



## ECO MESA PROJECT NARRATIVE STATEMENT:

ECO MESA is a mixed use infill residential rental community designed with sustainability and walkability in mind. Rooftop solar panels will provide over 50% of the development's energy needs, gray water capture from showers will irrigate the landscaped areas and a car share program will be available for residents. Located just one street north of the light rail in downtown Mesa, the building is located in and designed to the T5MSF transect of the form based code. The building will be constructed in the place of the 76 parking space Purple Lot, and will provide those same 76 public parking spaces plus additional parking for residents onsite. The building will yield 102 rental apartment units including studios, 1 bedroom and 2 bedroom units. The structure will feature 3 parking floors of Type I C.I.P. concrete construction below the 3 hr podium slab, and 4 residential floors of Type V wood frame above the podium slab. The top of wood frame structure at roof plane will be 72'-0". A number of rooftop appurtenances in the form of stair and elevator overrun, and a sizeable array of solar panels will be constructed below the maximum allowable height of 85' per form based code. These elements will be of non-combustible construction.

If you have questions regarding ECO Mesa, please feel free to reach out to:

Development Team: Mr. Tim Sprague of Habitat Metro... [tim@habitatmetro.com](mailto:tim@habitatmetro.com)

Architect: Mr. Martin Ball of CCBG Architects... [mball@ccbgarchitects.com](mailto:mball@ccbgarchitects.com)

## OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND:

Habitat Metro, LLC represents the 'Landowner' in redevelopment of approximately 1.17 acres (gross) in Downtown Mesa for a mid-block site consisting of 6 parcels between Robson and McDonald on the south side of Pepper Pl. The subject parcels are currently home to the City of Mesa Downtown surface parking Purple Lot, including existing electrical and trash/recycle infrastructure serving neighboring

businesses. The landowner has opted into the Form Based Code (“FBC”) zoning for this project redevelopment. Based on the FBC Regulating Plan (11-57-1), the parcel is designated FBC T5MSF.

**PURPOSE FOR REQUEST:**

The purpose for making this variance request is to redevelop the subject parcels into a mid-rise mixed-use development featuring residential rental units, replacing existing public parking and providing new ground level retail opportunities within one block of the light rail. Given the existing electrical infrastructure onsite, and more stringent parking setback requirements than exist for the surface lot today, there are a few instances where the new structure must request variance from specific elements of the Form Based Code requirements described below:



**Note:** In each request below, responses are given for the following justification questions.

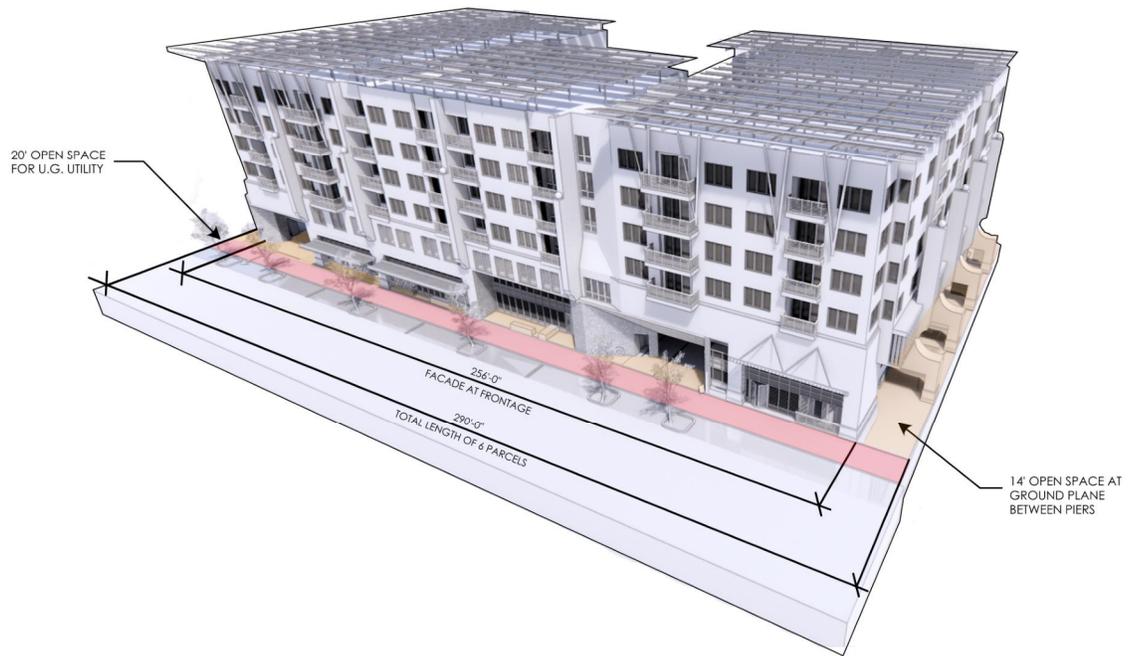
Explain what special circumstances or conditions apply to this property that may not apply to other properties in this area or zoning district (example: size, shape, topography, location or surroundings).

Explain how the special circumstances or conditions cited in Question #1 originated. Are these conditions pre-existing and not self-imposed? Why or why not?

Explain how strict compliance with the Zoning or Sign Ordinance would deprive the property of uses or development options available to other properties in the same zoning district

Explain why the requested variance will not grant special privilege or unusual vafor to this property or development over other sites with similar circumstances and zoning.

1) Omit... item removed from consideration



2) TRANSECT GUIDELINE: Building Types Standards: Building Size and Massing (11-59-14(D))  
Building width is 264' at its widest point, and is 256' at the right of way line.  
Maximum allowed is 200'.

Solution: Development team requests Variance from 200' limit not to exceed 264' total width.

**Justification for variance:**

A new structure limited to 200' of width per the FBC while simultaneously incorporating the existing onsite public parking plus electrical would constitute an economic hardship to the development team in lower yield of residential and retail, and require another level of underground parking in order to accommodate all functions. It would also leave a 90.25' wide second parcel or unused portion of a single lot which is encumbered by part of the existing underground electrical infrastructure that would likely prove durable and/or challenging for a smaller development to accommodate in the future. The architectural design of this longer structure incorporates a deep vertical cut in the façade at the elevator core in order to further articulate the building into smaller logical masses.

Approval of this variance would not constitute a grant of special privilege because the specific infrastructure encumbrances unique to this site plus accommodation of existing public parking function while upgrading the same amenity to garaged covered public parking within the constraints of a more restrictive newly adopted Form Based Code where a 30' setback of said public parking is required... will require the use of the entire width of the unencumbered site. The same surface parking lot under the FBC would itself be in violation of the allowable width of the parcel, and would lose 25% (19 of 76 spaces) of its parking capacity with the 30' surface parking setback imposed upon it.

As such, the conditions are not self-imposed but are pre-existing as evidenced by the existing Purple Lot that currently exceeds the allowable width of the combined parcel.

The requirement and need to maintain the existing 76 parking spaces of the Purple Lot for public use deprives the property of uses or development options available to other properties in the same zoning due to its inherent location and necessity for its existing use to be maintained.



Guideline building mass depth above 2<sup>nd</sup> floor is not perceptible from street.

3) TRANSECT GUIDELINE: Building Size and Massing (Sec 11-59-14(D))

Building width on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor is 135'.

Building width on 4–7 floors is less than 76'-8" (two units plus 6' hallway)

Maximum allowed is 65'.

Solution: Development team requests Variance from 65' limit not to exceed 76'-8"

Justification for variance at residential floors and rooftop apurtenance:

Variance from guideline dimension of 65' for all floors above 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of a mid-rise is proposed for the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor parking deck, and for each residential floor, parapet and solar panel rooftop apurtenance. The residential floors feature a typical unit depth of 33' which extends to 35'-4" at the point of deepest building shaping projection. Hallways are a minimum of 6'-0" clear. These

dimensions are not uncommon in modern urban infill residential solutions, and allow for the bulk of the usable balcony (5'-0" depth) to be inset rather than extend fully from the face of structure. This set of modules, when assembled generates a building section of roughly 76'-8". It also results in a smaller exterior wall surface per unit and a greater surface area of roof which both serve the sustainability goals of this project. Strict adherence to the codified 65' would result in wider, shallower units which would reduce the potential yield of residential units on this site that is limited on east and west sides by existing electrical infrastructure.

Approval of this variance would not constitute a grant of special privilege because the guideline depth of building section, as applied to this site which is encumbered by existing City of Mesa electrical infrastructure is a condition unique to this building site, and is not shared by all other privately held land with a Form Based Code T5MSF mid-rise overlay.

Justification for variance at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor parking deck:

The third floor parking deck extends the full depth of the parcel to allow for 2 efficient double loaded parking bays in order to provide enough parking for residents and to fully replace the existing Purple Lot public parking onsite. This 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of parking is required as the number of existing parking spaces on the existing surface lot does not setback from right of way line the 30' required from the Form Based Code T5MSF mid-rise typology. When adhering to this mark, and when added to the number of spaces required to provide a minimum of 1:1 parking ratio for residents, a third level is required. Given existing electrical infrastructure to remain onsite (either active or abandoned in place), the construction of a full or partial basement relative to the utilization of same is both costly and functionally prohibitive due to the existing underground infrastructure.

Approval of this variance would not constitute a grant of special privilege as the floor to floor height and configuration of the architecture at the primary street façade and alley results in a building mass that reads as a tall first floor with shopfront/arcade development plus a shorter (visually speaking) second floor mass containing stacked resident fitness amenity. The height of the podium atop these three levels of parking is less than 30' from existing grade which is not out of character for a tall first floor and floor above for a commercial structure when considering the formal character rather than the number of floors.

In both instances above, the conditions are not self-imposed but are pre-existing by the need to maintain the existing Purple Lot and address the existing utility infrastructure that currently exceeds the allowable width of the parcel. Furthermore, the unique existing conditions of the site limit the development options over other sites with similar circumstances and zoning.



4)TRANSECT GUIDELINE: Building Size and Massing (Sec 11-59-14(D))

Required first floor cannot be smaller than upper floors.

First Floor is smaller only by the depth of the building's architecture. Additional design detail is provided in attached zoning clearance docs 7/15/20.

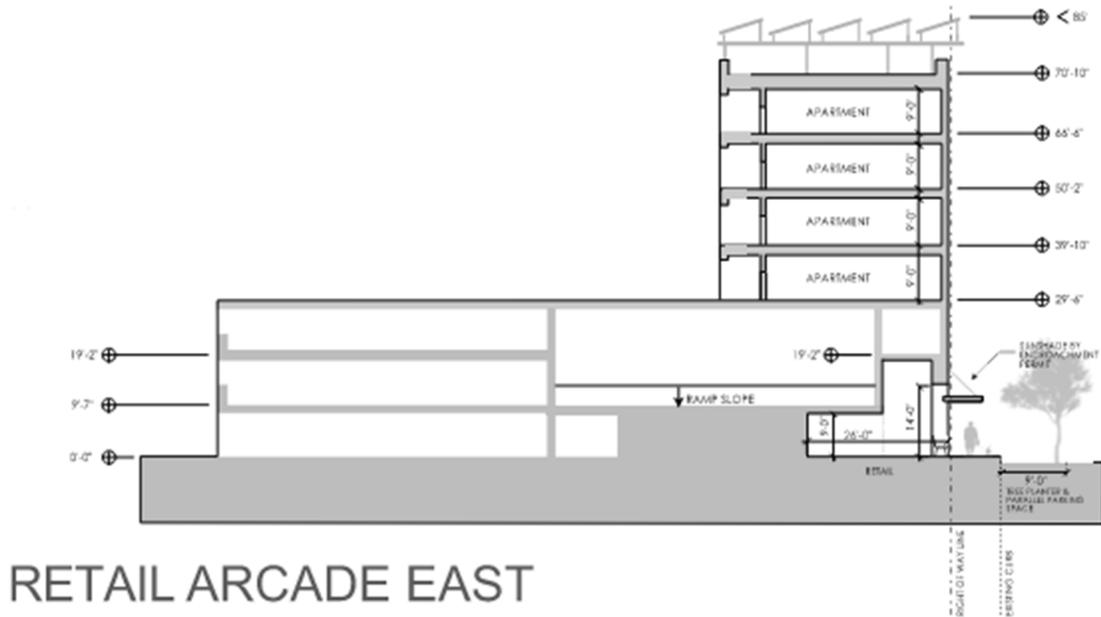
Solution: Development team requests variance from requirement that floorplate of any floor may not be larger than the floor below such that podium and parking floors may project not more than 18" beyond the ground floor utilization of the site.

**Justification for variance:**

The ground level public parking has been designed to take full advantage of the available ground plane and to be as open to the free flow of pedestrian movement as is the existing open-to-sky public parking lot known as the 'Purple Lot'. To create this new, well lit and easily accessed covered parking, the east and west ends of the ground floor are not enclosed by walls, but rather, are open to the landscape, and are defined by Architectural piers which terminate at the underside of the third floor parking deck. It is the projection of the parking deck, by no more than 18" beyond the toe of a building pier at any location, which would make the third floor wider than the ground floor. From the street, the retail and resident amenity functions form a continuous building mass at the right of way line, as is the case for this building along the alley. It is only at the side elevations where the floorplate has been extended by up to 18" to maximize available parking for public and resident use

Approval of this variance would not constitute a grant of special privilege because the actual area of utilization of the ground floor, by function, is greater than the size of any floorplate above, and the overall visual massing of the building is vertical rather than inverted.

The conditions limiting the ability to increase the first floor size are not self-imposed but are pre-existing by the need to maintain the existing Purple Lot. And, the proposed design works to present coherent massing in this unique set of site conditions that limit the development options over other sites with similar circumstances and zoning.



5) TRANSECT GUIDELINE: Building Form Standards, Retail Suite depth (Sec 11-58-9(D))

Retail depth must be 30'.

Provided retail depth is 26'.

Solution: Development team requests variance from 30' standard to 'not less than 26'-0" of interior space measured to include storefront glazing system and demising wall depth.'

Justification for variance:

The building frontage incorporates a retail suite storefront of 14'-0" in height, and maximizes the depth of the suite given the parcel's 135'-0" of total depth and two double loaded parking aisles and associated structure. The depth of each parking bay, by required parking dimension is 18' + 24' + 18' or 60' plus reasonable depth for structure and building façade of 1'-0" on either side... thus 62'. Two bays to provide for necessary maneuvering and ramping will require 124' of the available 135' leaving only 11' for retail plus the first row of parking spaces at 18'. The deepest reasonable retail space would be 29' minus the depth of demising wall at 1'-0" resulting in 28'. Our retail suites recess from the right of way line by a minimum of 2' to create a sense of entry and articulation to the building façade, resulting in a retail suite of 26' in depth.

Approval of this variance would not constitute a grant of special privilege because the efficiency of public parking layout to replace existing public facilities drives the dimensions of space available for retail, and development of character of retail entry is guided by the intent of the shopfront/arcade frontage.

The conditions limiting the ability to increase the retail shopfront space are not self-imposed but are pre-existing by the need to maintain the existing Purple Lot. And, the proposed design works to maintain an attractive and functioning pedestrian experience in this unique set of site conditions that are limiting the development options over other sites with similar circumstances and zoning.



6) TRANSECT GUIDELINE: Private Frontage Standards, Interruptions within storefront glazing (Sec 11-60-10(B))

Interruptions between storefront glazing panels may not exceed 2' in width

Proposed solution incorporates building piers not to exceed 5' in width, and building monument signage not to exceed 22' in width as part of a vertical green wall design feature.

Solution: Design team requests variance from 2' max to 'not more than 5' and to 'include integrated monument wall elements' such that 'minimum 75% of overall length of shopfront shall be glazing system with 75% transparency.'

Justification for variance:

The scale of the building dictates that the visual piers should be substantial enough to carry the perceived mass of structure. Thus, we have separated the articulation of the retail suites storefront by a visual mass not to exceed 5'. We have also incorporated the building's marquee signage into the design at a pedestrian scale where the ground floor parking and elevator access will outlet pedestrian traffic to the public way.

Approval of this variance would not constitute a grant of special privilege because the number or cadence of allowed 2' interruptions separating storefront system glazing is not limited in the guideline standard. In this instance, the designed elements simply unite allowed interruptions in a way that supports the architecture and sustainability statement that is inherent to the proposal. The combined area of storefront system (1874 s.f.) compared to the overall area of the façade designated shopfront/arcade (2487s.f.) results in 75.4% utilization of available lineal footage of that part of the façade dedicated to retail and resident suites. A lower overall utilization of façade area is achievable using a number of 2'-0" interruptions in the storefront system, as the number is not limited in the Form Based Code. This solution results in a façade with 75% transparency of glazing on 75% of the façade designed in keeping with the shopfront/arcade frontage type. The remainder of the property frontage is given over to required and functional utility setbacks and to vehicular entry and exit in keeping with the historic use of the site as openly accessible public parking.

The proposed structure responds to the longer than typical building mass set onto this 290.25' long parcel. As such, each building element must respond to this pre-existing condition... each is upsized slightly over the ideal guideline dimension in order to carry the visual weight of the composition. This is not a self-imposed desire, but a response to the pre-existing size of the site.



7) TRANSECT GUIDELINE: Private Frontage Standards, Retail suite entry recess at sidewalk (Sec 11-60-10(B))

Retail storefront entries may be recessed up to 5'-0" in depth

Proposed solution incorporates a Resident/Leasing suite entry recessed 6'-4" in depth from right of way line as part of a vertical green wall design feature intended to differentiate the use of the resident entry from the three adjacent retail suites.

Solution: Design team requests variance from 5' max depth of recessed entries to 'not to exceed 6'-4" depth of recessed entries'.

**Justification for variance:**

This solution brings the building mass down to ground at the right of way line. Retail suite entries are setback 2'-0" from right of way line at the storefront glazing system. Resident Leasing and Amenity entrance is setback 6'-4" from right of way line at storefront glazing system. This is done to maximize the depth of retail suite, and to create more foreground at the ground plane at the Resident primary entry. Strict adherence to the maximum entry recess of 5'-0" does not provide enough depth of growing planter for the intended vertical green wall at resident entry portal, which is a key point of articulation between the retail suite entries and resident entry on primary façade.

Approval of this variance would not constitute a grant of special privilege as the structure does adhere to the build-to line at the right of way, and seeks only to provide a deeper frontage for the pedestrian environment at the ground plane.

The proposed design seeks to enhance the pre-existing pedestrian experience on Pepper by articulating the retail façade and create an interesting environment adjacent to the right of way. This proposed design works to complement the unique site conditions that limited development options over other sites with similar circumstances and zoning.

8) CITY OF MESA ZONING (MZO 11-32-4(A)): Setback of Cross Drive Aisles require parking to be set back 50' from property line abutting the street.

City of Mesa standard is 50' setback for surface parking accessed from main drive aisles intersecting street.

Proposed solution maintains a 30' setback for surface parking open to sky that is accessed from main drive aisles intersecting a street.

Solution: Design team requests variance from 50' setback to 'not less than 30' setback from property line'

**Justification for variance:**

This solution conforms to the 30' setback for surface parking that is not concealed by a building to be in conformance with the adopted Form Based Code section 11-58-9(f).

Approval of this variance would not constitute a grant of special privilege as the proposal has been modified to meet the standard of the adopted Form Based Code. This standard, intended to guide the character of downtown development responds to inherently different density of use requirements that do not apply to larger, more suburban site development which is guided by the 50' setback. All parties who would opt in and follow the guidelines of the Form Based code would be required to meet the 30' setback identified in the adopted document. This simply rectifies a discrepancy between different sections of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance.

9) TRANSECT GUIDELINES: Building Form Standards (11-58-9 (D)): Ground Floor Ceiling Height guideline for commercial space is 14'

Form Based Code standard for Main Street Flex zoning is 14' clear height for commercial spaces Proposed solution includes ground floor ceiling height of 18'-6" for the first 10'-0" of retail suite depth and minimum of 9'-0" clear height for the remainder of the depth of retail suite.

Solution: Design team requests variance from required 14'-0" clear height for full depth of retail suite primary spaces to allow for a minimum of 9'-0" clear for not more than 2/3 of the depth of the suite. This solution maintains the full 14'-0" shopfront window frontage.

**Justification for variance:**

This solution maintains the street frontage character requiring tall (14'-0") glazing system and minimum 75% transparency, but limits the height of the interior volume of the leasable retail suite in order to allow for parking at the ramp from parking level 2 to parking level 3. The requirement to replace existing surface parking that is non-conforming to the Form Based Code

setbacks noted in the item above, as well as the parking required for the operation of the residential development does place a burden on this development solution that is not consistently required of other urban infill housing solutions. This represents a hardship to the development of the parcel. It is in response to this requirement that the design team requests a minimum of 9'-0" to allow for parking to begin at the low end of the ramp from 2 to 3. This 9'-0" minimum height rises with the rise of the underside of the ramp until the 14'-0" minimum height is achieved (a total of 71' of the 200' of linear frontage or 35% at reduced height)

Approval of this variance would not constitute a grant of special privilege as the structure requires such height modification in order to efficiently provide for the additional public parking above and beyond what an equivalent structure without that public parking would be able to provide. It is a condition unique to the development of this product on this parcel responding to the functional requirement to replace existing non-conforming parking count, and to continue to provide space at the ground plane to house electrical infrastructure intended to serve neighboring properties.

- 10) TRANSECT GUIDELINE: Building Form Standards (11-58-9(d)): 50' max allowed between points of entry

Form Based Code standard for Main Street Flex building form is max 50'-0" between building entries (under miscellaneous standards)

Proposed solution includes points of entry to retail suites and to open public parking garage such that there is not more than 50'-0" between points of entry where shopfront frontage standard is provided.

Solution: Design team requests variance from the 50'-0" maximum distance between points of entry at shopfronts such that it should include points of entry to the open public parking garage in addition to points of entry at specific retail or residential suites.

**Justification for variance:**

The open public parking garage located behind the street fronting retail shopfronts and residential leasing suites is a primary programmatic function of the building that drives the design solution. As such, it is expected that the public should have an identifiable and accessible path from the public way along Pepper into the parking garage. These access points constitute regularly used points of entry to the functions of the building and should, thus, be counted among the points of entry to retail suites or residential leasing. When considered in the wider context of downtown, clear pedestrian access pathways through the building will assist shopfronts on both Main Street and Pepper. When included in the count of entries along the Pepper Place façade, the distance between points of entry varies, but is never greater than 50' in conformance with the standard.

Approval of this variance would not constitute a grant of special privilege as the public parking provided to replace existing surface public parking that is not in conformance with the development guidelines of the Form Based Code, is a primary function required of this

development proposal. This is not a requirement of all other development proposals, and as the intensity of historic use of this public parking will demonstrate, it merits equal or greater importance to the retail suite entries from the standpoint of public wayfinding from downtown parking to destinations like the IDEA museum and local shops.

11) City of Mesa Zoning: Entry Drive Aisle Standards (MZO 11-58-9(f))

Form Based Code standard for drive entry is 20'.

Proposed entry drive is 24'-0".

Solution: Design Team requests variance from Form Based Code 20' and Standard Drive width 30' as requested in Engineering notes July 30, 2020 for ADM20-00480... to provide 24'-0" at right of way line with wings as required by COM Stnd Dtl M-42 per Transportation Review notes.

**Justification for variance:**

The open public parking garage and residential garage are accessed through the same entry drive matching historic location of drive access for public parking at Pepper Place and at the alley. Given the significant scale of public parking and resident parking allocations, two points of easily identifiable vehicular entry with simple path of navigation matching the historic usage of the public parking has been our standard of design in conversation with staff. A third exit only point to Pepper Place will provide egress from a one way only main parking level closest to the IDEA Museum. Each point of vehicle access will include pedestrian access to the public way. Given the anticipated usage, and both resident (regular users) and the public (many first time users) City staff and applicant settled on a 24'-0" entry drive at right of way line based on prior experience at other similar facilities.

Approval of this variance would not constitute a grant of special privilege as the public parking function required of this solution increases the load and usage of this garage structure relative to a garage structure without the addition of 76 public parking spaces. This is a unique solution generated from required program that is not typical to other structures of this type. Given that the Form Based Code (20') and standards of development outside of the form based code area (30') are in conflict in this condition, and direction to provide both has been provided to the design team, a 24'-0" entry matching the width of the typical drive aisle in the garage provides for a safe maneuvering clearance at low speed and splits the difference between the two conflicting standards.

12) TRANSECT GUIDELINES: Private Frontage Standards (11-60-10(B)) 75% Ground Floor Transparency

Form Based Code requires 75% of elevation area of ground floor retail suites to be 75% transparent.

Proposed transparency was identified in plan and not provided in elevation. Work continues to provide 75% elevation transparency

Solution: Design team will provide shopfront elevation view with calculation of transparency and requests variance to standard to allow the use of spandrel or fretted glazing within storefront system.

**Justification for variance:**

The programmatic requirements of the structure include a significant functional requirement for public parking with access to Pepper Place at the north (IDEA Museum) and to the Paseo to Main Street shops at the south. The articulation of vehicular access points to Pepper Place is like to that of a retail storefront on the remainder of the façade. The intent of transparency of façade is to provide visual interest and depth of activated functions along the pedestrian environment... we want to see into the building.

The use of fretted or spandrel glass set within the framework of a storefront system does not preclude the primary function of viewing into the ground floor suites and can add significant visual interest to the character of the façade. Design team requests that no more than 10% of the storefront system may be allocated to an accent glazing panel.

Like to a retail component, there is a significant need for vehicular entry portals to be highly visible and readily recognizable as access points. These areas contain no transparent glazing elements or storefront framing to calculate percentage opening. The design team asserts that the angled recess in façade, while not 100% open, provides for both driver maneuvering acuity and to pedestrian experience in meeting the intent of the 75% transparency rule.

Approval of this variance does not constitute a grant of special privilege to the development team because of the unique requirement to replace existing public parking in a way that provides ease of wayfinding, ease of access and is in keeping with historical use patterns of the existing non-conforming surface parking lot.

13) TRANSECT GUIDELINES: Building Form Standards (11-58-12 (e)4): lots with alleys shall be accessed only from alleys.

Form Based Code requires lots adjacent to alleys to be accessed only from alleys.

Proposed design maintains access points on both Pepper Place and the alley.

Solution: Design Team requests variance to alley only access to maintain 2 points of access on Pepper Place as has been supported during its historic use.

**Justification for variance:**

This project will develop parking for the use of residents onsite, and is required to replace existing parking capacity for the non-conforming surface parking lot serving neighboring businesses and museums. Given that the parking will serve both frequent and infrequent users who access businesses onsite and offsite, the ease of access to public sidewalks, and ease of vehicular access to and from the garage argues for direct connection to Pepper Place as has

historically been the case. This structure will sit atop an elongated by-passed parcel which, when accessed only from the alley may place an unnecessary traffic burden on neighboring businesses, and may be more difficult for infrequent visitors to neighboring museums to access.

Approval of this variance does not constitute a grant of special privilege to the development team because the reasoning for the continued parking access to Pepper Place is in support of public parking use which in turn supports neighboring businesses and museums. A similar project without the public parking component would not require multiple points of access and ease of wayfinding for infrequent visitors.