Zone Change Request: 478 Mill Creek Drive

1. Justification for the Zone Change
The Western Spirit Cycling building at 478 Mill Creek Drive is in need of a full replacement. The current zone is R-1, (single household residential). The current and historic use of the property is mixed use: office and residential, and for this reason we are requesting a zone change to C-5 to match the nearby zone on the other side of Oliver Street.

In considering options, we explored the idea of developing the property as a residence to fit the R-1 zoning requirements and moving our business into Spanish Valley or some other out of town location. However, the Mill Creek corridor has become so busy over the years that the property does not really seem attractive or appropriate for a home. And with the development of Lions Back and the possibility of designated OHV routes in town, the corridor from 400 East to the Sandflats Road is destined to become even busier, and louder.

As we thought more about the existing mixed use, we realized that a new building with proper landscaping designed for the mixed use of office and residential, could provide a buffer for the nearby homes from the noise of Mill Creek Drive.

Our proposal is for a building with office space, storage, and employee housing which includes a staging courtyard and outdoor space. This more casual office setting with easy access to the outdoors, will provide affordable employee housing and meet the needs of our growing year-round staff.

2. Impacts and Required Mitigation
The use of the property will be the same as the current use, creating no new impacts or the need for mitigation. The new building will meet all current codes and requirements.

3. Conformance with Surrounding Uses and Compliance with the Land Use Code and General Plan

A. Vision for Moab
Some of the key points in the Vision for Moab language included the general plan that apply to this project include:

- Maintain and enhance Moab’s small-town character, including safe and quiet neighborhoods, with commercial hubs offering a range of products and services. The neighborhood around the Western Spirit property could be considered a small commercial hub, with the nearby offices on 400 East, Dave’s Corner Market, Milt’s and another possible neighborhood restaurant. If the Western Spirit property was rezoned as C-5, the new and greatly improved building, would better contribute to this small commercial hub.
• Encourage community-wide multi-modal (walking/biking/pathway) connectivity, between schools, neighborhoods, workplaces, downtown, and popular amenities. Offices in this region of town are convenient to many homes and allow for easy multi-modal transportation, without the need to travel across town.

• Encourage a resilient economy, with a mix of year-round jobs offering competitive salaries, a skilled and educated workforce, and an entrepreneurial culture. The Western Spirit team includes 35% year-round professionals. Western Spirit guides, the remainder of the work force, have gone on to become health care professionals and entrepreneurs in Moab after they retire from guiding. The building and courtyard we hope to construct will be a recruiting tool for our company and any future occupant, to attract and retain the skilled workforce needed to improve the resiliency of Moab’s economy.

• Recognize the value of Moab’s surrounding landscape, including dark skies, solar access, and other natural resources to enhance the quality of life for community residents and to ensure the longevity of Moab’s tourism industry. Western Spirit’s entire business model depends upon maintaining the beauty of the Moab landscape. Our purpose is to share our beautiful backcountry and National Parks while employing leave no trace principles and inspiring our guests to support our public lands.

In addition, in the Future Land Use chapter of the Moab General Plan, the need for infill to prevent increased sprawl is mentioned. Current economic trends include the increased desirability of small town living and the growing number of ‘foot loose’ businesses and professionals of all types, who can live wherever they choose. A less formal office building at the western end of Mill Creek Drive will be attractive in the long run and will avoid the need for our business, or a future business like ours, to move to San Juan County and ultimately increase sprawl.

B. Moab City General Plan 9 Elements
Changing the zoning of the Western Spirit property relates to the following elements of the Moab General plan:

Element 1: Economic Development
GOAL 1: GENERAL
Policy 3: Encourage local businesses and industries to grow and thrive. While Western Spirit is a seasonal business, that season now stretches from February to November and includes a growing number of well-paid year-round jobs. In addition, Western Spirit is a founding member of Public Land Solutions a non-profit also hiring year-round staff, which will be housed in the new building. Both organizations will be much improved by a new facility.
Policy 4: Facilitate the growth of local businesses and industries in a context appropriate to Moab. (size, scale, etc.) While Western Spirit is growing, our operations extend to over 17 states at this time, so our management staff will grow in Moab, but the size and scope will remain appropriate for the property.
Policy 7: Support well-planned festivals and events that appeal to a wide array of residents and visitors and provide a net benefit to the community, without undue impact on residential neighborhoods. Western Spirit is the promoter of Outerbike, a consumer bike demo event that is important to both the state of Utah and Moab’s reputation as a must-experience mountain bike destination. Outerbike is held at the BAR M Trailhead and has no effect on residential neighborhoods.

**Element 2: Environmental Sustainability**

**GOAL 1: GENERAL**

Policy 1: Collaborate with local businesses and residents to expand opportunities for environmental sustainability. Our non-profit, Public Land Solutions does just this—we work with local businesses to support environmentally sustainable economic development.

**GOAL 3: AIR QUALITY**

Policy 2: Promote the use of alternative transportation that is non-polluting or reduces fossil fuel consumption. By adding neighborhood office space like this proposal, walking and biking to work is greatly facilitated.

Policy 3: Encourage and promote energy conservation and the use of clean alternative energy sources such as solar, wind, etc. The new building will include solar panels.

**Element 3: Land Use and Growth**

**GOAL 1: GENERAL**

Encourage a diverse, compact, and efficient land use pattern that promotes resident quality of life and is aligned with the city’s character, economy, and vision. Policy 1: Encourage development to consider the appearance, design, financial impact, and amenities of the community. Instead of a larger compound outside of town, we are choosing to work in a more compact efficient space that can be accessed easily by residential areas by bike or walking.

**GOAL 5: STREET TREES AND LANDSCAPING**

Improve the overall visual, recreational and environmental quality of the community through the use of trees and vegetation.

Policy 1: Utilize climate-appropriate vegetation to beautify and provide shade in and around paved areas. Action Steps: We are very excited to landscape this property to meet these goals with shade and natural vegetation.

**GOAL 7: COMMERCIAL**

Promote appropriate commercial development while maintaining quality of life for residents.

Policy 1: Consider zone changes and adjustments that balance property rights and community benefits.

Policy 2: Work with property owners and businesses to create more appealing commercial areas for residents.

These policies define exactly what we hope to do—provide the community with an office area that is appealing for current uses and future residents.
GOAL 8: RESIDENTIAL
Promote a variety of housing types and neighborhoods for primary residences. Policy 1: Work with developers and neighborhoods to promote different, densities and forms. The design we hope to build will provide a unique housing opportunity for a key component of the Moab population. Western Spirit guides are our companies most important resources we work to help them ‘graduate from the Western Spirit program’ with a down payment saved and the skill set to move forward in their careers. Providing housing to them while they are guiding allows them to do just that.

Element 4: Housing
GOAL 1: GENERAL
Implement a housing strategy that meets the needs of current residents, anticipates growth in housing demand, promotes a cohesive small-town environment and supports a high quality of life.
Policy 1: Encourage housing opportunities for a variety of needs and income levels. Our guides are generally at the beginning of their careers and meeting their housing needs efficiently allows them to save for their futures and our facilities really do meet their needs.

Community Nodes Master Plan – Draft Oct 1, 2019
From this planning document the area along 400 East and around the corner on the Mill Creek is described as mixed use:

Node 4: 400 East
From Center Street to 400 South, 400 East is transformed into a unified mixed-use walking and biking district. The concept maintains the low-density, single-family character while targeting specific sites with supportive mixed-use development. The result is a unified street lined with a wide range of low-intensity and eclectic uses that can be explored on foot or bike. The character changes from distinctly residential in the north to a more commercial feel to the south, which is aligned with the general structure of the area at present.

The mixed-use building with housing and office space seems to fit well into this vision of the area.

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Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. We appreciate all the time and work of the staff and the planning commission.

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