



**Environmental  
Planning  
Commission**

**Agenda Number: 02  
Project # 1011232 (PR-2019-002629)  
Case Number: 17EPC-40011  
Hearing Date: 08 August 2019**

**Supplemental Staff Report to the June 8 and July 13, 2017 Staff Reports**

<b>Agent</b>	Design Workshop
<b>Applicant</b>	Garcia Auto Group
<b>Request</b>	<b>Zone Map Amendment (Zone Change)</b> Tracts 224D3B, 225B2A1A1 & 226C2B, 225B2A1A2, 225B2B, 225B2C, 225B2D, 225B2E, 225B2F & 225B2A2, 225B2G, 225B2H, 225B2I, 226A, 227, 228, 232, 233A, 236-A, 236-B, and Land of J A Garcia Tract A, MRGCD Map #35
<b>Legal Description</b>	North of I-40 and East of Rio Grande Blvd between the Alameda Drain and Campbell Ditch
<b>Location</b>	
<b>Size</b>	20 acres
<b>Existing Zoning</b>	M-1 and R-1
<b>Proposed Zoning</b>	C-2 and R-2

**Staff Recommendation**

**APPROVAL of  
Project # 1011232 (PR-2019-002629)  
Case # 17EPC-40011  
based on Findings in this report  
beginning on page #**

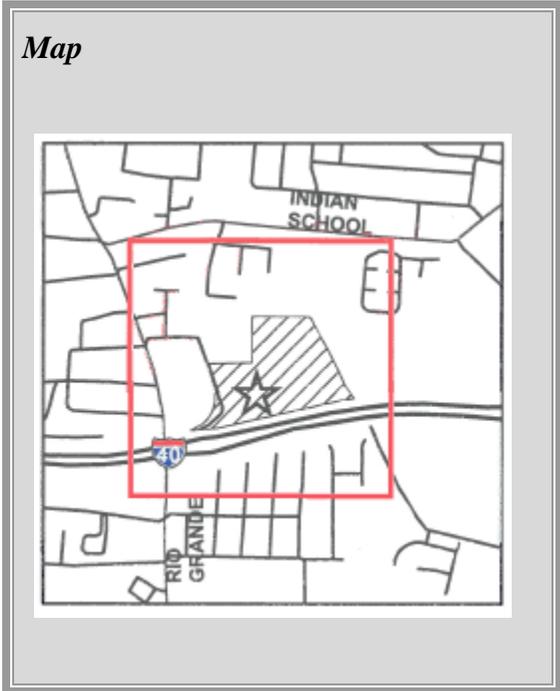
**Staff Planner  
Russell Brito**

**Summary**

The EPC approved this zone change in July 2017, which was appealed to City Council, who denied the appeal in October 2017. That decision was appealed to District Court, who remanded the applicaiton back to the City in January 2019. The City Council sent it back the EPC in June 2019 with the District Court order to further consider two items:

- 1) Whether the proposed C-2 zone is in significant conflict with purported NVAP limiations on commercial development; and
- 2) Whether some of the permissive uses of the proposed C-2 zone would be harmful to adjacent property, neighborhood, or community

In all other respects, the decision is affirmed by District Court. This application was submitted under the old Zoning Code and is to be reviewed, analyzed, and decided per R-270-1980, the 2017 Comp Plan, and the 1993 North Valley Area Plan. Staff recommends approval per the findings in this report.



## ***I. INTRODUCTION***

### ***A. Overview***

This is a supplemental staff report to the June 8 and July 13, 2017 staff reports.

The Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) approved the requested zone change at the July 13, 2017 hearing. That decision was appealed to City Council, who in October 2017 accepted the Land Use Hearing Officer's recommendation to deny the appeal. The City Council's decision was appealed to District Court. The Second Judicial District Court affirmed the City Council's decision in January 2017 except for two items that are remanded back to the City for further consideration:

- 1) Whether the proposed C-2 zone is in significant conflict with purported NVAP limitations on commercial development; and
- 2) Whether some of the permissive uses of the proposed C-2 zone would be harmful to adjacent property, neighborhood, or community

Please see the attached City Council Other Communication, OC-19-31, and District Court Memorandum Opinion and Order for more details. The EPC is charged with reviewing only the two items above for further consideration.

## ***II. ANALYSIS of APPLICABLE ORDINANCES, PLANS AND POLICIES***

This application was submitted under the old Zoning Code, prior to the adoption and effective date of the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO), and is to be reviewed, analyzed, and decided per the zone change criteria of R-270-1980, the applicable policies of the 2017 Comp Plan, and the 1993 North Valley Area Plan (NVAP).

## ***III. AGENCY & NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS***

### ***A. Agency***

There are no additional agency comments for this application.

### ***B. Neighborhood/Public***

The Near North Valley, Sawmill Area, Los Duranes, and West Old Town Neighborhood Associations, Symphony HOA, and the North Valley Coalition were notified of the original 2017 request, as well as property owners within 100 feet.

City Legal provided guidance that re-notification for the remanded matter is not necessary. Nonetheless, this item was included in the legal advertisement published in the Albuquerque Journal for the 08 August 2019 EPC hearing.

## ***IV. ANALYSIS***

The applicant addresses the District Court order to consider the two remanded items in a detailed letter to the EPC dated 29 July 2019. These two items correspond to criteria C and D)3, and criterion E, respectively, of R-270-1980, the City's policies/criteria for zone

map changes in effect at the time of submittal in 2017. The summaries of the applicant's responses to the two items are in italics and the Planning staff analysis follows each one:

- 1) Whether the proposed C-2 zone is in significant conflict with purported NVAP limitations on commercial development.

*The C-2 rezoning is **not in conflict with the NVAP** because the NVAP does not limit commercial development to a specific area and, moreover, the rezoning furthers the NVAP which specifically calls for commercial development in this very area along I-40, which it designates as "Central Urban," and because the NVAP, the 2001 amendments to the City's previous 1989 Comp. Plan, as well as the City's controlling 2017 Comp. Plan, all call for "village center" and "centers and corridors" commercial development in this area adjacent to I-40 and Rio Grande Blvd.*

Staff: The applicant correctly notes that the NVAP language cited by the appellant (NVAP, page 38) is a description of a preferred scenario and not a Goal or Policy that reflects the land use and/or transportation strategy for the area. Per R-270-1980, a change shall not be in conflict with adopted elements of the Comprehensive Plan or other city master plans; adopted Goals and Policies best express the articulated intent for the community (R-270-1980, (C) and (D)3).

The applicant correctly cites the most applicable articulation of the NVAP's intent for commercial development as Goal 11 on page 6:

11. To locate commercial and industrial development within the I-25 corridor, and selected areas along the I-40 corridor, especially as an alternative to extensive lower valley commercial/industrial development.

The applicant also notes that the NVAP reflected the previous 1989 Comp Plan Areas that designated the subject area as "Central Urban" (NVAP, Comprehensive Plan Areas map, page 42) and as a "Village Center Area" (NVAP, Preferred Scenario Land Use Plan map, page 37). The map on page 37 also identifies the subject site as Housing, but the retention of some of the existing R-1 zoning maintains consistency with this Preferred Scenario map. Of note, the map on page 37 designates an area along I-40, at the southeastern corner of the NVAP area, as "Large Scale Community & Regional Commercial," but this map does not fully reflect existing nor limit commercial development elsewhere in the NVAP area (e.g. commercial zoning and uses exist at the intersection of Rio Grande and Griegos, a location designated as Housing on the page 37 map).

NVAP Goal/Issue 6 on page 6 states:

6. To encourage quality commercial/industrial development and redevelopment in response to area needs in already developed/established commercial industrial zones and areas. To

discourage future commercial/industrial development on lots not already zoned commercial/industrial.

The above Goal may appear to limit future commercial development, but the language is “discourage” not prohibit. But it does encourage development in already established commercial industrial zones and areas, which the subject site already is with the existing M-1 zoning. Furthermore, and most importantly, any perceived or alleged limitation on commercial development in the Rank II NVAP is tempered and superseded by the Policy direction of the Rank I Comp Plan, per Section 14-13-2-2 Rank Importance of City Plans:

“Adopted city plans for urban development and conservation are of varying rank importance. Lower ranking plans should be consistent with higher ranking plans, and when this is indisputably not the case, the conflicting provision of the lower ranking plan is null and void. Plans should identify how they relate to relevant, higher ranking plans.”

The requested C-2 zone is not in significant conflict with purported NVAP limitations on commercial development because the most applicable Goal/Policy language (Goals 6 and 11, page 6) does not limit commercial development on the subject site. Moreover, the applicant has demonstrated compliance with R-270-1980, criteria (C) and (D)<sup>3</sup>, because the requested change is not in conflict with the Comp Plan nor the NVAP, and is more advantageous to the community, as articulated by the vision, Goals, and Policies of the Comp Plan (including the elimination of M-1 uses that would be harmful to the community). The NVAP was not updated/amended with the adoption of the 2017 Comp Plan to reflect the updated Rank I vision and policy direction.

- 2) Whether some of the permissive uses of the proposed C-2 zone would be harmful to adjacent property, neighborhood, or community

*The C-2 permissive uses will not be harmful to adjacent property owners, the neighborhood or the community, because (1) all C-2 uses will be buffered from all R-1 property with an R-2 buffer owned entirely by the Garcia Entities, (2) because the C-2 rezoning removes a previous intensity mismatch where 5.29 acres of M-1 property was directly adjacent to R-1, (3) because the rezoning creates a properly scaled village center infill site for a much needed modern grocery store, (4) because the village center and centers and corridors commercial redevelopment objectives expressed in the City’s controlling 2017 Comp. Plan and other Plans for the area operate as a finding that C-2 Community Commercial zoning here is not harmful, as well as (5) for each of the specific reasons given in the table of specific C-2 permissive uses which is provided in the applicable section of this letter below.*

**Please see the 29 July 2019 Letter to EPC, pages 5 – 9 for applicant’s use tables.**

Staff: The applicant’s outline of each C-2 use and the explanation of no harm to the community is comprehensive and useful. Staff is in agreement with the applicant’s

analysis because many of the commercial uses are either already allowed in some fashion by the existing M-1 zoning and/or any adverse impacts of the C-2 uses will be addressed by site design requirements, distance separation requirements, required off-site infrastructure (vehicular access) per use and intensity, and/or by required landscape and buffering. The applicant correctly notes that C-2 zones and C-2 uses “coexist with adjacent and nearby residential neighborhoods in many areas throughout Albuquerque.” It is not unusual for C-2 zoning to be next to residential neighborhoods and there are existing buffer and separation requirements when this occurs.

The applicant goes further by outlining multiple M-1 uses that would be eliminated by the zone change request that would be harmful adjacent property, the neighborhood, or community including, but not limited to, C-3 permissive uses, IP (industrial park) uses, manufacturing, vehicle dismantling, truck terminal, poultry and rabbit killing, concrete batch plant, gravel stockpiling, and construction equipment sales.

Given the context of the site, the proposed zoning pattern with transitions of use intensity from I-40 northward, the permissive uses of the proposed C-2 zone would not be harmful to adjacent property, neighborhood, or community (R-270-1980, (E)).

## ***V. CONCLUSION***

The request is for a Zone Map Amendment (Zone Change) for 21 contiguous parcels of land within MRGCD Map #35, generally located to the north of Interstate 40 and east of Rio Grande Blvd between the Alameda Drain and Campbell Ditch containing approximately 20 acres (the “subject site”).

The property is currently zoned a combination of M-1 Light Industrial and R-1 Residential, and the applicant is proposed to change the zoning of 11.61 acres at the southern portion of the site to C-2 Community Commercial with approximately 7.85 acres of R-2 Residential located to the north of that. A portion of the subject properties closest to the existing single-family residential homes at the northern edge of the project are proposed to remain with R-1 zoning. The request is generally consistent with and furthers numerous goals of the updated 2017 Comprehensive Plan, and is well justified in accordance with R-270-1980 as analyzed in the June 8 and July 13, 2017 staff reports.

The Second Judicial District Court affirmed the City Council’s decision in January 2017 except for two items that are remanded back to the City for further consideration:

- 1) Whether the proposed C-2 zone is in significant conflict with purported NVAP limitations on commercial development; and
- 2) Whether some of the permissive uses of the proposed C-2 zone would be harmful to adjacent property, neighborhood, or community

Staff recommends approval of the request based on the findings outlined in this supplemental staff report. New recommended findings that address the two items above are in **bold text**.

## ***FINDINGS, Zone Map Amendment***

### ***Project # 1011232, Case # 17EPC-40011***

1. This is a request for a Zone Map Amendment (Zone Change) for Tracts 224D3B, 225B2A1A1 & 226C2B, 225B2A1A2, 225B2B, 225B2C, 225B2D, 225B2E, 225B2F & 225B2A2, 225B2G, 225B2H, 225B2I, 226A, 227, 228, 232, 233A, 236-A, 236-B, and Land of J A Garcia Tract A, MRGCD Map #35 located north of Interstate 40 and east of Rio Grande Blvd between the Alameda Drain and Campbell Ditch and containing approximately 20 acres.
2. The subject site is currently zoned a combination of R-1 (Residential Zone) and M-1 (Light Industrial Zone). The request is for a zone change for approximately 11.61 acres to C-2 (Community Commercial Zone) and 7.85 acres to R-2 (Residential Zone). The R-2 zone would allow townhomes and apartments in addition to what is currently allowed under the R-1 designation, and the C-2 zone would allow for a wide variety of office, commercial and service, and some institutional uses generally of a lower intensity than is allowed by the existing M-1 zone.
3. The existing R-1 zoning is the original zoning of the subject site. The M-1 zoning was the subject of a zone change request in 1957 (Z-440) and pre-dated the existence of I-40.
4. The 2017 Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan), North Valley Area Plan, Alameda Drain and Trail Master Plan, and the City of Albuquerque Zoning Code are incorporated herein by reference and made part of the record for all purposes.
5. The subject site is just northwest of the I-40 and Rio Grande Blvd interchange, which is the nexus of three Comp Plan Corridors: Rio Grande Blvd immediately west of the subject site from I-40 going north and then east on Indian School Road is a Multi-Modal Corridor; Rio Grande Blvd south of I-40 and heading west on I-40 is a Major Transit Corridor; and I-40 east of Rio Grande Blvd is a Commuter Corridor.
6. The subject site is within both the Area of Change and the Area of Consistency of the Comp Plan. The request is in compliance with and furthers the following applicable goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan:

Policy 5.1.1 Desired Growth: Capture regional growth in Centers and Corridors to help shape the built environment into a sustainable development pattern.

(c) Encourage employment density, compact development, redevelopment, and infill in Centers and Corridors as the most appropriate areas to accommodate growth over time and discourage the need for development at the urban edge.

The request furthers Policy 5.1.1 c) because the subject site is a large infill site in close proximity to multiple corridor types, including Major Transit, and the change in zoning will allow for additional employment and housing density in a location not at the urban edge.

Policy 5.1.10 Major Transit Corridors: Foster corridors that prioritize high-frequency transit service with pedestrian-oriented development.

(b) Minimize negative impacts on nearby neighborhoods by providing transitions between development along Transit Corridors and abutting single-family residential areas.

The request furthers Policy 5.1.10 b) because the requested zone change creates a step-down from more intense commercial uses adjacent to I-40 and Rio Grande Boulevard to medium density residential down to single-family residential to the north.

(c) Encourage mixed-use development in Centers and near intersections.

The request furthers Policy 5.1.10 c) because the combination of Community Commercial and medium density multi-family development would foster more active mixed-use development near the intersection of three different Comprehensive Plan corridor types at the I-40 and Rio Grande Blvd interchange.

Policy 5.2.1 Land Uses: Create healthy, sustainable, and distinct communities with a mix of uses that are conveniently accessible from surrounding neighborhoods.

(a) Encourage development and redevelopment that brings goods, services, and amenities within walking and biking distance of neighborhoods and promotes good access for all residents.

The request furthers Policy 5.2.1 a) because the requested zone change will facilitate redevelopment of long vacant land with goods, services, and amenities that is accessible to nearby residents within the Los Duranes neighborhood, as well as farther away, via walking and along a number of existing and proposed bicycle facilities.

(b) Encourage development that offers choice in transportation, work areas, and lifestyles.

The request furthers Policy 5.2.1 b) because the subject site is within ¼ mile of multiple transit stops, adjacent to convenient bicycle facilities, and close to a major interchange between I-40 and an arterial roadway that offers easy access for automobiles allowing for choice in transportation and lifestyles for both those residents living in the proposed development and those who live elsewhere and will travel to the development for employment and other activities.

(d) Encourage development that broadens housing options to meet a range of incomes and lifestyles.

The request furthers Policy 5.2.1 d) because changing some of the zoning from R-1 to R-2 will allow for a wider variety of housing options than currently exists on the subject site including single-family houses, townhomes, and medium density apartments.

(e) Create healthy, sustainable communities with a mix of uses that are conveniently accessible from surrounding neighborhoods.

The request furthers Policy 5.2.1 e) because the combination of R-2 and C-2 zoning requested allows for a wide mix of uses that will benefit the surrounding neighborhoods that can access the site via automobile, transit, bicycle, or walking.

(f) Encourage higher density housing as an appropriate use in the following situations:

- iii. In areas where a mixed density pattern is already established by zoning or by use, where it is compatible with existing area land uses, and where adequate infrastructure is or will be available;
- iv. In areas now predominately zoned single-family only where it comprises a complete block face and faces onto a similar or higher density development;
- v. In areas where a transition is needed between single-family homes and much more intensive development;

The request furthers Policy 5.2.1 f) because it includes higher density housing at the subject site in an area with a mix of uses already established, infrastructure in place, is of a size comparable to an entire block face, and will abut and be a transition between more intensive commercial development and existing developed single-family homes.

(n) Encourage more productive use of vacant lots and under-utilized lots, including surface parking.

The request furthers Policy 5.2.1 n) because it will facilitate redevelopment of long vacant and under-utilized lots.

Policy 5.3.1 Infill Development: Support additional growth in areas with existing infrastructure and public facilities.

The request furthers Policy 5.3.1 because rezoning the vacant subject site supports growth in an infill location surrounded by existing infrastructure including paved roads and various utilities.

Policy 5.6.1 Community Green Space: Provide visual relief from urbanization and offer opportunities for education, recreation, cultural activities, and conservation of natural resources by setting aside publicly-owned Open Space, parks, trail corridors, and open areas throughout the Comp Plan area as mapped in Figure 5-3.

(a) Maintain existing irrigation systems as Community Green Space and to help ensure agricultural lands in rural areas.

The request furthers Policy 5.6.1 a) because the development will maintain and enhance the Alameda Drain and Campbell Ditch adjacent to the subject site thus offering recreation and some visual relief from the surrounding urbanization, as well as contributing to the vision for this section of the Alameda Drain as described in the Alameda Drain and Trail Master Plan.

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.

(b) Encourage development that expands employment opportunities.

The request will allow for development of long vacant parcels with a more productive use, including commercial uses that will expand employment opportunities on land that is partially designated as an Area of Change thus furthering Policy 5.6.2 b).

(c) Foster a range of housing options at various densities according to each Center and Corridor type.

The request includes R-2 zoning, which allows for a variety of housing options and densities up to medium density apartments thus furthering Policy 5.6.2 c).

(d) Encourage higher-density housing and mixed-use development as appropriate land uses that support transit and commercial and retail uses.

The request furthers Policy 5.6.2 d) because the combination of R-2 and C-2 zoning requested will allow for higher-density housing and mixed-use development that will support transit along Rio Grande Boulevard, as well as supporting the existing and future commercial and retail uses in the area.

(f) Minimize potential negative impacts of development on existing residential uses with respect to noise, stormwater runoff, contaminants, lighting, air quality, and traffic.

The proposed zoning steps down in intensity from south to north and development of the vacant parcels will add an additional buffer between the existing residential and Interstate 40. Future development proposals will need to address stormwater, lighting that is in compliance with Night Sky and zoning regulations, and traffic circulation. In particular, a Traffic Impact Study has been completed for all of the proposed Rio Grande Crossing and shows that the transportation system can support this request thus furthering Policy 5.6.2 f).

(g) Encourage development where adequate infrastructure and community services exist.

The request furthers Policy 5.6.2 g) because redevelopment of the subject site will utilize existing available infrastructure including water, sewer, and electricity, as well as better utilizing other existing services as an infill location rather than new edge development.

Policy 5.6.3 Areas of Consistency: Protect and enhance the character of existing single-family neighborhoods, areas outside of Centers and Corridors, parks, and Major Public Open Space.

(b) Ensure that development reinforces the scale, intensity, and setbacks of the immediately surrounding context.

The requested R-2 and C-2 zones reinforce the surrounding context by allowing similar uses and intensities of development as the commercial zoning to the west and R-3 to the east, as well as creating a step-down transition of intensities to the existing R-1 located to the north of the subject site, so the request furthers Policy 5.6.3 b).

(c) Carefully consider zone changes from residential to non-residential zones in terms of scale, impact on land use compatibility with abutting properties, and context.

A portion of this request is to change the zoning from residential to commercial, and it has been considered carefully based on its context. The proposed zones are compatible with and reinforce the land uses on properties located immediately east and west of the subject site and step down in intensity to the properties to the north including leaving a portion of the

applicant's property zoned R-1 to maintain land use compatibility thus furthering Policy 5.6.3 c).

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.

(a) Provide appropriate transitions between uses of different intensity or density and between non-residential uses and single-family neighborhoods to protect the character and integrity of existing residential areas.

The request furthers Policy 5.6.4 a) because the applicant has made a request with appropriate variations in housing densities and commercial intensity in appropriate locations as to effectively transition to the existing residential areas to the north of the subject site. In addition, the applicant will need to comply with all zoning standards for setbacks, height, landscaping, and buffering when the site is eventually developed.

Policy 9.1.1 Housing options: Support the development, improvement, and conservation of housing for a variety of income levels and types of residents and households.

(a) Increase the supply of housing that is affordable for all income levels.

The request furthers Policy 9.1.1 a) because the requested R-2 zone allows for a variety of housing types and densities such as single-family houses, townhomes, and apartments that allows for free-market housing options to suit various income levels.

(e) Provide for the development of quality housing for elderly residents.

The applicant indicates a desire to develop a senior living facility as allowed by the requested zoning that will provide for quality housing for elderly residents thus furthering Policy 9.1.1 e).

(i) Provide for the development of multi-family housing close to public services, transit, and shopping.

The request for R-2 adjacent to C-2 will allow for development of multi-family housing immediately adjacent to shopping options, and the proposed development will be in close proximity to transit options along Rio Grande Boulevard, so the request furthers Policy 9.1.1 i).

Policy 9.3.2 Other areas: Increase housing density and housing options in other areas by locating near appropriate uses and services and maintaining the scale of surrounding development.

(a) Encourage higher density residential and mixed use development as appropriate uses near existing public facilities, educational facilities, job centers, social services, and shopping districts.

The proposed mixed-use development is near to existing public facilities, educational facilities, job centers, and shopping districts such as Duranes Elementary School, which has

capacity, the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center and new development along 12<sup>th</sup> Street between Menaul and I-40, and Old Town thus furthering Policy 9.3.2 a).

(b) Encourage multi-family and mixed use development in areas where a transition is needed between single-family homes and more intense development.

The request furthers Policy 9.3.2 b) because the proposed multi-family zoning is a transition between existing single-family residential and the proposed C-2 zoning and the Interstate 40 corridor.

Policy 10.1.1 Distribution: Improve the community's access to recreational opportunities by balancing the City and County's parks and Open Space systems with the built environment.

The requested zone change will help better balance the parks and Open Space system by establishing more active commercial uses adjacent to the Alameda Drain and Trail system, which will encourage more users and activation of the future trail facility thus furthering Policy 10.1.1.

Policy 12.1.5 Irrigation System: Coordinate with MRGCD and other stakeholders to protect the irrigation system.

The request furthers Policy 12.1.5 because, in addition to being a stakeholder as a property owner abutting the Alameda Drain, the applicant has forged a relationship with MRGCD to support and protect the irrigation system abutting the subject site by improving access and generally supporting development of the Alameda Drain and Trail Master Plan.

Policy 13.5.1 Land Use Impacts: Prevent environmental hazards related to land uses.

(b) Protect public health, safety, and welfare by discouraging incompatible land uses in close proximity, such as housing and industrial activity.

The request furthers Policy 13.5.1 b) because it will replace an incompatible industrial zone that is currently adjacent to residential with a more appropriate commercial zone, while creating an effective transition from the busy I-40 corridor and the commercial zoning down to the lower density single-family residential north of the subject site.

7. The subject site is within the boundaries of the North Valley Area Plan. The request generally furthers the North Valley Area Plan goals and policies by:

- a. providing a variety of choices for housing and lifestyles,
- b. planning to address land use conflicts such as between industrial and residential zoning,
- c. redevelopment of vacant land,
- d. promoting higher density development where there is adequate infrastructure,
- e. encouraging mixed use development,
- f. promoting development that encourages more sustainable transportation options, and
- g. The requested C-2 zone is not in significant conflict with purported NVAP limitations on commercial development because the most applicable Goal/Policy**

**language (Goals 6 and 11, page 6) does not limit commercial development on the subject site. Any perceived or alleged limitation on commercial development in the Rank II NVAP is tempered and superseded by the Policy direction of the Rank I Comp Plan, per Section 14-13-2-2 Rank Importance of City Plans.**

8. The subject site abuts the Alameda Drain on its west side, so considerations of the Alameda Drain and Trail Master Plan apply. The Alameda Drain and Trail Master Plan is primarily concerned with the design and routing of the proposed trail along the Alameda Drain, but it contemplated the future development of the subject site in its narrative stating the southern portion of the trail is fronted by vacant properties “with potential commercial uses.” The request furthers the Master Plan because the proposed development offers an opportunity to create additional amenities along the trail corridor, as well as provide access and a destination for future trail users.
9. The zone change request has been justified pursuant to *R-270-1980* as follows:
  - A. The applicant’s justification letter and the policies cited and analyzed in Findings 6 through 8 substantiate the claim that the request is consistent with the health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the city.
  - B. The proposed zoning categories allow for similarly intense uses as those surrounding the subject site – commercial to the west and multi-family residential to the east – and the request lays them out in a thoughtful manner stepping the intensity of the freeway to commercial zoning, followed by a medium density multi-family transition to the existing single-family residential located to the north of the subject site, which improves land use stability not found with vacant properties and industrial zoning adjacent to single-family residential.
  - C. The request is consistent with and furthers adopted plans and policies, including the Comprehensive Plan, North Valley Area Plan, and Alameda Drain and Trail Master Plan as summarized in Findings 6 through 8.
  - D. The existing zoning is inappropriate because it predates significant changes in the area, as well as the existing M-1 in particular being in an inappropriate location abutting single-family residential. Changed community conditions include the routing of Interstate 40 and the adoption of the Los Duranes Sector Development Plan by the City. The industrial zoning of the subject site was bisected by Interstate 40 when the highway was built, and the remaining portion is too small and inappropriately close to residential to be properly developed and utilized. Adoption of the plan, which affected the properties on the west side of the Alameda Drain and are not a part of this request, created zoning along Rio Grande Boulevard that allows for a mix of uses. The requested zone change would extend a mix of commercial and residential uses farther east and could lead to a more cohesive development with those other properties to the west. In addition, as shown in the policy analysis, the request furthers numerous policies of the Comprehensive Plan and generally supports the North Valley Area Plan and Alameda Drain and Trail Master Plan, so the requested use categories are more advantageous to the community.

- E. The proposed R-2 and C-2 zones allow uses that will not be harmful to the adjacent property, neighborhood, or community because the uses of these two zones are the same or less harmful than the uses already allowed on the subject site in the M-1 zone or in the adjacent R-3 zone to the east and the SU-2 LD MUD-2, which refers to the C-2 zone to the west. **Given the context of the site, the proposed zoning pattern with transitions of use intensity from I-40 northward, the permissive uses of the proposed C-2 zone would not be harmful to adjacent property, neighborhood, or community because many of the commercial uses are either already allowed in some fashion by the existing M-1 zoning and/or any adverse impacts of the C-2 uses will be addressed by site design requirements, distance separation requirements, required off-site infrastructure (vehicular access) per use and intensity, and/or by required landscape and buffering.**
  - F. Approval of the requested amendment will not require any capital improvements because the site is located in an area that already has infrastructure. If future development requires additional infrastructure the applicant will have to make those improvements themselves.
  - G. Economic considerations are not the determining factor in the request, rather the request is justified based on changed community conditions and being more advantageous to the community in accordance with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
  - H. The subject site does not front directly onto any major street except for I-40, which does not allow for direct access, and the request is not justified by the location. The request is justified based on changed community conditions and as being more advantageous to the community as articulated by the Comprehensive Plan.
  - I. The request is not creating a small area of zoning different from the surrounding zoning, so the request does not constitute a spot zone.
  - J. The request is not for a strip of land along a street, so it does not constitute a request for strip zoning.
10. The Near North Valley, Sawmill Area, Los Duranes, and West Old Town Neighborhood Associations, Symphony HOA, and the North Valley Coalition, as well as property owners within 100 feet were notified of the request, as required.
11. A facilitated meeting was held on May 23, 2017. The meeting report submitted by the facilitator indicates a primary concern of the neighbors related to traffic and what the impacts development of commercial uses on the subject site will have on Rio Grande Blvd and the I-40 interchange, including a request that the application be deferred until a Traffic Impact Study can be completed. Other questions and comments included discussion about the height and density allowed by the R-2 zone, as well as the possibility of a grocery store and what type it could be.
12. Staff has talked with numerous individuals about the request in person or over the phone indicating varying levels of support and concern over aspects of the proposal. Six written letters of support were received before the June 8, 2017 hearing, as well as four letters in

opposition to the request – two of which are from the owner and family of the closest neighboring R-1 zoned properties. The letters in opposition question the intensity and allowed uses of the C-2 zone, as well as reiterate the traffic concerns that were discussed extensively at the facilitated meeting.

13. At its June 8, 2017 hearing, the EPC voted to defer the request to the July 13, 2017 hearing to allow for continued discussion with affected neighbors regarding traffic and other issues related to the development proposal.
14. Since the deferral, approximately 32 more written public comments were received. Six of these comments are in support of the request with an additional two comments from the Los Duranes Neighborhood Association and homeowners within the Symphony subdivision offering conditional support.
15. 17 letters are opposed and three ask for another deferral related to continued concerns related to traffic, the potential closure of the Campbell Ditch to accommodate vehicular ingress/egress, the scale of development and density allowed by the requested zones, and the proposal taking away from the rural character of the North Valley.
16. Four letters take a more neutral tone asking questions and offering possible solutions to concerns that have been raised.
17. A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) was not required by Transportation Development for this zone change request; however, in the time since the deferral, the applicant has completed a TIS showing the impacts of their proposed development on the surrounding transportation system. The TIS shows there is sufficient capacity on Rio Grande Blvd. to handle the additional trips generated by the proposed development.
18. A second TIS was completed looking at the use of the Campbell Ditch alignment for ingress/egress, and it was shown that such a connection did not yield enough benefit to warrant an alternative connection.
19. The requested C-2 zoning is greater than 5 acres in size, which under the current Zoning Code would constitute a Shopping Center site and future development would have to comply with those regulations.
- 20. The Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) approved the requested zone change at the July 13, 2017 hearing. That decision was appealed to City Council, who in October 2017 accepted the Land Use Hearing Officer's recommendation to deny the appeal. The City Council's decision was appealed to District Court.**
- 21. The Second Judicial District Court affirmed the City Council's decision to grant the zone map amendment request in January 2017 except for two items that are remanded back to the City for further consideration:**
  - 1) Whether the proposed C-2 zone is in significant conflict with purported NVAP limitations on commercial development; and**
  - 2) Whether some of the permissive uses of the proposed C-2 zone would be harmful to adjacent property, neighborhood, or community**

**22. The applicant has replatted the site and created lot lines that correspond to the proposed zoning boundaries as accurately shown on Exhibit 1 of the applicant's Appendix to the July 29, 2019 letter.**

***RECOMMENDATION***

***APPROVAL of 17EPC-40011, a request for Zone Map Amendment from M-1 and R-1 to C-2 and R-2 for Tracts 224D3B, 225B2A1A1 & 226C2B, 225B2A1A2, 225B2B, 225B2C, 225B2D, 225B2E, 225B2F & 225B2A2, 225B2G, 225B2H, 225B2I, 226A, 227, 228, 232, 233A, 236-A, 236-B, and Land of J A Garcia Tract A, MRGCD Map #35, based on the preceding Findings and subject to the following Condition of Approval.***

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***Russell Brito  
Planning Manager***