



10 February 2022

Environmental Planning Commission
City of Albuquerque Planning Department
600 2nd Street NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102

RE: 4th and Bell Zoning Map Amendment

Dear Commissioners,

The Barelás Neighborhood Association writes this letter to the Environmental Planning Commission to formally address the Zoning Map Amendment request to MX-M from MX-L by Homewise, Inc. and Michael A Gonzales. The Association requests the following action be taken by the EPC:

- Motion to defer the Zone Map Amendment for *Lot 1 Block 1 Gutierrez Addition and Tract 30B Map 41*, owned by Homewise Inc., to the next scheduled EPC Hearing.
- Motion to deny the Zone Map Amendment for *Tract A Plat of Tracts A & B Barelás Coffee House containing .4481 ac* owned by Michael A. Gonzales.

The Neighborhood Association desires to support development that is mindful of the history and culture of Barelás, the people, and stability of the residential neighborhood and its relationship with the economic vitality of the 4th Street Main Street corridor (as designated in the Comprehensive Plan and 4th St Cultural Corridor Plan). The Association asks the EPC to consider the following when deliberating on the request before them:

The neighborhood supports the current zoning of MX-L along the 4th street corridor as it believes the uses within the zone provide ample opportunity for redevelopment and economic vitality through "*non-destination retail and commercial uses*" and foster a well balanced relationship with the residential land use. These land uses have coexisted together for 250+ years, and while the neighborhood does see the need for investment to update buildings and upgrade infrastructure, it does not agree that rezoning the subject site to MX-M is necessary for this to occur.

When comparing the uses of the MX-L and MX-M zones, MX-L provides a layer of protection against the more intensive and auto-oriented permissive uses of the MX-M zone (i.e. Transit facility, light vehicle fueling station, vehicle sales and rental, catering etc.) and protect against nuisance permissive uses such as bars and nightclubs. In addition, the Association believes the conditional use process in MX-L for uses such as taprooms is appropriate. The permissive uses of the MX-M zone are more conducive to vehicle oriented corridors such as Avenida Dolores Huerta, where MX-M currently exists, and where uses such as drive-throughs and fueling stations occur. Implementing the

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MX-M zone would lower the barrier for more intensive auto-oriented uses that ultimately deter from the objective of the Main Street Corridor designation *"to be lively, highly walkable streets lined with local-serving businesses, modeled after the American tradition of Main Street as a place for living, working, and shopping."* Additionally, the permissive auto-oriented uses of the MX-M zone, detract from the objectives of the Major Transit corridor to be *"served by high frequency and local transit (e.g. Rapid Ride, local, and commuter buses). These corridors prioritize transit above other modes to ensure a convenient and efficient transit system. Walkability on these corridors is key to providing a safe and attractive pedestrian environment, as well as good access for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users to goods and services along these Corridors and the Centers they connect."* We note that a much higher percentage of residents here rely on walking, biking, and public transit as compared to residents in most other areas of Albuquerque.

Auto-oriented is the current condition of the 4th street corridor. This can be seen by numerous curb cuts on residential and commercial property and existence of alleyways connecting to 4th Street. The characterizing land uses of 4th street are overwhelmingly skewed towards service and institutional uses to include auto shops, non-profits, city offices, schools, and churches. The requested zone change would perpetuate this condition and actively work against other initiatives such as the Barelás Community Coalition's Great Blocks project (\$5 million in public investment; currently in the design phase) to redesign 4th Street to be pedestrian oriented by way of reducing the number of curb cuts, widening and improving sidewalks, and reducing the street width to deter speeding and decrease accidents. Ultimately, the objective of this project is to provide the conditions for development and uses that are dependent on pedestrian traffic (not vehicular traffic) to realize and implement the objectives of the MX-L for non-destination retail and commercial uses that, first and foremost, serve the residents (restaurants, coffee shops, bank, health clinics, artisan manufacturing, etc.) and stabilize the residential and commercial land uses, preserve the history and culture, keep residents in place, and provide tangible and clear pathways to economic opportunities for residents to live, work, and frequent establishments within their neighborhood.

The Neighborhood Association supports "catering" as a use in Barelás, and most definitely supports and welcomes the Street Food Institute (tenant of the proposed project), but does not agree the catering use is best located at the subject site. The neighborhood supported catering as a use when Homewise proposed this project on 2nd Street (tentatively between 803 and 817) and also supported the live-work project that was proposed by Homewise at the site subject to this request. Given that Homewise has demonstrated it has options and the capacity to implement various project concepts and redevelop other sites in Barelás, the Association is confident that Homewise can develop a concept that completely aligns with the "Main Street" Corridor, "Major Transit" Corridor, and "Area of Change" designations at the subject site, while furthering the neighborhood vision of the 4th street corridor.

The neighborhood is placed in a precarious position with this request because the zoning map amendment is permanent; and while Homewise can control the use of the site for the next 7-years (because of funding stipulations), the additional permissive uses of MX-M perpetuate beyond 7 years

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and beyond Homewise as the property owner. It is plausible Homewise will sell the property as this is part of their community development strategy. Homewise and the Street Food Institute have stated they wish for the Street Food Institute to eventually purchase the property, but no plans are in place for this to occur. The Association proposed that Homewise utilize covenants to perpetually mitigate the problematic uses of the MX-M zone at the subject site and proceed with their request for MX-M for catering. Unfortunately, Homewise did not offer a binding, enforceable, and permanent solution and did not provide a plan past the 7 years. The Association has done its due diligence in negotiating with the property owner and presenting solutions that would benefit both Homewise and the neighborhood. **Ultimately, the Association does not desire to oppose the proposed catering use project, but requests only time to continue to negotiate or support Homewise is selecting another site for the proposed use.**

Finally, the .441 acre parcel is requesting an upzone solely on the basis of creating uniformity in zoning. This parcel is currently utilized as parking for the Barelás Coffee House, and the Association feels this is the best use as the Coffee House is an anchor business and attracts plenty of visitors and vehicular traffic to this block of Barelás. Without a designated parking lot, the traffic would divert to the residential streets. Because no redevelopment or alternative uses of this parcel were presented (the property owner never met with the Association and the Agent conveyed the owner had no plans for redevelopment), the site should remain zoned as MX-L. Additionally, MX-M applied to this parcel, would not fulfill the criterion of the "Area of Change" designation in the Comprehensive Plan. as it would remain in the same condition for an indefinite amount of time (private parking use).

The Barelás Neighborhood Association respectfully requests that the EPC grant the above motions or appropriate related action that would allow Homewise, Inc. and the Barelás Neighborhood Association to reach a consensus.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
Lisa Padilla
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Lisa Padilla
President
Barelás Neighborhood Association