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## OFFICIAL NOTICE OF DECISION

September 19, 2024

Rio Grande Food Project  
P.O. Box 7174  
Albuquerque, NM 87194

**Project # PR-2024-010457**  
RZ-2024-00042 – Zoning Map Amendment

### **LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**

Consensus Planning Inc, agent for Rio Grande Food Project, requests a Zoning Map Amendment, from R-1B to MX-L, for all of or a portion of Lot C, Block J, located at 600 Coors Blvd. NW, between Fortuna Rd. NW and Daytona Rd. NW, approximately 2.2 acres.  
(J-11)

Staff Planner: Jude Miller

On September 19, 2024, the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) voted to APPROVE PR-2024-010457/RZ-2024-00042 – Zoning Map Amendment, based on the following findings:

### FINDINGS – RZ-2024-00042 – Zoning Map Amendment

1. The request is for a Zoning Map Amendment (i.e. zone change) for an approximately 1.3-acre property at 600 Coors Blvd. NW, legally described as Lot C-2, Block J, Northern Heights (“subject site”). The applicant is requesting a zoning map amendment from R-1B to MX-L.
2. The R-1B zoning for the subject site was established at the effective date (May 17, 2018) of the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) based upon prior zoning and land use designations (R-1 – Residential). On April 28, 1965 the original lot was created through a re-plat after a vacation of 60th and 61st Streets as part of project number V-508. The replat was approved on July 7, 1965 under project number S-1401. On January 12, 1970, the alley that once abutted the eastern border of the subject site was vacated as part of project number V-69-32.
3. Case history for the area includes case numbers 1002259 and 1008668. Case #1002259 (02-DRB-01515) was for a minor subdivision action filed by Rio Grande Presbyterian Church on October 9, 2002. The minor subdivision was to divide the R-1 land into two lots in order to sell them. They proposed to divide the land with equal frontage on Estancia Drive NW. The request was filed on October 9, 2002.

4. Project #1008668 was filed by the Rio Grande Presbyterian Church on February 2, 2011. The request was for the addition of a 600 square foot, on-site storage area for the Rio Grande Food Project that was housed in the church and had exceeded capacity.
5. The subject site was recently subdivided from the property containing the church directly to the west (Project #PR-2024-010457, SD-2024-00103). The Rio Grande Food Bank is in the process of purchasing the newly platted lot C-2, the subject site, with the intention of building a new facility for their organization.
6. There is no indication that a site plan exists for the subject site, so future development will need a Site Plan – Administrative that meets all applicable standards in the IDO pursuant to the MX-L zone district. If developed as a food pantry as noted by the applicant, the grocery store use is the closest matching land use in Table 4-2-1 pursuant to §14-16-4-1(B), which is permissive in MX-L but subject to a size limit of 30,000 square feet [§14-16-4-3(D)(38)].
7. The EPC is hearing this case because the subject site is less than 10 acres in an Area of Consistency as designated by the Comprehensive Plan (IDO §14-16-6-7(G)).
8. The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan and the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) are incorporated herein by reference and made part of the record for all purposes.
9. The request furthers the following applicable Policies from the Comprehensive Plan Chapter 4 – Community Identity

A. GOAL 4.1 CHARACTER: Enhance, protect, and preserve distinct communities.

The request would contribute to enhancing, protecting, and preserving the community by allowing for the development of a vacant lot near residential neighborhoods. The request would also expand the area's mix of uses to neighborhoods that are mostly zoned R-1B. MX-L zoning is found north of the subject site at Le Petite Academy (Daycare) and Volcano Plaza (Shopping Center). A future site plan for development of the property would be subject to IDO requirements. Neighborhood edges (§14-16-5-9), landscape buffering and screening (§14-16-5-6), and mixed-use low intensity dimensional standards (§14-16-5-1) would have to be followed in order to protect and preserve the distinct community of the Southwest Mesa CPA.

B. POLICY 4.1.2 DISTINCT COMMUNITIES: Protect the identity and cohesiveness of the neighborhoods by ensuring the appropriate scale and location of development, mix of uses, and character of building design.

The request would help activate a site that has remained vacant due to its existing zoning of R-1B and will serve the surrounding area, which is largely single-family residential. The request will not greatly impact the area but will facilitate a transition to permissive uses for retail and commercial development that are intended to be neighborhood-scale. The purpose of MX-L zoning is to provide for neighborhood-scale convenience shopping needs, primarily at the corners of collector intersections. The zone change aligns with an existing zone district north of the subject site. If the applicant decides not to construct a new facility for the Rio Grande Food Project, future development under MX-L would be subject to applicable IDO standards that generally serve to protect and preserve the identity and design of the neighborhood.

- C. **POLICY 4.1.4 NEIGHBORHOODS:** Enhance, protect, and preserve neighborhoods and traditional communities as key to our long-term health and vitality.

The request would allow the Rio Grande Food Project, which is already operating out of the church on the lot directly to the west, to construct a new facility on the subject site with the intent of better serving its clientele and the surrounding community. In the event that the applicant does not construct a new facility, the zone change from R-1B to MX-L would facilitate the development of a use more appropriate for the site that could serve the surrounding neighborhood. Daytona Rd. currently serves as a separation between the commercial uses that dominate the block where the subject site is located and the residential neighborhood to the south.

10. The request furthers the following applicable Policies from the Comprehensive Plan Chapter 5 – Land Use

- A. **GOAL 5.1 Centers and Corridors:** Grow as a community of strong Centers connected by a multi-modal network of Corridors.

The zone change to MX-L could facilitate the development of an undeveloped vacant lot and allow for a greater variety and intensity of uses along Coors Boulevard, a major transit corridor, helping to fulfill the goals of regional growth, employment density, and infill development.

- B. **POLICY 5.1.10 MAJOR TRANSIT CORRIDORS:** Foster corridors that prioritize high-frequency transit services with pedestrian-oriented development.

The request would encourage development at the subject site, which is located along a major transit corridor. The applicant intends to use the rezoned lot to construct a new facility for the Rio Grande Food Project, a land use similar to a grocery store for the people it serves, which would benefit from being adjacent to the transit corridor. The request furthers Policy 5.1.10 – Major Transit Corridors.

- C. **GOAL 5.2: COMPLETE COMMUNITIES:** Foster communities where residents can live, work, learn, shop, and play together.

The request would facilitate the development of the subject site, providing additional opportunities for residents to work and shop in the area. The request would foster complete communities where residents can live and work together, as the proposed food pantry would be within walking distance of residential neighborhoods and a quarter of a mile from transit stops on Coors Blvd. for ABQ Ride Route #155.

- D. **GOAL 5.3 EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS:** Promote development patterns that maximize the utility of existing infrastructure and public facilities and the efficient use of land to support the public good.

The request would help facilitate the development of a lot that has historically remained vacant by allowing development that aligns with the properties abutting it to the north and east.

- E. **POLICY 5.3.1 INFILL DEVELOPMENT:** Support additional growth in areas with existing infrastructure and public facilities.

The subject site abuts the Coors Blvd. Major Transit Corridor and has access to utilities and other existing public infrastructure.

- F. **GOAL 5.6 CITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS:** Encourage and direct growth to Areas of Change where it is expected and desired and ensure that development in and near Areas of Consistency reinforces the character and intensity of the surrounding area.

The subject site is in an Area of Consistency, but the abutting lots directly to the north are in an Area of Change. Additionally, the subject site abuts a Major Transit Corridor, where more development is desired. Since the surrounding lots to the north and east are currently zoned MX-L, the majority of new permissive uses on the subject site would not be harmful to the residential area to the south, which is separated from the subject site and surrounding MX-L zoned properties by Daytona Rd.

- G. **POLICY 5.6.3 AREAS OF CONSISTENCY:** Protect and enhance the character of single-family neighborhoods, areas outside of Centers and Corridors, parks, and Major Public Open Space.

The subject site is surrounded by MX-L zoning to the north and east. The lot to the west is zoned R-1B but is the site of a church, a non-residential use. Changing the zoning to MX-L will allow for development that is more consistent with the development on the same block. Daytona Rd, to the south of the subject site, already serves as a division between the residential neighborhood to the south and the predominantly MX-L zoned properties on the block containing the subject site.

11. The request furthers the following applicable Policies from the Comprehensive Plan Chapter 7 – Urban Design

**POLICY 7.3.4 INFILL:** Promote infill that enhances the built environment or blends in style and building materials with surrounding structures and the streetscape of the block in which it is located.

The subject site, currently zoned R-1B, has remained undeveloped but is surrounded by MX-L zoned lots to the north and east. The requested zone change to MX-L could promote development that is more compatible with the existing development on the same block. Since this is not a site plan, it is not possible to know how future development will interact with surrounding properties.

12. The request furthers the following applicable Policies from the Comprehensive Plan Chapter 9 – Housing

**POLICY 9.3.1 CENTERS & CORRIDORS:** Encourage higher density, multi-unit housing and mixed-use development in Downtown, Urban, Activity, and Village Centers, and along Premium and Major Transit Corridors to capture growth, relieve development pressure at the edge of the urban footprint, and maintain low densities in rural areas.

The request to change the zoning from R-1B to MX-L would allow for a greater range of uses on the subject site. The proposed use for the Rio Grande Food Project would provide a food resource to the community and transit riders on the Coors Blvd Major Transit Corridor, utilizing a vacant lot that has remained undeveloped.

13. Pursuant to §14-16-6-7(G)(3) of the Integrated Development Ordinance, Review and Decision Criteria, "An application for a Zoning Map Amendment shall be approved if it meets all of the following criteria."

6-7(G)(3)(a) Consistency with the City's health, safety, morals, and general welfare is demonstrated by showing that a request furthers applicable Comprehensive Plan goals and policies and does not significantly conflict with them. The applicant's policy-based responses

adequately demonstrate that the request clearly facilitates a preponderance of applicable goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, the request is consistent with the City's health, safety, morals, and general welfare.

- 6-7(G)(3)(b) The subject site is located entirely within an Area of Consistency, where significant growth is typically undesirable and where any new development or redevelopment must be consistent with the established character of the surrounding context. The applicant argues that the existing zoning is inappropriate because it meets Criteria 3 due to the lot's location along a Major Transit Corridor and its adjacency to other commercial properties that are also zoned MX-L.

The applicant's policy-based analysis demonstrates that the request would further a preponderance of applicable Comprehensive Plan goals and policies and, therefore, would be more advantageous to the community than the current zoning.

- 6-7(G)(3)(c) The subject site is located wholly in an Area of Consistency, as designated by the Comp Plan.

- 6-7(G)(3)(d) The subject site abuts existing MX-L lots to the north and east. The majority of new permissive uses on the subject site would not be harmful to the residential areas of the surrounding neighborhood located across the streets to the south and east. Additionally, the church property directly to the west and a daycare facility to the northeast will further limit uses that may be considered harmful to the neighborhood.

- 6-7(G)(3)(e) The subject site is currently served by infrastructure, which will have adequate capacity once the applicant fulfills its obligations under the IDO, the DPM, and/or an Infrastructure Improvements Agreement. Any future development on the subject site, which is currently vacant and being rezoned, will be required to adhere to all obligations and standards under the IDO, the DPM, and/or an Infrastructure Improvements Agreement.

- 6-7(G)(3)(f) The subject site is alongside a Major Transit Corridor, which bolsters the justification for the more intense zone; however, it is staff's understanding that the reason for the rezoning is to facilitate the construction of a new facility for the Rio Grande Food Project, which is currently operating out of the church on the neighboring lot to the west. Additionally, the subject site abuts Coors Blvd. to the west and lies between a vacant lot, recently rezoned to MX-L to the east, the church to the west, and a small shopping center to the north. Given that there are no existing residential uses on this block, the request to change the existing R-1B zone is appropriate.

- 6-7(G)(3)(g) The applicant's reasoning for the rezoning of the subject site is to facilitate the construction of a new facility for the Rio Grande Food Pantry on a newly platted lot adjacent to the church's site with which they have been closely associated. However, the applicant has adequately demonstrated that the request clearly facilitates a preponderance of applicable Comprehensive Plan goals and policies independently of its intended use.

6-7(G)(3)(h) The proposed zone change does not create a “spot zone” or a “strip zone.” The request is to change the zoning of the subject site from the R-1B zone to MX-L. As shown in the zone map, the lots directly to the north and east of the subject site currently have an MX-L zone designation.

14. The affected neighborhood organizations are the Los Volcanes Neighborhood Association (NA), West Mesa NA, and the South West Alliance of Neighborhoods (SWAN). Property owners within 100 feet of the subject site were also notified as required.
15. Staff has not received any agency comments in opposition to the request.
16. Staff has not received public comments in support or opposition to the request.
17. A member of the public who provided comments, Grant Nicholas, on behalf of a property owner at 640 Coors Blvd. NW, received mailed notice.

**APPEAL:** If you wish to appeal this decision, you must do so within 15 days of the EPC’s decision or by **October 4, 2024**. The date of the EPC’s decision is not included in the 15-day period for filing an appeal, and if the 15th day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or Holiday, the next working day is considered as the deadline for filing the appeal.

For more information regarding the appeal process, please refer to IDO §14-16-6-4(U) (Appeals). A non-refundable filing fee will be charged and must be paid at the time the appeal is filed.

You will receive notification if any person files an appeal. If there is no appeal, you can receive building permits at any time after the appeal deadline quoted above. Successful applicants are reminded that other regulations of the IDO must be complied with, even after approval of the referenced application(s).

Sincerely,

/ Mikaela Renz-Whitmore /

for Alan M. Varela,  
Planning Director

AV/MRW/WS

CC:

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