

# planning division

## DIP Project Guidelines

Mesa Zoning Ordinance, Section 11-13-2(R), Development Incentive Permits



### Introduction

The Mesa City Council recently adopted a new mechanism for reviewing projects on so-called “by-passed” properties, known as a Development Incentive Permit (DIP). The Council adopted this new process in response to concerns that the recently adopted revisions to the Design Guidelines and Site Development Standards (Chapters 14 and 15 of the Zoning Ordinance) would make smaller properties economically non-viable. Many of the boundaries of these smaller properties were created at a time when smaller dimensional requirements were in place. Creating this new process allowed by-passed parcels affected by the revised standards to be individually assessed as to how the standards affect the property.

### Qualifying the Site

Under Sections 11-1-3 and 11-13-2 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance, sites that meet the definition of “infill” may be reviewed for a Development Incentive Permit, or DIP. To qualify for DIP consideration, the site must have all three of the following conditions:

- 1) Does not exceed two and one half (2.5) net acres, and has been in it's current configuration for more than ten (10) years; OR does not exceed five (5) net acres and was created by the assembly of individual, contiguous parcels, each not more than two and one half (2.5) acres in area; and
- 2) Is served by, or has direct access to, existing utility distribution facilities; and
- 3) Is surrounded by properties within a twelve hundred foot (1,200') radius in which:
  - A) The total developable land area is not more than twenty-five percent (25%) vacant; and
  - B) Greater than fifty percent (50%) of the total number of lots or parcels have been developed fifteen (15) or more years ago.

### Fees

DIP application fees are less when compared to typical variance fees. If the project requires examination by the Design Review Board, no additional fee for the DRB application is required.

### Public Hearing Requirement

The Zoning Administrator and/or Board of Adjustment review and decide the DIP application at a public hearing (decisions of the Zoning Administrator may also be appealed to the Board of Adjustment). Planning Division staff will analyze the request and develop a recommended action before the meeting, which may include conditions that would modify the final design if the case is recommended to be approved.

### Limitations

Modifications to development requirements authorized by a DIP are limited to building setbacks, landscaping design, on-site parking, building height, right-of-way dedication, and other site development provisions contained in Chapter 15 of the Zoning Ordinance. A DIP application CANNOT modify items related to Engineering standards, Uniform Fire Code requirements, or requirements of the Uniform Building Code.

### Review Criteria

Once qualified, the criteria for a DIP require applicants to show the end condition of the new project will result in an overall development that meets all four of the following criteria:

- 1) The proposed development is consistent with the General Plan, specific area plans, and the permitted uses as specified in the Mesa Zoning Ordinance; and
- 2) The incentives provide only for development that is commensurate with existing development within the definitional boundary of the infill property; and
- 3) The incentives are necessary to accommodate the proposed development; and
- 4) The architectural elements, construction and landscape materials, and other site improvements of the proposed development meet the intent of the provisions of the Design Guidelines chapter of this Ordinance.

# DIP – Design Guidelines

## **How These Guidelines Will Be Used**

Planning Division staff will use these guidelines to review and develop their recommendations for DIP applications. These recommendations are then forwarded to the Zoning Administrator or Board of Adjustment at the public hearing phase of the DIP process. Copies of any written recommendations will be made available to the applicant and general public prior to the public hearing.

The proposed project should comply where possible with the intent of the revised Design Guidelines and Site Development Standards (Chapters 14 and 15 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance). Existing conditions of surrounding properties will be taken into account to provide a context setting for the project, but may not necessarily set a precedent for setback requirements.

**The Planning Division staff recommendation will be based on how well the project works within the following parameters (in no particular order): 1) fitting within the context of surrounding development; 2) maintenance or development of new buffering mechanisms between dissimilar uses; and 3) how well the project works to achieve the intent of the revised standards. Creative solutions that achieve these goals are strongly encouraged.** Designs that include combined requirements may be considered if the resulting design meets the intent of both standards (example: side yard landscaping requirements and parking lot landscape islands). Each case will differ because of the existing site improvements and the nature of the land use and new construction being requested. For this reason, each project will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

The following guidelines are based on the requirement that follows the bold type.

- ◆ **Foundation Base** - Sec.11-15-3(C)  
New construction should show compliance with intent to separate the building and outdoor seating areas from parking spaces and circulation drives, as well as provide a pleasant pedestrian entry to the building.
- ◆ **Pedestrian Connections** - Sec. 11-15-5(A)  
Provide pedestrian walkways between the street and the building entry, and to adjacent buildings. If applicable, connect walkways from building entries to bus stops.
- ◆ **Retention Basin Design** – Sec 11-15-3(D)  
Landscaping within and around the retention basin should comply with ordinance standards.

- ◆ **Building/Parking/Drive Aisle Setbacks** – Sec. 11-15-2(A)  
Maintain building setbacks as specified. Driveways and parking spaces may encroach into setback, depending upon the scale of the project. Smaller projects (One acre or less) may encroach more than larger projects.
- ◆ **Parking Lot Landscape Islands** - Sec.11-15-3(B)  
Install parking islands in new parking fields at the specified ratio. Smaller projects with small parking fields (less than 20 spaces) may delete landscape islands if parking rows do not exceed 12 spaces and have islands at both ends of the row.
- ◆ **Perimeter Landscaping when Adjacent to Residence District(s)** - Sec. 11-15-3(A)  
The project should be designed so as to provide sufficient landscape and screening wall buffering mechanism between residential and non-residential uses. Parking may encroach somewhat into a side or rear yard landscape areas if the parking island ratio is increased to coincide with the perimeter tree spacing requirement and sufficient distance is provided for shrubs to be planted between the parking space and the property line, and remain separate from vehicular overhangs. Covered parking shade structures require a minimum setback of 10' from the property line
- ◆ **Perimeter Screening Standards** - Sec. 11-15-4  
(This includes parking lots and outdoor display areas) Provide screening where required at the specified heights.
- ◆ **Building Separations** – Sec. 11-15-2(C)  
New construction should comply with present requirements. Adjacent buildings with elevations that are not parallel by more than 5 degrees may use the average distance between the building faces to achieve the requirement.
- ◆ **Open Space Requirements** – Secs. 11-5-6(A) & 11-15-3(E)      Open space for new development should be scaled appropriately to meet requirements. Small multiple residence projects (less than three units) may place private open space areas into required landscape areas provided that a minimum of one third of the number of trees required for perimeter landscaping are provided within the private open space area (all fractions are rounded up). Multiple residence projects with more than three units should provide both private open space for individual units and for usable common areas.
- ◆ **Perimeter Landscaping (All Sides)** - Section 11-15-3(A)  
New projects should meet all of the required setbacks, except in circumstances where existing circulation lanes have been established and modification of the route would unnecessarily tighten turns, or create unaligned lanes that cross a primary entrance aisle. Small encroachments of parking spaces may be allowed in exchange for increasing the frequency of parking landscape islands. Additional small encroachments into street-side landscape areas MAY be considered for projects that do not over-build a site. Comparisons will be based on building floor areas that are consistent with similar developments on similar sized parcels, and on the development context of the site.