

What's your **NEXTMESA?**

# nextmesa

A quarterly newsletter from City of Mesa Development Services Department

## NANA APPIAH IS NEW DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTOR

Nana Appiah was appointed in December as the new Development Services Director. Dr. Appiah, who has been Planning Director at Mesa since 2018, oversees planning, construction permitting, building inspections and historic preservation. In this role, he works with private sector developers and City departments to promote quality and intentional growth and historic preservation, as well as ensuring efficient and customer-friendly permitting and reviews for proposed development and businesses in Mesa.



Dr. Appiah has a Doctorate from the University of Texas at Dallas and a broad depth of professional experience leading regional and community planning efforts of county and city agencies across the country. Since joining Mesa, he has been responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of effective land-use strategies for healthy economic growth. Dr. Appiah has also led significant land-use policy and administrative changes that have resulted in effective and timely review of development projects and improved performance of the Planning Division.

A native of Ghana and a U.S. citizen, Dr. Appiah has served as Planning and Development Services Manager for Adams County, Colorado and Planning Supervisor and Senior Planner in Denton, Texas. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners and has completed Public Leadership training at Harvard University's prestigious Kennedy School of Government. Dr. Appiah replaces Christine Zielonka, who retired after serving Mesa for 27 years in various departments, including the City Attorney's Office and Environmental Management and Solid Waste.

## BUILDING CODE UPDATE

Mesa City Council has approved updates to the Mesa Building Code. The amendments will bring Mesa's building codes into closer alignment with regional cities, offer additional construction design options, clarify certain sections of the code and increase the level of safety for first responders.

The primary changes involve permits for large solar panel installations and additional options for pool barriers. The remaining changes correct clerical errors and align language among the multiple building codes.

The code amendment involving solar panels is for installations greater than 10,000 square feet and for systems not installed by a licensed contractor.

The update does not change the fees.

**UPDATED**

## GENERAL PLAN

The City is beginning the process to update the General Plan, which provides a vision concerning desirable future physical development and a strategy for achieving it. The City is expected to hire a consultant by fall to help with the process of collecting data and analyzing it. Extensive public engagement will take place in 2023. City Council must adopt the updated General Plan by July 2024 and place the issue on the ballot for voters to ratify in November 2024.

State statutes require cities to create general plans and specify topics that must be addressed in the plans. These plans must be updated every 10 years and approved by voters.

## MESA RECEIVES GRANT FOR TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The Federal Transit Administration recently awarded Mesa a \$920,000 grant to conduct comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) planning along a proposed 5-mile streetcar route in west Mesa. The Mesa streetcar route would connect four major economic activity centers within the City - Riverview Marketplace, Asian District, Fiesta District and downtown Mesa.

The City will use the grant funding to conduct comprehensive planning efforts, define design guidelines and develop economic strategies. Mesa was awarded the second-largest TOD grant in the country, after MARTA in Atlanta.



## DEVELOPMENT PROJECT UPDATES

**ASU AT MESA CITY CENTER** - The state-of-the-art, three-story, 118-thousand square foot building is scheduled to open to students in the fall. When completed, 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 for approximately 1,300 students and faculty.



**THE STUDIOS AT MESA CITY CENTER** - Construction is nearly completed on the adaptive reuse of Mesa's first library at the southwest corner of First Street and Centennial Way. The Studios @ Mesa City Center 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.



**PLAZA AT MESA CITY CENTER** - Construction for this project, which will create a major public civic space to enjoy, is scheduled for completion in May. The plaza includes an interactive water feature, an iconic 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.



**DOBSON RANCH LIBRARY** - Major renovation work began in February at Dobson Ranch Library. The construction project expands the library's footprint by 1600 square feet and adds a THINKspot makerspace for community innovation and networking. The library's façade will be updated, adding greater visibility to the building and more convenience for library users. This is the most significant renovation at Dobson Ranch Library since it opened in 1987.



**BELL BANK PARK** – The new \$280 million multi-purpose sports and entertainment complex officially opened Feb. 4 in southeast Mesa. The 320-acre one-of-a-kind complex includes a 5,000 seat outdoor stadium, 2,800 seat indoor arena, 35 soccer/lacrosse/football fields, 57 indoor volleyball courts, two ziplines, a wellness and fitness center, a sports bar and restaurant and a 2.7 acre outdoor area for concerts and events.



**GULFSTREAM** - Construction began in November for Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation's new 225,000 square foot maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facility at Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. Gulfstream's \$70 million investment will offer a broad range of services and add additional capacity for customers in the western U.S.



**MESA ARTS DISTRICT LOFTS** - Construction began in December for the Mesa Arts District Lofts on the old Brown and Brown Chevrolet site. The 335-unit multifamily development will have five buildings. It will also include nearly 13,000 square feet of retail space. The design also allows for two future mid-rise residential buildings. The Mesa Arts District Lofts will begin welcoming residents in May 2023, and will be fully completed by March 2024.



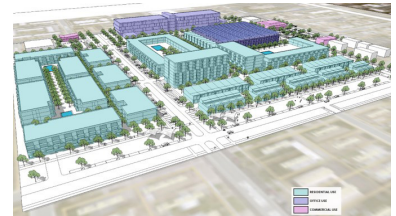
**ECO MESA** - A groundbreaking ceremony was held in November for ECO Mesa, with 102 apartment units and 4,000 sq ft of retail on Pepper Place in downtown Mesa. The project also includes conversion of 78 public surface parking spaces to a public parking structure. Eco Mesa will include several sustainable elements including rooftop solar, carshare and bikeshare and public and private electric charging stations. It is scheduled to open by summer 2023.



**THE POST** - The former post office, 26 N. Macdonald, is being transformed into a multipurpose space for community events, private rentals and receptions. It will also house offices for the City and Downtown Mesa Association. There will also be room for an outdoor gathering space. Renovation work is scheduled for completion in spring 2023.



**TRANSFORM 17** - Plans have been submitted and the public engagement process is underway for Transform 17, a new mixed-use neighborhood of residential, office and community retail at the southwest corner of Mesa Drive and University Drive. The first neighborhood meeting is Monday, April 4. It will be a virtual meeting from 5:30 pm to 7pm at [www.gblaw.com/nexusmesa](http://www.gblaw.com/nexusmesa). The second meeting is Thursday, April 7 from 5:30 pm to 7pm at the Charles K. Luster Building Community Room, 640 N. Mesa Drive. City Council is expected to consider zoning, a purchase agreement and development agreement in late August.



**THE COMMONS OF MESA** - Work is underway on The Commons of Mesa which will have 12 three-story buildings on 2nd Avenue between Robson and Macdonald. The development will contain 48 one-bedroom and 92-two-bedroom apartment units. Construction is scheduled for completion by the summer of 2023.



## CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY

Construction of single family homes has greatly increased recently in Mesa. There have been 456 permits issued through February 2022, a 73 percent increase over the same time period last year.

There were 2,063 such permits issued in 2021 in Mesa compared to 1,937 in 2020, a seven percent increase.





## NEW/PROMOTED EMPLOYEES

### NEW EMPLOYEES

**KENDRA SHUMWAY** – Building Inspector II

**ELI SHAW** – Building Inspector II

**GRACE WHITAKER** – Permit Technician II

**AARON AMENT** – Senior Civil Engineer

**KWASI ABEBRESE** – Planner I

### PROMOTIONS

**NANA APPIAH** – Development Services Director

**RACHEL PRELOG** – Assistant Planning Director

**CASSIDY WELCH** – Senior Planner

**KELLIE ROSEX** – Senior Planner

**JENNIFER MERRILL** – Planner II

**PAMELA WILLIAMS** – Planning Assistant

**PABLO HERNANDEZ** – Senior City Plans Examiner

## CALENDAR OF MEETINGS/EVENTS

**MON., APRIL 4. CITY COUNCIL.** 5:45pm.  
Upper Level Council Chambers, 57 E. 1st St.

**MON., APRIL 4. TRANSFORM 17  
VIRTUAL NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING.** 5:30pm-  
7pm. [www.gblaw.com/nexusmesa](http://www.gblaw.com/nexusmesa)

**TUES., APRIL 5. DEVELOPMENT  
ADVISORY FORUM.** 7:30am-9am. Zoom.

**TUES., APRIL 5. HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION BOARD.** 6pm. Lower Level  
Council Chambers, 57 E. 1st St.

**WED., APRIL 6. BOARD OF  
ADJUSTMENT.** 5:30pm. Lower Level Council  
Chambers, 57 E. 1st St.

**THUR., APRIL 7. TRANSFORM 17  
NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING** 5:30pm-7pm.  
Charles K. Luster Building Community Room,  
640 N. Mesa Drive

**SAT., APRIL 9. CELEBRATE MESA.** 10am-  
2pm. Pioneer Park, 526 E. Main St.

**TUES., APRIL 12. DESIGN REVIEW  
BOARD.** 4:30pm. Lower Level Council  
Chambers, 57 E. 1st St.

**WED., APRIL 13. PLANNING AND  
ZONING BOARD.** 4pm. Upper Level Council  
Chambers, 57 E. 1st St.

**MON., APRIL 18. CITY COUNCIL.**  
5:45pm. Upper Level Council Chambers, 57 E.  
1st St.

**WED., APRIL 27. PLANNING AND  
ZONING BOARD.** 4pm. Upper Level Council  
Chambers, 57 E. 1st St.

**MON., MAY 2. CITY COUNCIL.** 5:45pm.  
Upper Level Council Chambers, 57 E. 1st St.

**TUES., MAY 3. HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION BOARD.** 6pm. Lower Level  
Council Chambers, 57 E. 1st St.

**WED., MAY 4. BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT.**  
5:30pm. Lower Level Council Chambers, 57 E.  
1st St.

**TUES., MAY 10. DESIGN REVIEW  
BOARD.** 4:30pm. Lower Level Council  
Chambers, 57 E. 1st St.

**WED., MAY 11. PLANNING AND ZONING  
BOARD.** 4pm. Upper Level Council Chambers,  
57 E. 1st St.

**MON., MAY 16. CITY COUNCIL.** 5:45pm.  
Upper Level Council Chambers, 57 E. 1st St.

**WED., MAY 25. PLANNING AND ZONING  
BOARD.** 4pm. Upper Level Council Chambers,  
57 E. 1st St.

**WED., JUNE 1. BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT.**  
5:30pm. Lower Level Council Chambers, 57 E.  
1st St.

**MON., JUNE 6. CITY COUNCIL.** 5:45pm.  
Upper Level Council Chambers, 57 E. 1st St.

**TUES., JUNE 7. HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION BOARD.** 6pm. Lower Level  
Council Chambers, 57 E. 1st St.

**WED., JUNE 8. PLANNING AND ZONING  
BOARD.** 4pm. Upper Level Council Chambers,  
57 E. 1st St.

**TUES., JUNE 14. DESIGN REVIEW  
BOARD.** 4:30pm. Lower Level Council  
Chambers, 57 E. 1st St.

**MON., JUNE 20. CITY COUNCIL.** 5:45pm.  
Upper Level Council Chambers, 57 E. 1st St.

**WED., JUNE 22. PLANNING AND  
ZONING BOARD.** 4pm. Upper Level Council  
Chambers, 57 E. 1st St.