



**PLANNING DIVISION  
STAFF REPORT**

**City Council Hearing**

**August 24, 2020**

CASE No.: <b>ZON20-00204</b>	PROJECT NAME: <b>Southern Avenue Storage</b>
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Owner's Name:	Creation Funding, LLC
Applicant's Name:	Neil Feaser, RCAA Architects, Inc.
Location of Request:	860 and 864 West Southern Avenue. Located east of Alma School Road on the north side of Southern Avenue.
Parcel No(s):	134-19-010
Request:	Rezone from Neighborhood Commercial (NC) and Limited Commercial (LC) to Limited Commercial with a Bonus Intensity Zone Overlay (LC-BIZ); and Site Plan Review. This request will allow for an office building and self-storage facility.
Existing Zoning District:	Neighborhood Commercial (NC) and Limited Commercial (LC)
Council District:	3
Site Size:	2± acres
Proposed Use(s):	Office and Self-Storage
Existing Use(s):	Office and Single-Residence
P&Z Hearing Date(s):	<b>June 24, 2020 / 4:00 p.m.</b>
Staff Planner:	Cassidy Welch, Planner II
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions
Planning and Zoning Board Recommendation:	Approval with conditions
Proposition 207 Waiver Signed:	Yes

**HISTORY**

On **November 4, 1968**, the property was annexed into the City of Mesa (Ord. #602).

On **April 21, 1975**, the City Council approved a rezoning of the southern portion of the property from Single Residence (RS-6) to Neighborhood Commercial (NC) to allow the development of a medical office and retail center. (Z75-006; Ord. #923)

On **February 20, 1978**, the City Council approved a rezoning of the northern portion of the property from Single Residence (RS-6) to Limited Commercial (LC) to allow the development of a self-storage facility. (Z78-003; Ord. #1134)

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **Background:**

The applicant is requesting to rezone the subject site from Neighborhood Commercial (NC) and Limited Commercial (LC) to LC with a Bonus Intensity Zone (BIZ) Overlay and a site plan review. The site is located along Southern Avenue. Existing development on the subject 2-acre site includes a medical office building on the southern portion of the site and a single residence building with a vacant yard on the northern section of the property. According to information on file with the City, the medical office building was developed in the late 1970's. The remaining section of the site has been vacant and bypassed by development for the past few decades. The subject request also includes a site plan review to allow redevelopment of the existing medical office building and a proposed self-storage facility to be built on the northern portion of the property. According to the applicant, the existing single residence building will be demolished to allow the proposed development of the site.

As part of the rezoning the applicant is requesting a BIZ overlay to allow modifications to certain development standards on the property. The proposed modifications include reductions in building and landscape setbacks, as well as requirements for foundation base standards. The proposed modifications are needed to facilitate the redevelopment of the site. Per Section 11-36-2 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO), the existing medical office building is considered legal non-conforming as it does not comply with current development standards. The modifications are needed to allow the existing medical office building to remain and the proposed self-storage facility to develop on the remainder of the property. Per Section 11-21-1 of the MZO, the purpose of the BIZ overlay is to provide for variations from certain development standards to allow greater intensity of development and encourage unique, innovative developments of superior quality. The proposed site plan and elevations meet the criteria for review of a BIZ as outlined in Section 11-21-3 of the MZO.

### **General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals:**

The General Plan Character area designation on the property is Mixed Use Activity District with a community sub-type. Per Chapter 7 of the General Plan, the primary focus of the Mixed Use Activity District character is to help these districts be strong and viable centers of commercial activity that attract people to unique shopping and entertainment experiences. Commercial, retail and office uses are typical primary uses allowed within the character area designation.

The property is also located within the Transit Corridor character area designation. Per the Plan, the Transit Corridor designation areas are those developments located between transit stations and stops. The intended goal of the corridor is to create urban patterns such as pedestrian-oriented urban environment that results in development within walking distances to and from transit stops. The proposed development and redevelopment of the site will improve pedestrian connections through orienting the development towards the street

frontage (i.e. Southern Avenue) and help contribute to the desired pedestrian-oriented urban environment envisaged in the Plan.

**Fiesta District Sub-Area:**

The site is also located within the Fiesta Economic Activity District. Per Chapter 5 of the Mesa 2040 General Plan, the Fiesta District is primed to revitalize and re-energize over the next decade. In accordance with the Plan, development efforts should focus on the redevelopment and revitalization of commercial and entertainment uses. The proposed redevelopment of the existing office and development of a self-storage facility to serve the surrounding residents conforms to the goal of the district to encourage revitalization and development of various properties in the sub area.

Per Chapter 7 of the General Plan, Limited Commercial (LC) zoning is listed as a primary zoning district within the community-scale sub-type of the Mixed Use Activity District. The proposed rezoning and site plan request are consistent with the General Plan land use character designation. Staff reviewed the request and determined it is consistent with the criteria for review of development outlined in Chapter 15 (pg. 15-1) of the Mesa 2040 General Plan.

**Zoning District Designations:**

The subject site has two zoning designations. Specifically, the southern portion of the site is currently zoned Neighborhood Commercial (NC) and the northern portion is zoned Limited Commercial (LC). The applicant is requesting to rezone the entire site to LC with a Bonus Intensity Zone (LC-BIZ) overlay to accommodate the existing office building and proposed self-storage facility. Per Section 11-6-2 of the MZO, the existing office and proposed self-storage are allowed in the LC zoning district.

The purpose of the Limited Commercial zoning district is to provide areas for indoor retail, entertainment and service-oriented businesses that serve the surrounding residential trade area within a 1 to 10-mile radius. The proposed medical office and self-storage facility will contribute to and serve the needs of the surrounding community.

**Bonus Intensity Zone (BIZ) Overlay – MZO Article 3, Chapter 21:**

The subject request includes a BIZ overlay to allow for deviations from certain required development standards of the MZO. Per Section 11-21-1 of the MZO, the purpose of the overlay is to provide for variations from certain development standards to allow greater intensity of development and encourage unique, innovative developments of superior quality.

Table 1 below shows the MZO required standards and the applicant’s proposed BIZ standards.

*Table 1*

<b>MZO Development Standards</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
<b><u>Interior Side Setback - Section 11-6-3</u></b> (building/landscape)	(building/landscape)	(building/landscape)
<i>West Side – Office</i>	15’/15’	<b>3’/3’</b>
<i>West Side – Self-Storage</i>	15’/15’	15’/5’
<i>East Side, adj. to RS district</i>	25’/20’	25’/5’

<u>Foundation Base – Section 11-33-5</u> <i>Entry Plaza</i> <i>Exterior wall w/ public entrance</i>	20' depth, 900 SF 15' wide	<b>5' depth, 250 SF</b> <b>8' wide</b>
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As shown on the table above, the applicant is requesting the following deviations from the LC zoning district development standards outlined in Section 11-6-3 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO):

Side Setback - Building (west side): Per Section 11-6-3(A) of the MZO, the required building setback along the interior west side of the subject site is 15 feet. The current office building does not meet the minimum required building setback for the proposed LC district. The applicant is requesting a reduction in the side setback from 15 feet to 3 feet to accommodate the office building at its current location. According to the applicant, the reduction in the required setback will allow the office building to remain as the primary building and use, as well as be seen from the street. The location of the building along the street will also allow continued and enhance interaction between the building and the street which will help foster a pedestrian scale environment along the street frontage on Southern Avenue.

Side Setback – Landscape (west side): Per Section 11-6-3(A) of the MZO, the required landscape setback along the interior west side of the subject site is 15 feet. As previously stated, the current office building does not meet the minimum required setback for the proposed LC district. The applicant is requesting a reduction in the landscape setback from 15 feet to 3 feet to accommodate the existing office building. The applicant is also proposing a reduction in the landscape setback on the west side of the building from 15 feet to 5 feet to allow development of the self-storage facility. According to the applicant, the size and shape of the by-passed parcel is inadequate and poses challenges to complying with the required development standards.

Side Setback – Landscape (east side): Per Section 11-6-3(A) of the MZO, the required landscape setback along the interior east side of the subject site is 20 feet when adjacent to a Single Residence (RS) zoning district. The applicant is requesting a reduction in the landscape setback from 20 feet to 5 feet, same as the west side, to accommodate development of the self-storage facility. According to the applicant, the size and shape of the by-passed parcel is inadequate and poses challenges to complying with the required development standards.

Foundation Base – Exterior Public Entrance: Per Section 11-33-5.A.1 of the MZO, a 15-foot-wide foundation base is required for exterior walls with public entrances. The applicant is requesting a reduction in the minimum exterior public entrance foundation base from 15 feet to 8 feet to allow development of the self-storage facility. According to the applicant, the reduction to the landscape foundation base is necessary to accommodate large vehicle loading without obstructing vehicular circulation on the site. The area of the building with no large vehicle loading conforms to the required 15-foot foundation base dimension.

Foundation Base – Entry Plaza: Per Section 11-33-5.A.1.a of the MZO, an additional entry plaza with a minimum depth of 20 feet and a minimum size of 900 square feet is required to be provided for buildings larger than 10,000 square feet. The applicant is requesting a reduction

of the required additional entry plaza depth from 20 feet to 5 feet, and a reduction to the minimum size from 900 square feet to 250 square feet to allow development of the self-storage facility. According to the applicant, site constraints coupled with the limitation of using the existing office building make full compliance with standards of the MZO impractical. The applicant has also indicated that the majority of the self-storage customers will not use the entrance to the office but instead go directly to their individual units.

The proposed development complies with requirements of a BIZ outlined in Section 11-21-3 of the MZO to provide superior quality and redeveloping an economically stressed property. As justification for the requested deviations, the applicant is proposing significant improvements to the existing development as well as high-quality and superior design of the proposed self-storage facility. In addition, the proposed site plan and elevations show additional landscaping along Southern Avenue, pedestrian connectivity to Southern Avenue and between buildings, and a redesign of the existing office building façade. As a part of the office redesign, the exterior building façade will be updated with quality architectural elements. The building will also be redesigned to engage and improve the pedestrian connection to Southern Avenue as encouraged by the Fiesta District Sub-Area Plan.

**Site Plan and General Site Development Standards:**

The proposed site plan shows redevelopment of an existing 2,200± square foot medical office building on the site and construction of a 25,500± square foot self-storage building on the northern section of the property. Primary access to the site will be from an existing vehicular drive access from Southern Avenue. Both the existing office building and the proposed self-storage building will share the vehicular access from Southern Avenue.

The site plan also shows the existing office building and associated parking will remain in its current configuration. The self-storage building will be constructed in the center of the northern portion of the site and have a vehicular access drive wrapped around the perimeter of the building. According to the applicant, entrance to the storage building will be gated and only accessible to its customers. As shown on the site plan, guest parking and public entrance will be located along the southern side of the self-storage building. Parking spaces for both the medical office building and self-storage facility conforms to the number of spaces required as outlined in Section 11-32-3 of the MZO. Overall, the proposed site plan conforms to the review criteria for Site Plan Review outlined in Section 11-69-5 of the City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance.

**Design Review:**

On May 12, 2020, the Design Review Board (DRB) reviewed the proposed elevations and landscape plans for the development and recommended certain modifications. Staff will be working with the applicant to address any comments and recommendations from the Design Review Board. During the review, the DRB agreed that the overall improvements to the existing building and landscaping and the proposed elevations for the self-storage facility are consistent with the city's Quality Development Design Guidelines.

**Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:**

<b>Northwest</b> RS-6 Single Residences	<b>North</b> PS Elementary School	<b>Northeast</b> PS Elementary School
<b>West</b> NC & LC Commercial & Multiple Residence	<b>Subject Property</b> NC & LC Existing office & single residence	<b>East</b> NC & RS-6 Vacant and Laundry facility
<b>Southwest</b> (Across Southern Avenue) RM-4-PAD Multiple Residence	<b>South</b> (Across Southern Avenue) RM-4-PAD Multiple Residence	<b>Southeast</b> (Across Southern Avenue) RM-4-PAD Multiple Residence

**Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses:**

The proposed site plan is for the redevelopment of an existing office building and a proposed development of a self-storage facility on the property. Overall, the proposed development of the site with associated site improvements and design will not be out of character with the surrounding area and uses.

**Neighborhood Participation Plan and Public Comments:**

The applicant has completed a Citizen Participation Process, which included mailed letters to property owners within 1,000-feet of the site, as well as HOAs within ½ mile and registered neighborhoods within 1 mile of the site. As of writing this report, neither the applicant nor staff has received any comments/concerns from surrounding property owners. The applicant will be providing an updated Citizen Participation Report to staff prior to the June 24, 2020 Study Session. Staff will provide the Board with any new information during the scheduled Study Session.

**Staff Recommendation:**

The subject request is consistent with the General Plan and meets the review criteria for Site Plan Review outlined in Section 11-69-5 of the MZO and is consistent with the purpose for a Bonus Intensity Zone overlay outlined in Section 11-21-3 of the MZO; therefore, staff recommends approval with the following conditions:

**Conditions of Approval:**

1. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations, except the modification to the development standards as approved with this BIZ as follows:
  - a. Medical Office Building
    - i. The minimum building setback along the west property line adjacent to the medical office building is 3 feet.
    - ii. The minimum landscape setback along the west property line adjacent to the medical office building is 3 feet.
  - b. Self-Storage Facility
    - i. The minimum landscape setback along the east and west property lines adjacent to the self-storage facility is 5 feet.

- ii. The minimum foundation base for exterior walls with a public entrance is 8 feet.
  - iii. The minimum entry plaza depth is 5 feet and the minimum size of the entry plaza is 250 square feet.
2. Compliance with the final site plan submitted.
3. Compliance with all requirements of Design Review.

**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

**Exhibit 4-Citizen Participation Report**