

What's your **NEXTMESA**?

nextmesa

A quarterly newsletter from City of Mesa Development Services Department



CORONAVIRUS AND CITY SERVICES

To best protect the safety and wellbeing of our customers and employees, Development Services is continuing to conduct business online and via the telephone. The offices at 55 N. Center remain closed.

Development Services, which includes planning, plan review, and building inspections, is continuing to provide online services at www.mesaaz.gov/dimes to submit applications and submittals.

For any questions about permits, including any planning issues, call **480-644-4273**. The call center is open Monday-Thursday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. We are also continuing to provide essential services via the call center on Fridays from 8 a.m. to noon. If you need to pay for a permit by check, please place the check and invoice in the payment utility box on the north side of 55 N Center.

We are continuing to conduct building inspections within one business day. You can request an inspection by calling the 24-hour line at **480-644-2428**.

All public meetings, including Planning and Zoning Board, Board of Adjustment and Design Review Board will continue to meet on a regular schedule. However, the City Council Chambers are closed to decrease COVID-19 exposure. Public participation is available electronically and telephonically and listening to the meetings will be available electronically. Planning and Zoning Board meetings are telecast via YouTube.

Visit www.mesaaz.gov/business/development-services and visit the individual board pages for detailed information on how to participate in those meetings.

Because of Mayor Giles' Emergency Proclamation in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, there is an interim process to inform residents of land use applications in place of traditional neighborhood meetings. For details, visit www.mesaaz.gov/home/showpublisheddocument?id=37468.

MESA OPEN AIR

It is a creative, healthy and safe way to enjoy our fabulous weather and give Mesa businesses a big boost! The City has started Mesa Open Air, allowing businesses to temporarily move their waiting areas outdoors to parking spots, sidewalks, green spaces and other places normally off limits.

The City of Mesa is trying to do everything it can during the COVID-19 pandemic to help businesses have a more robust schedule and operate as normally as possible. Mesa Open Air encourages businesses to take advantage of our sunny, comfortable winter and early spring temperatures and safely serve more customers. Mesa Open Air is modeled after the highly successful Mesa Al Fresco program, adopted in September, to help restaurants and bars expand their services outdoors.

While businesses will need to pay for equipment needed to expand outdoors, permit fees will be waived, and the goal is to approve applications within two to four business days. Business owners will need to obtain approval from landlords or property managers and the expansion plans must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), social distancing and other life/safety requirements to protect the public.

Heather Omta, Development Services Small Business Assistant, will be the central point of contact to receive, review and approve expansion requests. For more information, contact Heather at heather.omta@mesaaz.gov or **(480) 644-6451**.



Mesa Open Air

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES 2020 SUCCESS STORIES

Major Code and Process Changes

MESA 2020 GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENTS - City Council, at its Dec. 8 meeting, approved amendments to Chapter 7 (Community Character) and Chapter 16 (Plan Implementation and Amendment) of the City's General Plan. The amendments were needed due to ambiguous text. The purpose of the changes was to add specific guidance on the amount of primary vs. secondary zoning districts permitted in the character areas, identify primary and secondary land uses in the character areas, amend the qualification criteria for minor and major general plan amendments and establish approval criteria for minor and major General Plan amendments. City Council Presentation (<https://www.mesaaz.gov/home/showpublisheddocument?id=41644>)

SUBDIVISION REVIEW CHANGES - As part of our continuing efforts to streamline the land use and development review process, the City of Mesa recently modified its Subdivision review process to improve timeliness, predictability and efficiency. The improvements consolidate the Subdivision Technical Review process with the Preliminary and Final Plat procedures and have two processes instead of three, reducing redundancy and shortening the platting process. The updated Subdivision process guides and checklists are currently available online at: <https://www.mesaaz.gov/business/development-services/planning/special-projects>.

SITE PLAN REVIEW AMENDMENTS - City Council, at its Dec. 1 meeting, approved amendments to the Zoning Ordinance that streamlines the site plan review process. These amendments allow for some qualifying site plans to be reviewed and approved

administratively by staff. Amendment also included a notification process for administrative site plans to ensure high-quality development and mitigate adverse impacts on surrounding properties. Planning & Zoning Board Presentation (<https://www.mesaaz.gov/home/showpublisheddocument?id=41650>)

ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES AND NURSING AND CONVALESCENT HOME AMENDMENTS - City Council, at its Dec. 1 meeting, approved amendments to the Zoning Ordinance that changed the land use process required for assisted living facilities and nursing and convalescent homes and created specific development standards for those uses. These amendments addressed the safe, health and welfare of the residents of these communities by ensuring that facilities are located in contextually appropriate areas.

BOAT & RV STORAGE AMENDMENTS - At its Dec. 1 meeting, City Council approved amendments to the Zoning Ordinance adding a use category for boat and recreational vehicle (RV) storage. These uses will be allowed in General Commercial (GC), Light Industrial (LI), General Industrial (GI) and Heavy Industrial (HI) zoning districts with the approval of a Council Use Permit.

RESIDENTIAL USES IN COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICTS AMENDMENTS - At its Dec. 1 meeting, City Council approved modifications to the allowance for residential uses in commercial districts. These amendments clarified existing provisions and modified the minimum requirements for commercial uses within mixed use development.

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Despite the serious economic challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been numerous accomplishments in the City of Mesa in 2020 when it comes to development projects and process improvements to transform our community. Among them:

ASU @ MESA CITY CENTER - Construction began in January for this state-of-the-art, three-story, 118-thousand square foot building. It will house programs offered by the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts related to digital and sensory technology, experiential design, gaming, media arts, film production and entrepreneurial development and support. The new building is expected to open to approximately 800 students and faculty in time for the Spring 2022 semester.

STUDIOS @ MESA CITY CENTER - City Council recently awarded the contract for the second phase of an adaptive reuse of Mesa's first library at the southwest corner of First Street and Centennial Way into The Studios @ Mesa City Center. The Studios will allow the collision of ideas between industry leaders, entrepreneurs, students and the public and provide community event space. Exterior renovations will include a new entry experience and improved daylighting while respecting the local Historical Landmark Designation



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PLAZA @ MESA CITY CENTER - Construction is scheduled to begin in February for this project, which will create a significant public civic space to enjoy. The plaza, scheduled for completion in November 2021, includes an interactive water feature, a large shade canopy over an area for the Merry Main Street ice rink and other events and a large lawn space to view movies and videos on an exterior high-resolution screen on the adjacent ASU building.



THE GRID - The GRID, 225 E. Main St., creates a new neighborhood that brings together lifestyle amenities, three luxury housing options, a healthy, full-service restaurant and creative Class A office space. The project makes use of the underutilized Pomeroy parking garage, reimagining it as an inclusive urban mixed-use community. The GRID is designed to become the social “living room” of Downtown Mesa.



MESA AL FRESCO

As part of the Mesa CARES Small Business Technical Assistance Program, Development Services recently worked with 27 dining and beverage establishments in the City to temporarily expand their patios and other outdoor areas. The funding for Mesa Al Fresco allowed restaurants and bars to expand service areas outdoor to serve more customers and provide more dining options to help offset the economic challenges brought on by the pandemic.

Staff from Development Services and other City departments created a very streamlined process to approve expansion of premises requests. The permit fees were funded with Mesa CARES dollars with a goal to approve those applications within two to four business days. Heather Omta, Development Services Small Business Assistant, was the central point of contact to receive, review and approve expansion requests.

Mesa City Council took action to create Mesa Al Fresco as part of the Mesa CARES Initiative to support individuals, families and businesses impacted by COVID-19. Funding, which expired Dec. 30, was from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act approved by Congress last March.

Development Services has received positive feedback from several of the businesses assisted by Mesa Al Fresco:

“Hello, yes the patio expansion has definitely helped by allowing us to stand out and look more appealing to passersby. We seem to be getting busier.” Jarrod – Jarrod’s Coffee Tea & Gallery

“The approval of the temporary patio helped us increase sales during our busier times. We have a lot of customers not comfortable sitting inside, so the expansion has given us the opportunity to offer more seating for guests.” Carol – Rochester Family Dining & Sports Bar

“We had a very positive experience being part of the Al Fresco Patio program and are so thankful that the City provided us this much needed support! ... the grant given to us has allowed us to stay relevant and create a space for our customers in this new era of dining out.” Brendan and Lisa – Intentional Foods

“Our experience with Mesa CARES and specifically this program and Ms. Omta was nothing short of spectacular. I have never witnessed an application for anything that has concerned my business move as fast as this one did.” – Justin Heinz-The Draft Sports Grill

“Mesa Cares! This has been a productive venture with the city as we have all tried to navigate the ever-changing days of COVID-19...this process has proven that the City of Mesa government cares for its small businesses and is truly there to help.” – Craig Arstingstall-What’s Crackin Cafe

Development Services continues to approve requests for the temporary patio expansions and the department is assisting Mesa bars and restaurants to qualify for the State of Arizona Safest Outdoor Restaurant Assistance Program.



CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY

There were 172 permits issued for construction of single family homes in Mesa in December. This was a large increase from the 120 permits issued in November and the highest monthly number since August. It was also a significant increase compared to December 2019 when 130 permits were issued.

There were 1,937 such permits issued in 2020 in Mesa compared to 2,243 in 2019, a 14 percent decrease.



EMPLOYEE NEWS

JENNIFER CASTANEDA, ALEXYS ALVARADO, AND AMBER GIBSON are new Permits Technicians II

LARRY HILL is a new Building Plan Reviewer

DENNIS SCHNICK is a new Building Inspector I

CHLOE DURFEE-SHERMAN is a new Planner I

DIANA WALRAVEN promoted to a Development Information Specialist

CHARLOTTE BRIDGES promoted to a Planner II

ROBERT APODACA, Senior Civil Engineer, is on special assignment as the acting Deputy Director – Civil Plan Review

GORDON HAWS has retired as Deputy Director – Civil Plan Review after 22 years as a City of Mesa employee.

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS/EVENTS

WED., FEB. 10. PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD. 4pm

MON., FEB. 22. CITY COUNCIL. 5:45pm

WED., FEB. 24. PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD. 4pm

MON., MARCH 1. CITY COUNCIL. 5:45pm

TUES., MARCH 2. HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD. 6pm

WED., MARCH 3. DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY FORUM. 7:30am

WED., MARCH 3. BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT. 5:30pm

TUES., MARCH 9. DESIGN REVIEW BOARD. 4:30pm

WED., MARCH 10. PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD. 4pm

MON., MARCH 15. CITY COUNCIL. 5:45pm

WED., MARCH 24. PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD. 4pm