

PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT DIVISION  
600 2nd Street NW, 3rd Floor, Albuquerque, NM 87102  
P.O. Box 1293, Albuquerque, NM 87103  
Office (505) 924-3860



## OFFICIAL NOTICE OF DECISION

February 20, 2025

Mark Armijo Academy  
6800 Gonzales Rd SW  
Albuquerque, NM 87121

**Project # Project # PR-2024-010332**  
**RZ-2025-00001 – Zoning Map Amendment (Zone Change)**

### **LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**

**Archis Architects, agent for Mark Armijo Academy, requests a Zoning Map Amendment, from R-T to R-MH, for all or a portion of Lots 150-A and 150-B, Plat of Lots 150-A & 150-B for Town of Atrisco Grant Unit 6, located at 6800 Gonzales Rd SW, between Airport Dr SW and Adrian St SW, approximately 6 acres. (K-10-Z)**  
**Staff Planner: Daniel Soriano**

On February 20, 2025, the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) voted to APPROVE Project # 2024-010332/RZ-2025-00001, a Zoning Map Amendment (Zone Change), based on the following Findings.

### FINDINGS – RZ-2025-00001 – Zoning Map Amendment (Zone Change)

1. This is a request for a Zoning Map Amendment, from R-T to R-MH for two lots, an eastern lot containing approximately 2.47 acres and a western lot containing approximately 3.17 acres, legally described as all or a portion of Lots 150-A and 150-B Plat of Lots 150-A & 150-B for Town of Atrisco Grant Unit 6, located at 6800 Gonzales Rd. SW, between Airport Dr. SW and Adrian St. SW, containing a total of approximately 5.6 acres.
2. With approval of the zone change, the existing high school would become a permissive use in the R-MH zone district; whereas, currently, in the R-T zone district, a high school requires a conditional use approval in order to expand the use onto the western lot through future planned phased projects.
3. Prior to the effective date of the IDO, the subject site was zoned SU-1 for Church and related facilities in the now repealed Tower-Unser Sector Development Plan. In June 2008, a request to EPC was approved to amend the Tower/Unser Sector Development Plan map to change the zone on the subject site from SU-1 to R-T to allow for townhouses and a charter school use in the former church building. Upon the effective date of the IDO in May 2018, the subject site was converted to R-T, moving the high school from a Permissive use to a conditional use. The school is allowed to operate on the eastern lot as an approved Conditional Use pursuant to IDO §14-16-4-1(E)(1) Previously Allowed Uses and on the western lot as a nonconforming use.

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF DECISION

Project # 2024-010332

February 20, 2025

Page 2 of 9

4. The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan and the City of Albuquerque Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) are incorporated herein by reference and made part of the record for all purposes.
5. The subject site is within an Area of Change as designated by the Comprehensive Plan and is located between the Tower Employment Center to the South and West Route 66 Activity Center to the North. The subject site is located within the Major Transit Corridor, Coors Blvd. SW.
6. The subject site is not within an Overlay zone.
7. The request facilitates the implementation of the following applicable Goals and Policies related to Character, Placemaking, Process, and Community Engagement from Comprehensive Plan Chapter 4: Community Identity.

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

This request would allow the current use of a high school to operate as a primary permissive use, rather than require a conditional use approval to expand onto the lot to the west. This request will both protect and enhance the community by allowing the owner to utilize an underdeveloped lot with a planned future expansion of the land use that has been a part of the community for the last 10 years. Should the school move sites in the future, a change to the R-MH zone will preserve the identity of the community as it will continue the pattern of existing zoning and familiar land uses that currently surround the subject site. There is currently a pocket of R-MH zoning a little over 500 feet from the subject site, the land uses introduced by the R-MH zone are mostly present in the community already, and a change to R-MH can provide an opportunity for more dense residential uses which would be a welcome addition along the Major Transit Corridor and nearby Activity and Employment Corridors.

B. POLICY 4.1.3 PLACEMAKING: Protect and enhance special places in the built environment that contribute to distinct identity and sense of place.

The purpose of the zone change is to convert the high school to a permissive use, in doing so, it will provide a straightforward process as designated in the IDO to expand the existing school use onto the western lot. Right now, the high school is a nonconforming use. The proposed expansion is to utilize an underdeveloped lot by building a new 2-story school building and gymnasium, enhancing the school's ability to offer programs and amenities to the students and surrounding community. The community charter high school is already a partner to the community, attending neighborhood meetings, and working with the community to determine the needs of the students, staff and residents surrounding the school. In enhancing the existing school, the community would have a place where they can gather for public meetings, celebrations and sporting events. This should strengthen the special place that is the community charter high school, while creating a sense of place for the community.

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

The subject site has been a community charter high school for the last 10 plus years. The school has become a community partner during this time, and takes into account the needs of the students, staff and surrounding community when developing future plans for the high school. The purpose of requesting the re-zone from R-T to R-MH is to ultimately expand the school onto the western lot, removing a mostly undeveloped lot from the neighborhood and providing more services and programs that aim to enhance, protect and preserve the community and the long-term health and vitality of its members.

- D. GOAL 4.2 PROCESS: Engage communities to identify and plan for their distinct character and needs.

The purpose of this request is to re-zone the subject site so the current use, a community charter high school, can become a permissive primary use rather than requiring a conditional use to expand onto the western lot of this premise. The community school has historically exhibited a strong relationship with the surrounding community, participating in various meetings with different local organizations while seeking out and welcoming feedback for future expansion projects and overall program development for the school. On March 11, 2024, the applicant and representatives from the school presented this project and its long-term goals to the Alamosa Neighborhood Association, the presentation was said to have been met with support, however staff does not have access to meeting notes for this event.

- E. POLICY 4.2.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Facilitate meaningful engagement opportunities and respectful interactions in order to identify and address the needs of all residents.

The community charter high school is requesting this zone change in hopes of facilitating a future planned expansion for the school onto the western lot. On March 11, 2024, the applicant and representatives from the school presented this project to the Alamosa Neighborhood Association. There were no notes provided from this meeting, however, the applicant indicated the project was met with support from the association. Being a community school, the intent is a mutually beneficial collaboration between the school and surrounding community to identify and address the needs of its student body and the surrounding community. Staff has not been provided documentation that would support that this practice is ongoing.

8. The request facilitates the implementation of the following applicable Goals and Policies regarding Complete Communities and Land Uses from Comprehensive Plan Chapter 5: Land Use.

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

In amending the zone from R-T to R-MH, the applicant wishes to remedy the schools nonconforming status on the western lot and make the high school a permissive use across the premises. The R-MH zone district would allow for a greater density of residential uses, civic and institutional uses focused on providing care and education for children or adults, and community gathering uses, such as a religious institutions or community centers and libraries. Additionally, accessory permissive uses in the R-MH zone would further this multifaceted approach to the community, such as a health club or gym and small general retail. This range

of uses allowed in the R-MH zone district can create area where the community can live, work, learn, shop and play together.

- B. POLICY 5.2.1 LAND USES: Create healthy, sustainable, and distinct communities with a mix of uses that are conveniently accessible from surrounding neighborhoods.

Changing the zone of the subject site from R-T to R-MH will solidify the existing use of a community charter high school as a permissive use, allowing the school to pursue future expansion projects, following the policies, procedures and developmental standards of the IDO. The R-MH zone district would not introduce new uses harmful to the community, it will contribute to the character of the neighborhood by allowing more dense residential uses that are already present in the community. The high school, along with the abutting community center, mix of residential uses and nearby elementary school, contribute to the mix of uses that are conveniently accessible from the surrounding neighborhoods. This request will help maintain the community's variety of uses, while solidifying the use at the subject site, providing the school a path forward to expansion.

- C. 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.

This request would make the high school a permissive use and encourage the school to move forward with a planned expansion onto the underdeveloped western lot. A zone change to R-MH and potential infill development in an Area of Change will also preserve the character and use intensity for the surrounding community, which is in an Area of Consistency, regardless if the community charter high school remains at the subject site or moves elsewhere.

- D. POLICY 5.6.2 AREAS OF CHANGE: Protect and enhance the character of existing single-family neighborhoods, areas outside of Centers and Corridors, parks, and Major Public Open Space.

The subject site is within an Area of Change as designated in the Comp Plan. The request to adjust the zoning from R-T to R-MH will protect and enhance the character of the surrounding neighborhoods as it will not introduce a new zone or harmful uses to the community. There is R-MH zoning nearby, which will allow a variety of moderate intensity residential uses within an Area of Change. The subject site is within ¼ mile of the Coors Blvd. Major Transit Corridor and is between the Tower Employment Center and West Route 66 Activity Center. Denser development is appropriate in the Centers and Corridors in the area and will contribute to the variety of uses already present in the community, furthering the established character of the community. The purpose of this request is to facilitate the expansion of the existing school, solidifying the use of a community charter high school at the subject site for years to come.

- E. POLICY 5.6.4 APPROPRIATE TRANSITIONS: Provide transitions in Areas of Change for development abutting Areas of Consistency through adequate setbacks, buffering, and limits on building height and massing.

This request is for a zone map amendment from R-T to R-MH. The overarching goal of this request is to make the existing use of a school a permissive use and facilitate future expansion

of the school to the western lot of the subject site. Currently, the community charter high school exists primarily towards the rear of the eastern lot on the subject site, with parking on the north end of the lot. The high school acts as a buffer between the community to the east and the high-volume traffic from the Major Transit Corridor, Coors Blvd. Should the future expansion made possible by this request move forward, the addition of a gymnasium on the western lot will further help transition between Coors and the community.

9. The request facilitates the implementation of the following applicable Policy, Education from Comprehensive Plan Chapter 12: Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services.

**POLICY 12.3.8 EDUCATION:** Complement programming provided by educational institutions to expand educational opportunities for residents in all cultural, age, economic, and educational groups.

The zone change to R-MH would make the existing community charter high school a permissive use, rather than requiring a conditional use to operate and expand on the western lot. Future phased projects of the school would be able to build on to the western lot, providing the school with more structures and amenities that can be used to increase the educational opportunities offered to all residents through various after-school programs and providing the community a gathering place for local sports teams and community meetings.

10. 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) The proposed zone change is consistent with the health, safety, and general welfare of the City as shown by furthering (and not being in conflict with) a preponderance of applicable Goals and Policies in the ABC Comp Plan, as amended, and other applicable plans adopted by the City.

*Consistency with the City's health, safety, morals and general welfare is shown by demonstrating that a request clearly facilitates 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 regarding Character, Education, Complete Communities, and Community Engagement; therefore, the request is consistent with the City's health, safety, morals, and general welfare.*

6-7(G)(3)(b) If the subject property is located partially or completely in an Area of Consistency (as shown in the ABC Comp Plan, as amended), the applicant has demonstrated that the new zone would clearly reinforce or strengthen the established character of the surrounding Area of Consistency and would not permit development that is significantly different from that character. The applicant must also demonstrate that the existing zoning is inappropriate because it meets any of the following criteria.

*The subject site is located wholly in an Area of Change, as designated by the Comp Plan; therefore, Criterion B does not apply.*

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF DECISION

Project # 2024-010332

February 20, 2025

Page 6 of 9

6-7(G)(3)(c) If the proposed amendment is located wholly in an Area of Change (as shown in the ABC Comp Plan, as amended) and the applicant has demonstrated that the existing zoning is inappropriate because it meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. There was typographical or clerical error when the existing zone district was applied to the property.
2. There has been a significant change in neighborhood or community conditions affecting the site that justifies this request.
3. A different zone district is more advantageous to the community as articulated by the ABC Comp Plan, as amended (including implementation of patterns of land use, development density and intensity, and connectivity), and other applicable adopted City plan(s).

*The subject site is located wholly in an Area of Change. The applicant's policy-based analysis demonstrates that the request would clearly facilitate a preponderance of applicable Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies and would be more advantageous to the community than the current zoning.*

6-7(G)(3)(d) The zone change does not include permissive uses that would be harmful to adjacent property, the neighborhood, or the community, unless the Use-specific Standards in IDO §14-16-4-3 associated with that use will adequately mitigate those harmful impacts.

*The request is to rezone the subject site from R-T to R-MH. Staff notes that the applicant's intent for the zone change is to make a high school a permissive use to facilitate the future expansion of the community charter high school onto the western lot of the site without requiring a conditional use approval. According to the IDO's Allowable Uses table, Table 4-2-1, the R-MH zone designation generally allows for more dense uses than the R-T zone, permissively allowing multi-family dwellings, large community residential facilities, dormitories, adult or child care facilities, and all schools, elementary, middle and high school. The surrounding community has a variety of housing and zones present at the time of this writing. To the North there is a multi-family development zoned PD, and to the East there are townhomes zoned R-MH. Should the school be replaced and redeveloped, the permissive uses not currently utilized in the R-MH zone would not negatively impact the area. All new permissive civic and residential uses would contribute to the character and design of the community, while newly introduced commercial uses are restricted to being accessory, which is required to be subordinate in use, area or purpose to a primary land use on the same lot, further reducing potential impacts to the surrounding areas.*

6-7(G)(3)(e) The City's existing infrastructure and public improvements, including but not limited to its street, trail, and sidewalk systems meet 1 of the following requirements:

1. Will have adequate capacity based on improvements for which the City has already approved and budgeted capital funds during the next calendar year.
2. Will have adequate capacity when the applicant fulfills its obligations under the IDO, the DPM, and/or an Infrastructure Improvements Agreement.

3. Will have adequate capacity when the City and the applicant have fulfilled their respective obligations under a city-approved Development Agreement between the City and the applicant.

*This request meets the requirement by ensuring the infrastructure and public improvements will have adequate capacity while continuing through the City's permitting process and following the obligations set under the IDO, DPM, and/or a Infrastructure Improvements Agreement, meeting requirement E.2. The applicant has communicated with the New Mexico Department of Transportation to address potential impacts to city infrastructure caused by the zone change and future projects, as well, should this request be approved, a possible future expansion of the school includes widening of the sidewalks amongst other improvements to the infrastructure per IDO requirements.*

6-7(G)(3)(f) The applicant's justification for the Zoning Map Amendment is not completely based on the property's location on a major street.

*The request is not completely based on the property's location on a major street; rather, the request is based on policy analysis surrounding the properties existing land use and proposed Zoning Map Amendment to request a zone that will turn the existing high school into a permissive use, facilitate future expansion of the school, and implement Goals and Policies in the Comprehensive Plan.*

6-7(G)(3)(g) The applicant's justification is not based completely or predominantly on the cost of land or economic considerations.

*The applicant's justification is not completely or predominately based on economic considerations or the cost of land; rather, the applicant's request is to solidify the existing community charter high school into a permissive use, allowing a straightforward path to expanding the school onto the western lot of the subject site. A zone change to R-MH will be advantageous to the community, as it implements applicable Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies and does not significantly conflict with them.*

6-7(G)(3)(h) The zone change does not apply a zone district different from surrounding zone districts to one small area or one premises (i.e. create a "spot zone") or to a strip of land along a street (i.e. create a "strip zone") unless the change will clearly facilitate implementation of the ABC Comp Plan, as amended, and at least one of the following applies:

1. The area of the zone change is different from surrounding land because it can function as a transition between adjacent zone districts.
2. The site is not suitable for the uses allowed in any adjacent zone district due to topography, traffic, or special adverse land uses nearby.
3. The nature of structures already on the premises makes it unsuitable for the uses allowed in any adjacent zone district.

*Criterion H is a two-part test, which the request generally meets. The request to R-MH would create a spot zone. The applicant has demonstrated that the request would clearly facilitate the implementation of several applicable goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan,*

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF DECISION

Project # 2024-010332

February 20, 2025

Page 8 of 9

*specifically, from Chapters 4 – Community Identity; 5 – Land Use; and 12 – Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services. The R-MH zone district would allow the community charter school as a permissive use and facilitate much-needed infill development by providing the applicant a clear and straightforward path to expand the school onto the western, underdeveloped lot without needing to request conditional use approval, while also providing the school the allowed height it would need for a future project to build a gymnasium.*

*The subject site is surrounded primarily by residential uses, with a community center directly south. The applicant claims the area of the zone change is different from surrounding land, as it functions as a transition between an adjacent zone district to the northwest, NR-C, and a Major Transit Corridor (Coors Blvd.), which provides access to and from the nearby Employment and Activity Centers as designated by the Comp Plan. The community charter high school has served as a buffer from the residential community to the east and the traffic and commercially focused uses along Coors Blvd. SW, welcoming those to the community as they exit Coors Blvd. The permissive uses in the R-MH zone – denser residential and new civic institutional uses – would be able to maintain this buffer should the current school move locations.*

*Staff generally agrees with the applicant’s justification to create a spot zone.*

11. Recognized Neighborhood Associations within 660 feet, Alamosa Neighborhood Association and South West Alliance of Neighborhoods, and property owners within 100 feet of the subject site were notified as required.
12. As of this writing, Staff has not received any correspondence in favor or opposition of the proposed Zoning Map Amendment.

APPEAL

If you wish to appeal, you must do so within 15 days of the EPC’s decision or by **March 07, 2025**. The date of the EPC’s decision is not included in this 15-day period. If the 15<sup>th</sup> day falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or Holiday, the next working day is considered the deadline for filing an appeal.

For more information regarding the appeal process, please refer to the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO), §14-16-6-4(U) (Appeals). The IDO is available online here: <https://www.cabq.gov/ido>. A non-refundable fee is required to be paid when the appeal is filed. It is not possible to appeal EPC recommendations to the City Council, because a recommendation is not a final decision.

You will receive notification if anyone files an appeal. If the decision is not appealed, you can receive building permits any time after the appeal deadline, provided all conditions of approval associated with the decision and all other applicable regulations have been met.

Sincerely,

*Megan Jones*

for Alan Varela  
Planning Director

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF DECISION

Project # 2024-010332

February 20, 2025

Page 9 of 9

AV/DS/MJ

cc: Mark Armijo Academy, [shawn@markarmijo.com](mailto:shawn@markarmijo.com)

ARCHIS Architects, Ashley Hartshorn, [ashley@archisarchitects.com](mailto:ashley@archisarchitects.com)

Alamosa Neighborhood Association, Jerry Gallegos, [jgallegoswccd@gmail.com](mailto:jgallegoswccd@gmail.com)

Alamosa Neighborhood Association, Jeanette Baca, [jeanettebaca973@gmail.com](mailto:jeanettebaca973@gmail.com)

South West Alliance of Neighborhoods, Lorenzo Otero, [housealbchrome@gmail.com](mailto:housealbchrome@gmail.com)

South West Alliance of Neighborhoods, Jerry Gallegos, [jgallegoswccd@gmail.com](mailto:jgallegoswccd@gmail.com)

City Legal, Andrew Coon, [acoon@cabq.gov](mailto:acoon@cabq.gov)

EPC file