildings of this size.

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

As stated, the site plan is laid out with superior landscape buffers and pedestrian circulation in mind. Each building provides outdoor amenity space for employees, with landscaped areas and site furniture available for gathering. An interlinked system of shaded sidewalks and crosswalks allows circulation between buildings for a campus feel. Access is limited to one (1) driveway along Germann Road and three (3) driveways along Hawes Road, north of Germann Road, which will not conflict with the abutting residential subdivision.

*E. 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.*

The concurrent design review submittal package (DRB21-00926) will address the final design, colors, materials, etc. However, as stated, the proposed Hawes Commerce Center will be designed to provide a modern, class-leading design for industrial buildings of this size, which will be an asset to the community, while also being flexible for the end users.

- F. 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.*

Ample screening is provided to shield unsightly views from the public view; especially from the abutting Queens Park subdivision. An 8-foot masonry screen walls and opaque sliding metal gates screen the truck courts from view. A large, approximately 83-foot wide landscape buffer along 85<sup>th</sup> Place also offers a significant/visually appealing separation from the residential subdivision adjacent to the Site. The buildings will also be setback an additional 75-feet for a total of over 158-feet of building setback from 85<sup>th</sup> Place. The associated paving/maneuvering areas in this area will also be screened by a 6-foot screen wall.

- G. 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, 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.*

The future building design will be reviewed with the design review submittal package, but building elevations are planned to provide a variety of changes in building height of at least 3-feet as well as steps in the panels to create inset areas of recess. Moreover, the Hawes Commerce Center development is proposing building heights topping out at 46-feet while those sides facing the abutting residential subdivision will be topping out at 43-feet via the PAD request for parapet screening/line-of-sights. We believe the final design proposed/approved will be an asset to the community.

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

The streetscape design will be reviewed during the design review process, but the intent is to provide a visually appealing street frontages and maintain a generous buffer along 85<sup>th</sup> Place (i.e., the Queens Park subdivision). A large, approximately 83-foot wide landscape buffer along 85<sup>th</sup> Place offers a large separation from the residential subdivision adjacent to the Site and creates an opportunity to provide a nice/lush landscape palette. This area will be further refined and designed as the process proceeds forward and discussions with the community occur.

- I. 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.*

The street frontages will be enhanced to provide a visually appealing environment for the proposed development and to allow for surveillance via adjacent parking areas and adequate lighting to address safety concerns.

- J. 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.*

The landscaping will be lush and drought tolerant. Larger retention/open space areas will be provided on all sides of the Site; aside from the north/future industrial development area. These large areas will provide a nice planting area and buffer. Further review/modification of the landscape plan will occur, as needed, during the design review process.

### **Alternative Compliance Request**

It is worth noting, StarPoint Properties and their architect proposes the following amendments to the design standards. Additional information/visuals regarding the proposed can be found in design review case package (DRB21-00926).

#### **1. Variety of materials – MZO Section 11-7-3.B.5**

- *To reduce the apparent massing and scale of buildings, facades shall incorporate at least three (3) different and distinct materials.*
- *No more than fifty percent (50%) of the total façade may be covered with one (1) single material.*

No more than 50% of the façade is covered with any one color or texture, and each building in the multi-building complex share similar characteristics and design moves for a cohesive feel. A variety of colors and textures are used to elevate the concrete tilt panel structure, including extensive use of formliners, reveals, and applied shading devices. The color palette is modern and sleek, with large expanses of glass evoking a Class-A feel.

#### **2. Parapet detailing – MZO Section 11-7-3.B.2.c.iii**

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

Several architectural moves help break up the massing of panels at the roofline and define the planes at each building, including inset panels, horizontal shading devices, reveal lines, and textural changes. Concrete tilt panels are self-flashing, so metal coping or flashing at the top of panel is not required. Additionally, applied foam cornices or other "added" geometry at the roof line would be foreign to the overall design palette and were withheld.

## **PAD**

We are requesting the following PAD deviations:

1. Building height increase beyond 40-feet (allowed in LI) **to** 46-feet.

The Hawes Commerce Center development is proposing building heights topping out at 46-feet while those sides facing the abutting residential subdivision will be topping out at 43-feet. In addition, we will be seeking (i.e., via this PAD request) to keep the parapet height/screening lower via line-of-sights in order to keep the overall building heights down facing the residential subdivision.

The 40-foot limitation within the LI zoning district can be somewhat limiting for potential users. As such, the requested height provides the greatest flexibility for potential and anticipated uses and allows for greater interior floor to ceiling height often sought by end users. Suffice to say, we believe the final design proposed/approved is reasonable, transitional, and an asset to the community.

2. **This proposed PAD request is also seeking to allow** the building height to be inclusive of parapets for screening **via** line-of-sight studies from 85<sup>th</sup> Place right-of-way (Enclosed Line-of-Sight Studies from 85<sup>th</sup> Place Right-of-Way with this Resubmittal), which will allow StarPoint to maintain building heights of 40-feet for building 1 (i.e., no change to code, per the LI zoning), and modifying buildings 2 & 3 to allow a maximum building height with parapet/line-of-sights being 43-feet adjacent to the residential subdivision - as discussed at the neighborhood meeting.

Specifically we will be modifying the following provision below (see below bold/underlined) from the city's Zoning Code, which states:

### **Mesa City Zoning Code: 11-30-9: - SCREENING**

Design Objective: Encourage attractive, safe buildings and sites by screening non-architectural elements and uses from public view and providing for transitions between uses.

- A. Screening of Mechanical Equipment. Design Objective: Integrate visual screening of necessary mechanical equipment into the architecture of buildings to ensure development is attractive, clutter-free and safe.

Except the AG, RS, DR-1 and RSL districts, all exterior mechanical equipment, whether on a roof, on the side of a structure, or on the ground, shall be screened from public view. Exterior mechanical equipment to be screened includes, but is not limited to heating, ventilation, air conditioning, refrigeration equipment, plumbing lines, ductwork, transformers, satellite dishes, smoke exhaust fans, service entry section and similar utility devices. Exceptions may be approved by the Zoning Administrator when warranted. Screening shall be architecturally integrated into the main structure with regard to materials, color, shape, and size to appear as an integral part of the building or

structure. Equipment shall be screened from public view, public right-of-way, parking areas and on-site pedestrian walkways and amenities. Screening materials shall be opaque and durable. When screening with plants, evergreen types of vegetation shall be planted and maintained. Plant material sizes and types shall be selected and installed, and maintained so that at the time of building occupancy, and continuously afterwards, such plants effectively screen their respective equipment. The use of wood, expanded metal lath, and chain link for screening is prohibited. The following additional screening standards apply:

1. Roof-Mounted Equipment. Roof-mounted equipment screening shall be constructed as an encompassing monolithic unit, rather than as several individual screens (i.e., multiple equipment screens, or "hats," surrounding individual elements shall not be permitted). **The height of the screening element shall equal or exceed the height of the structure's tallest piece of installed equipment.**

Thus, the enclosed line-of-sight studies supplant the above language, which will now state:

The height of the screening element shall **equal or exceed the height of be of sufficient height to screen the structure's tallest piece of installed equipment from the public rights-of-way via line-of-sight studies reviewed and approved by the City.**

3. Modification to the following provision within the city Mesa Zoning Ordinance: 1-33-5 (A).1 Exterior Walls with Public Entrances. A 15-foot-wide foundation base shall be provided, measured from face of building to face of curb along the entire length of the exterior wall. For buildings with corner entries, both adjacent walls require a 15-foot-wide foundation base

**Our request is a 12-foot-wide foundation base** shall be provided, measured from face of building to face of curb along the entire length of the exterior wall. The City Ordinance states buildings with corner entries that both adjacent walls require a 15-foot-wide foundation base.

Landscaping Foundation Base on Exterior Walls. A 15-foot-wide foundation base is called for from the face of building to face of curb along the entire length of the exterior wall. A deviation is requested to reduce this measurement to 12-feet. This minor, 3-foot request enables fire safety vehicles to use the drive aisles to get within the desired thirty (30) feet of the buildings (12-foot landscaping + 18-foot parking space dimension = 30-feet). The request still enables adequately sized drive-aisles, parking spaces and parking landscape islands and will have minimal, if any, effect on the overall visual appearance or feel of the site.

4. We are seeking a **parking ratio modification** as outlined in the parking study provided by CivTech. (See Revised Parking Study Uploaded with this Resubmittal.) The parking reduction is nominal (i.e., 254 parking spaces) for the industrial industry and consistent with similar, or less than, other industrial projects currently approved/being developed

within the city of Mesa. It is important for newer industrial developments today to be more flexible for their ultimate end user(s).

Thus, the following proposed parking ratio modification for the Hawes Commerce Center is:

The overall combined parking **ratio shall be 1.70 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. of the total building space on site or 931 parking spaces total.**

5. We are seeking a slight modification to the “Parking Screening” section within the city Mesa Zoning Ordinance: Section 11-30-9(H), to reduce the minimum 5-feet required between the parking stalls and the screen wall **to** a 0-ft separation between the screen wall and the parking area. It is worth noting, there is a 2-foot car overhang shown on the site plan.

We need this request due to the resident’s comment for adding a screen wall along their side of the Site (i.e., 85<sup>th</sup> Place). Thus, the separation from the parking lot to the start of the proposed 6-foot high screen wall is needing to be reduced. As such we currently have this wall located 2-feet away from the interior face of curb to the face of wall. As stated, this placement still provides for a 2-foot car overhang and allows us to keep the proposed retention.

As noted, these PAD requests are supported by the competitive market needs, the supplemental information provided (i.e., parking study and line-of-sight graphics), and what has been previously approved within the city for similar industrial projects.

## **Conclusion**

With that being said, the proposed Site Plan Amendment and Planned Area Development Overlay (modifications) requests better align the Site with a more reasonable/appropriate level of development that we believe meets or exceeds both the previous (2009) approval/intent (i.e., to buffer/transition from the Queens Park subdivision) and the city’s required development standards. More importantly, the Site will develop with an appropriate/reasonable use(s)/site plan affording end-user flexibility. As previously stated, special attention to screening (i.e., landscaping, and interior loading views) along with building design were of utmost importance to the future owner/design team for creating compatibility with the existing neighborhood while also maintaining long-term economic viability/sustainability.

To that end, we are pleased to submit the following enclosed resubmittal materials for the proposed Hawes Commerce Center development for further 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).