

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE
PLANNING DEPARTMENT
URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
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ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING COMMISSION NOTICE OF DECISION

Project Number: PR-2021-005684
Case Number: [SP-2026-00044](#) - Site Plan - EPC
Hearing Date: 07-15-2026
Applicant: Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority
Subject Property: 5430 Watson Dr. SE
Case Description: Sites Southwest LLC, agent for ABCWUA, requests a Site Plan – EPC, for all or a portion of Tract F2, Plat of Tracts F-1, F-2 & F-3 Mesa Del Sol Innovation Park II, located at 5430 Watson Dr. SE, between Turing Dr SE and Hawking Dr SE, approximately 7.4 acres. (Q-16)
Staff Planner: Daniel Soriano

DECISION

On July 16, 2026, the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) voted to APPROVE Project # PR-2021-005684, Case # [SP-2026-00044](#), a Site Plan - EPC, based on the following Findings and subject to the following Conditions of Approval.

FINDINGS

1. This is a request for a Site Plan – EPC for an approximately 7.4-acre subject site, legally described as all or a portion of Tract F2, Plat of Tracts F-1, F-2 & F-3 Mesa Del Sol Innovation Park II, located at 5430 Watson Dr. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106, between Turing Dr. SE and Hawking Dr. SE (the “subject site”).
2. The proposed Site Plan is for a new, unmanned water reuse facility for the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA). This facility will be an expansion of the ABCWUA Southside Reuse Project and will be used to store non-potable water from the Southside Water Reclamation Plan (SWRP) in the 25,370 square foot steel reservoir on the subject site. The non-potable water from this facility will be distributed for use throughout the Mesa del Sol community to irrigate public landscapes, for construction needs and future industrial uses within Mesa del Sol.

3. The Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) is reviewing this request because it is a Site Plan application involving a major utility as the primary use of the subject site [§14-16-6-6(I)(1)(c)]. This is a quasi-judicial matter.
4. The subject site is within the boundaries of the Mesa del Sol Community Master Plan, which consists of Level A and Level B Plans. The subject site is governed by both the Level A and B Plans, and where the Plans are silent, the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) applies.
5. All projects in Mesa del Sol must obtain approval from the Mesa del Sol Architectural Review Committee (ARC). The ARC will notify the City in writing that the proposal meets all requirements of the Level A and Level B Plans.
6. The subject site is currently undeveloped and surrounded by a variety of non-residential uses or undeveloped land, all within Mesa del Sol
7. The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO), and the Mesa del Sol Level A and B Community Master Plans are incorporated herein by reference and made part of the record for all purposes.
8. All of Mesa del Sol is zoned Planned Community (PC) Zone District. Upon the effective date of the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) in May 2018, the PC zoning remained.
9. The proposed project is considered a Major Utility, Other use in IDO Table 4-2-1, this use is permissive in the Mesa del Sol Framework Plan.
10. The subject site is within the Airport Protection Overlay (APO) zone. The purpose of the Airport Protection Overlay (APO) zone is to require that land use and development at or around public airport facilities comply with the regulations of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) that protect the public from noise, vibration, and hazard impacts of airport operations and that protect the safety of aircraft operators.
11. The subject site is located in an Area of Change as designated by the Comprehensive Plan. Areas of Change include Centers, Corridors, and Metropolitan Redevelopment Areas, where new development and redevelopment are desired and appropriate.
12. The subject site is located within the Mesa del Sol Community Planning Area (CPA). This CPA encompasses an area bounded by the Sunport to the north, Kirtland Air Force Base to the east, Isleta Pueblo to the south, and parts of Broadway and University Boulevards to the west. University Boulevard is a primary route through the Mesa del Sol CPA, and there are future plans for a new I-25 interchange to serve this area.
13. The site plan has been evaluated for conformance with applicable Goals and Policies in the Comprehensive Plan, Mesa del Sol Level A and B Community Master Plans, and the Integrated Development Ordinance.
14. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies regarding centers & corridors, desired growth and city development areas from Chapter 5: Land Use.

- A. GOAL 5.1 CENTERS & CORRIDORS: Grow as a community of strong Centers connected by a multi-modal network of Corridors.

This request will facilitate the expansion of the Water Authority's (ABCWUA) water reuse system that will eventually allow the usage of non-potable reuse water from this facility to serve a variety of needs, including, irrigation of public landscapes within the Mesa del Sol community. This project supports sustainability efforts within Mesa del Sol and could provide reclaimed water to existing and future development, which will serve and promote the continued growth and strength of the Mesa del Sol Employment Center, which is connected to the University Multi-Modal Corridor.

- B. POLICY 5.1.1 DESIRED GROWTH: Capture regional growth in Centers and Corridors to help shape the built environment into a sustainable development pattern.

This request will expand the Water Authority's existing water reuse system with an additional water storage reservoir that will ultimately provide reclaimed water to public landscapes, parks, recreational facilities, and any other future development within Mesa del Sol. This service will help shape the built environment into a sustainable development pattern by reducing reliance on potable water sources, reduce the need for additional infrastructure, and supporting future growth in the Mesa del Sol Employment Center with a critical resource using sustainable methods.

- 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.

The subject site is located in an Area of Change and the Mesa del Sol Employment Center, where this type of development is encouraged and desired.

- D. POLICY 5.6.2 AREAS OF CHANGE: Direct growth and more intense development to Centers, Corridors, industrial and business parks, and Metropolitan Redevelopment Areas where change is encouraged.

The subject site is located in the Mesa del Sol Employment Center I boundaries and is primarily surrounded by undeveloped and non-residential land uses. The proposed water reuse facility is a Major Utility land use and has an industrial design which would be appropriate for this location.

15. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies regarding infrastructure design from Chapter 7: Urban Design.

- A. GOAL 7.6 CONTEXT-SENSITIVE INFRASTRUCTURE: Match infrastructure design to intended densities and development patterns to minimize lifecycle costs and conserve natural resources.

This Site Plan will facilitate the expansion of the Water Authority water reuse system. This expansion will allow reclaimed water to support development within the Mesa del Sol community, improving the sustainability of the area, conserving a critical natural resource and minimizing lifecycle costs by reducing the need for additional infrastructure improvements as the area continues to grow.

- B. **POLICY 7.6.3 UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE:** Encourage design of visible infrastructure (surface and overhead) that respects the character of neighborhoods and communities and protects significant natural and cultural features.

The subject site is governed by the Mesa del Sol Level A and B Community Framework Plans, both of which contain technical appendices that provide guidance on a range of development elements, including, but not limited to, Land Use, Developmental Standards, Landscaping, Parking and Infrastructure that is intended to conform to the desired character of Mesa del Sol. Included in the Framework Plans, are development approval processes, which requires all projects, including this request, to be reviewed and approved by the Mesa del Sol Architectural Review Committee (ARC). This request received ARC approval on June 28th, 2026, which demonstrates that the proposed project meets Mesa del Sol design standards that reflect the character of the surrounding community while protecting the significant natural and cultural features of Mesa del Sol.

16. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies regarding placemaking and resilient economy from Chapter 8: Economic Development.

- A. **GOAL 8.1 PLACEMAKING:** Create places where business and talent will stay and thrive.

The proposed expansion to the water reuse system is intended to provide non-potable water to serve a variety of uses, including irrigation of public landscaping, developmental needs and industrial uses that require a water resource. This development could solidify the availability of non-potable water in the area, which could make Mesa del Sol more attractive to future businesses to move to, and remain in Mesa del Sol.

- B. **POLICY 8.1.2 RESILIENT ECONOMY:** Encourage economic development efforts that improve quality of life for new and existing residents and foster a robust, resilient, and diverse economy.

The proposed Site Plan will expand the current Water Authority water reuse system to serve the Mesa del Sol area. This infrastructure investment could ultimately improve the quality of life for new and existing residents by providing non-potable water to irrigate public landscaping and recreational facilities, maintaining, protecting and enhancing the outdoor spaces within Mesa del Sol in an environmentally sustainable manner. Additionally, the water within this reuse system can contribute to improving economic development efforts within Mesa del Sol by potentially attracting land uses that can make use of non-potable water in their daily processes and during the construction phase of development.

17. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies regarding infrastructure system and design from Chapter 12: Infrastructure, Community Facilities and Services.

- A. **GOAL 12.1 INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS:** Plan, coordinate, and provide for efficient, equitable, and environmentally sound infrastructure to support existing communities and the Comp Plan's vision for future growth.

This Site Plan request will create environmentally sound infrastructure that will support existing communities and the Comprehensive Plan vision for future growth by efficiently

repurposing reclaimed water that is not safe for consumption, to meet a variety of needs for the entire Mesa del Sol community. The proposed facility was designed to be consistent with sustainability goals of the IDO, Comprehensive Plan and Mesa del Sol Community Master Plan which help address the environmental challenges of the city, including drought mitigation. This request supports water conservation and will improve water availability for non-potable uses in the area.

- B. POLICY 12.1.1 INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN: Encourage design of visible infrastructure (surface and overhead) that respects the character of neighborhoods and communities and protects significant natural and cultural features.

The subject site is in the Mesa del Sol community that has established development standards that promote the desired character of the plan area. Within the Mesa del Sol Framework Plan are development approval processes that requires applicants to obtain approval from the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) of Mesa del Sol. This project has received approval from ARC on June 28, 2026, which demonstrates compliance with the developmental guidelines of both the Level A and Level B Mesa del Sol Community Master Plan documents, adequately demonstrating that the design of this infrastructure respects the character and protects the natural and cultural features of Mesa del Sol

18. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies regarding climate change, resource-efficient development, water supply and conservation from Chapter 13: Resilience and Sustainability.

- A. GOAL 13.1 CLIMATE CHANGE: Promote resource-efficient growth and development to help mitigate global climate change and adapt to its local impacts.

The proposed project will promote resource-efficiency by increasing the access, purposes and viability of reclaimed, treated wastewater in the city. In becoming more efficient with the use of water, the request will help mitigate global climate change and promote sustainability in a city experiencing severe drought conditions.

- B. POLICY 13.1.1 RESOURCE-EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT: Promote development in the city and county that works with nature to slow global climate change.

This project will reduce the reliability on a limited resource, potable water. This request will facilitate the expansion of the existing water reuse system with a new facility in Mesa del Sol that will repurpose treated wastewater for irrigation, construction and other land uses that rely on water access for primary functions. The proposed development will reduce the global environmental impact caused by sourcing potable water and reclaimed water will be used to irrigate landscaping, trees and parks that help cool areas during the summer months.

- C. GOAL 13.2 WATER SUPPLY & QUALITY: Protect and conserve our region's limited water supply to benefit the range of uses that will keep our community and ecosystem healthy.

This request will increase the supply and usage of reclaimed, treated wastewater that will protect and conserve the limited supply of potable water in the city. The non-potable water

will be repurposed to serve a variety of needs in the Mesa del Sol community that will promote sustainability and help preserve the health of our ecosystem.

- D. POLICY 13.2.2 WATER CONSERVATION: Foster the efficient management and use of water in development and infrastructure.

This project will facilitate the expansion of the Water Authority's Southside Reuse Project to reclaim and utilize non-potable water for a variety of uses in the Mesa del Sol community. This project fosters efficiency in the use of a critical water resource to the city to improve sustainability and water conservation.

19. Pursuant to IDO §14-16-6-6(I)(3) – Site Plan – EPC – Review and Decision Criteria – Any application for a Site Plan – EPC shall be approved if it meets all of the following criteria.

- A. 6-6(I)(3)(a) The Site Plan is consistent with the ABC Comp Plan, as amended.

The applicant has demonstrated, through a policy-based analysis, that the proposed Site Plan request would be consistent with applicable Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies found in Chapter 5 - Land Use, Chapter 7 - Urban Design, Chapter 8 - Economic Development, Chapter 12 - Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services, and Chapter 13 - Resilience and Sustainability.

- B. 6-6(I)(3)(b) The Site Plan is consistent with any applicable terms and conditions in any previously approved NR-SU or PD zoning covering the subject property and any related development agreements and/or regulations:

The subject site is zoned PC and not within any previously approved NR-SU or PD zoning covering the property. The subject site is governed by the Mesa del Sol Framework Plan, the proposed project has met all developmental standards in the Mesa del Sol Framework Plan as demonstrated in the Mesa del Sol Architectural Review Committee approval letter.

- C. 6-6(I)(3)(c) The Site Plan complies with all applicable provisions of this IDO, the DPM, other adopted City regulations, and any terms and conditions specifically applied to development of the property in a prior permit or approval affecting the property.

The proposed Site Plan complies with all applicable provisions of the IDO, DPM, and any other adopted City regulations, and shall comply with any conditions of approval required by the Mesa del Sol Architectural Review Committee, planning staff and the EPC. All conditions must be met prior to building permit approval. City Staff has reviewed the Site Plan against the Mesa del Sol Framework Plan and where silent, the IDO development standards for the proposed water reuse facility on the subject site (see site plan analysis section of the staff report). The applicant received an approved conceptual grading & drainage plan from the CABQ Hydrology Division on July 9th 2026. Upon approval by the EPC, the Site Plan will be reviewed by the Development Facilitation Team (DFT) for final sign-off, at which point, the Site Plan will be reviewed against the DPM and any other adopted City regulations.

- D. 6-6(I)(3)(d) The City's existing infrastructure and public improvements, including but not limited to its street, trail, drainage, and sidewalk systems, have adequate capacity to serve the proposed development, and any burdens on those systems have been mitigated to the maximum extent practicable.

The proposed water reuse facility is unmanned, and, aside from the occasional maintenance vehicle approximately once or twice a week, there will be a limited vehicle traffic impact created through this project. The existing infrastructure and public improvements that serve the subject site are adequate, and any burdens on those systems have been adequately mitigated.

- E. 6-6(I)(3)(e) The application mitigates any significant adverse impacts on the project site and the surrounding area to the maximum extent practicable.

This request has met all development regulations in the Mesa del Sol Level A and B Plans as evidenced by ARC approval, and verified for compliance of applicable IDO standards by staff, which are intended to reduce any potential adverse impacts on the natural landscapes and surrounding community. The subject site is located in the Mesa del Sol Employment Center I, an area dedicated to commercial activity, where this type of development is encouraged. The proposed water reuse facility is unmanned, will not have an impact on traffic congestion, nor will have any lights that could impact the surrounding area.

- F. 6-6(I)(3)(f) If the subject property is within an approved Master Development Plan, the Site Plan meets any relevant standards in the Master Development Plan in addition to any standards applicable in the zone district the subject property is in.

The subject site is not a part of a Master Development Plan; it is within the boundaries of the Level A and Level B Plans for Mesa del Sol, which are Framework Plans.

- G. 6-6(I)(3)(g) If a cumulative impact analysis is required in the Railroad and Spur Small Area pursuant to § 14-16-5-2(E) (Cumulative Impacts) and § 14-16-6-4(H) (Cumulative Impacts Analysis Requirements), the Site Plan incorporates mitigation for all identified cumulative impacts. The proposed development will not create material adverse impacts on water quality or other land in the surrounding area through increases in traffic congestion, parking congestion, noise, vibration, light trespass, or other nuisances without sufficient mitigation or civic or environmental benefits that outweigh the expected impacts.

The subject site is not within the Railroad and Spur Area, and no cumulative impact analysis is required.

- H. 6-6(I)(3)(h) If an outdoor or site lighting performance analysis is requested, the proposed lighting design must prove it will not adversely affect the lighting requirements of § 14-16-5-2(E) without sufficient mitigation and benefits that outweigh the expected impacts.

An outdoor or site lighting performance analysis was not requested. The proposed site plan does not include outdoor lights that would require a site lighting performance analysis.

20. Site Plan:

- A. The proposed project will be completed in phases. The first phase, will develop the area south of the easement road, which includes the development of a 28-foot tall and 181-foot wide, welded steel reservoir (25,370 square feet) that will store non-potable water for uses throughout Mesa del Sol and site improvements, including landscaping, a new stormwater pond, fencing and vehicle access roads. Additionally, if needed, the site plan calls out an

additional steel reservoir in the same dimensions to be placed to the west of this first reservoir.

- B. A future phase will focus on the area north of the easement road, this phase will include a new reuse pump station (approximately 6000 square feet), vehicle access roads, landscaping and fencing. A full analysis of the Site Plan is provided in the EPC Staff Report for review.
 - C. The proposed site plan will not require, nor provide off-street parking or site lighting.
- 21. The office of Neighborhood Coordination verified that there are no recognized neighborhood associations (NAs) within 660ft of the subject site that required notifications. Property owners within 100ft of the subject site were notified as required. As of the writing of this report, staff has not received any letters of opposition or in support of this request.
 - 22. The applicant held a public meeting on October 14, 2025 as required in the Environmental Information Document (EID). A summary of public questions has been included on page E.
 - 23. The applicant was not required to offer a tribal meeting as part of the pre-submittal requirement. [see IDO §14-16-6-4(B)].

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

- 1. After approval by the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC), the applicant shall coordinate with the Staff Planner prior to submitting to the Development Facilitation Team (DFT) for final sign-off to ensure that EPC conditions have been met. Pursuant to IDO section IDO §14-16-6-6(I)(2)(n), Site Plans shall be reviewed administratively for compliance with conditions of approval, DPM, and zoning standards prior to the issuance of a building permit.
- 2. Pursuant to IDO section §14-16-6-4(O)(4) Any conditions shall be met within 1 year of the approval, unless stated otherwise in the approval. If any conditions are not met within that time, the approval is void. The Planning Director may extend the time limit up to an additional 1 year.
- 3. PNM Condition:

The applicant shall coordinate with PNM Staff to review the Site Plan and conform with PNM easement terms or conditions that exist on the site and include any revisions from PNM on final versions of applicable site plan sheets.

APPEAL

If you wish to appeal, you must do so within 15 days of the EPC's decision or by **July 31, 2026**. The date of the EPC's decision is not included in this 15-day period. If the 15th 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). 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 notice 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Megan Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

for Alan Varela
Planning Director

AV/MJ/DS

cc: Danielle Wilson, Sites Southwest, dwilson@sites-sw.com
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