



Date: November 22, 2022  
To: Planning and Zoning Board  
From: Rachel Nettles, Assistant Planning Director  
Through: Mary Kopaskie- Brown, Planning Director; Nana Appiah, Development Services Director  
Subject: **Mesa 2040 General Plan Amendments-** Proposed amendments to Chapter 7 - Community Character of the General Plan.

**PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATION:**

In a continued effort to streamline the administration of the City's General Plan and development regulations, the Planning Division staff is recommending certain text amendments to the Mesa 2040 General Plan (the "Plan"). Specifically, the proposed text amendments modify Chapter 7: Community Character by modifying the descriptions of the Medical Campus and Educational Campus Sub-types, of the Specialty District, and adding permissible zoning districts to the list of secondary zoning districts within the Educational Campus Sub-type. Details of the proposed text amendments are attached to this report as Exhibit 1 (i.e., 2022 Text Amendments to the Mesa 2040 General Plan).

The proposed changes: (1) Add Multiple Residence-4 (RM-4) and Multiple Residence-5 (RM-5) as secondary zoning districts within the Educational Campus Sub-type of the Specialty District; and (2) Provide an exception to the timing of when secondary zoning districts may be utilized in the Medical Campus Sub-type and Educational Campus Sub-type of the Specialty District.

**BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:**

The City adopted the Plan in 2014. Development of the Plan included extensive public participation and reviews. Overall, the Plan has the following three interrelated functions:

- An expression of community goals and priorities;
- A decision-making guide; and
- A fulfillment of a legal requirement of state law.

The Plan's policies and strategies are reviewed annually in accordance with Arizona State Law (ARS 9-461.07), and staff also reviews the Plan on a continual basis in order to identify areas of the Plan that may need amending from time to time. Arizona State Law (ARS 9-461.06) and Chapter 75 of the Zoning Ordinance set forth the process by which the Plan may be amended. For minor general plan amendments such as this proposed text amendment, the Zoning Ordinance requires two public hearings by the Planning and Zoning Board and one public hearing by the City Council.

## **SUMMARY OF THE AMENDMENTS AND EXPLANATION:**

### ***1) Add Multiple Residence-4 (RM-4) and Multiple Residence-5 (RM-5) as secondary zoning districts within the Educational Campus Sub-type of the Specialty District.***

The Specialty Districts Character Area is predominantly intended for the development a single use, such an educational campus, medical facility, or airport. This character area should be designed with a consistent landscape theme and signage and provide architectural consistency and connectivity between buildings to provide a campus like feel.

Section C: Detailed Character Types and Sub-types (pg. 7-4) within Chapter 7 of the Plan discusses the purpose of the primary and secondary zoning districts. Primary zoning districts are the main mechanism for the implementation and establishment of primary land uses that form the intended character within each character area. Secondary zoning districts allow for the establishment of secondary land uses that support the primary land uses and contribute to a mixture of uses while still fulfilling the intent of the character area. Staff is recommending that the Multiple Residence-4 and Multiple Residence-5 be added as secondary zoning districts within the Specialty District Educational Sub-type character area designation.

This recommendation is based in part on staff's experience with developments within the Educational Campus Sub-type, which has demonstrated that educational campuses are often in need of nearby housing for students, teachers, and other employees and users of the campus. This has become especially clear in the past few years as housing is continually in high demand in the Phoenix metropolitan area. Adding the secondary zoning districts of RM-4 and RM-5 to the Educational Campus Sub-type will allow developers, when the specific criteria outlined in the Plan are met (explained below), to include high-density residential developments to support an existing and operating educational campus. The addition of these zoning designations will allow for the development of high-density residential in conjunction with an educational anchor and will provide additional opportunities for students and employees of Mesa campuses to reside in Mesa. Staff feels that this is an appropriate ancillary or supportive land use that contributes to a vibrant educational campus.

### ***2) Provide an exception to the timing of when secondary zoning districts may be utilized in the Medical Campus Sub-type and Educational Campus Sub-type of the Specialty District.***

Within Chapter 7 of the Plan, character areas and their sub-types contain a detailed description on the main themes and attributes that contribute to the goals and establishment of the various character types. For some character types and sub-types, the Plan sets forth the percentage of primary zoning districts and primary land uses that must be met within the character area before secondary zoning districts and secondary land uses can come into the character area. For example, within the Specialty District Medical Sub-type, 80% of the character area must be established with primary zoning districts and land uses. Per Chapter 7 Section C: Detailed Character Types and Sub-types (pg. 7-4 & 7-5), when specific percentages of primary and secondary zoning districts and land uses is not stated in the description of the character area, such as the Specialty District Educational Campus Sub-type, a majority of the character area, defined as 55% or more, must be established with primary zoning districts or land uses before secondary zoning districts and land

uses may be used. This section further discusses the timing of when secondary versus primary zoning districts may be established. Character areas must either have met the minimum requirements for primary zoning districts through existing development, or, if not met for the overall character area, individual developments must meet the minimum requirements within their own proposal.

Staff is recommending an amendment to the Plan which would create a limited exception to the timing of when secondary zoning districts and secondary land uses may be utilized in the Medical Campus Sub-type and the Educational Campus Sub-type. These proposed exceptions would not increase the maximum percentage of secondary zoning districts, only the timing of when secondary zoning districts and secondary land uses may be used in the sub-types. Specifically, in order to be eligible for the exception in either sub-type, there must be an anchor facility already established and operating in the character area; meaning, a currently operating educational facility established within the Educational Campus Sub-type (such as a large college or high school campus) and a currently operating medical facility established within the Medical Campus Sub-type (such as a large hospital, medical clinic, or medical school). Definitions for “anchor educational establishment” and “anchor medical establishment” are contained within the proposed text amendments, Exhibit 1 (i.e., 2022 Text Amendments to the Mesa 2040 General Plan).

The intent of this amendment is to allow for the development of supportive secondary uses, such as multiple residence, small-scale retail, or restaurants when a primary intended use of the character area (such as the large educational and medical uses described above) is already in place and operating. When those anchor uses are already functioning within the character area, staff has found that it is appropriate, and meets the goals and intent of these sub-types, to allow the development of secondary uses to support that primary, anchor use.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

After thorough evaluation of the Mesa 2040 General Plan, staff is recommending approval of the proposed amendments to the Plan.