

APPLICANT PROJECT LETTER



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May 27, 2019

Dan Serrano, Chairman
Environmental Planning Commission
City of Albuquerque
600 Second Street NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Re: Request for Site Plan-EPC Major Amendment and Associated Variances to RML Height Regulation and Parking Area Buffer

Landscape Architecture
Urban Design
Planning Services

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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The purpose of this letter is to request a major amendment to the existing Site Development Plan for Building Permit for La Vida Llena, located at 10501 Lagrima de Oro Road NE between Juan Tabo Boulevard NE and Morris Street NE. The property is legally described as Amended Plat Land in Section 33 T11N R4E La Vida Llena containing approximately 16.89 acres. The property had previously been zoned SU-1 for Retirement Center/Nursing Home and was converted to R-ML under the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO). However, the Applicant submitted a Phase 2 IDO Voluntary Zone Conversion form to the Planning Department requesting zoning that better matches the existing and proposed development on this subject property, which includes a significant amount of non-residential services.

The Applicant, La Vida Llena (LVL), is requesting a major amendment to and replacement of the existing Site Plan for Building Permit that was approved by the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) on June 18, 1981 (Z-80-135). The major amendment will add two new structures (extensions to the existing building) to the LVL campus; an Independent Living building and associated commons space and an Assisted Living/Memory Care building. The new construction will be completed in two phases as indicated on the Site Plan.

As part of this application, LVL is also requesting two variances to the following provisions of the IDO:

- Table 2-3-9(G) R-ML Zone District Dimensional Standards and Table 5-1-1: Building Height, Maximum: 35 feet
- Section 5-9(F)(1) Parking and Drive-throughs or Drive-ups: Parking Area Separation from Abutting Protected Lot: Minimum 50 feet

The Planning Department recently approved an Administrative Amendment (PR-2019-002114; SI-2019-00080) on April 5, 2019, which allowed for 38 new parking spaces in anticipation of future construction and development as shown in this current application for major amendment.

Existing Conditions

Existing Land Use and Zoning: Surrounding land use and zoning are illustrated on the following page and described below:

- North: CNM Montoya Campus (institutional use), zoned R-1D
- South: a mix of office buildings and restaurants situated between Lagrima de Oro and Montgomery Boulevard NE and served by an interior roadway (Montgomery Parkway Loop NE), zoned PD; and Hahn Park/Roadrunner Little League Ballfields, zoned NR-PO-A;

PRINCIPALS

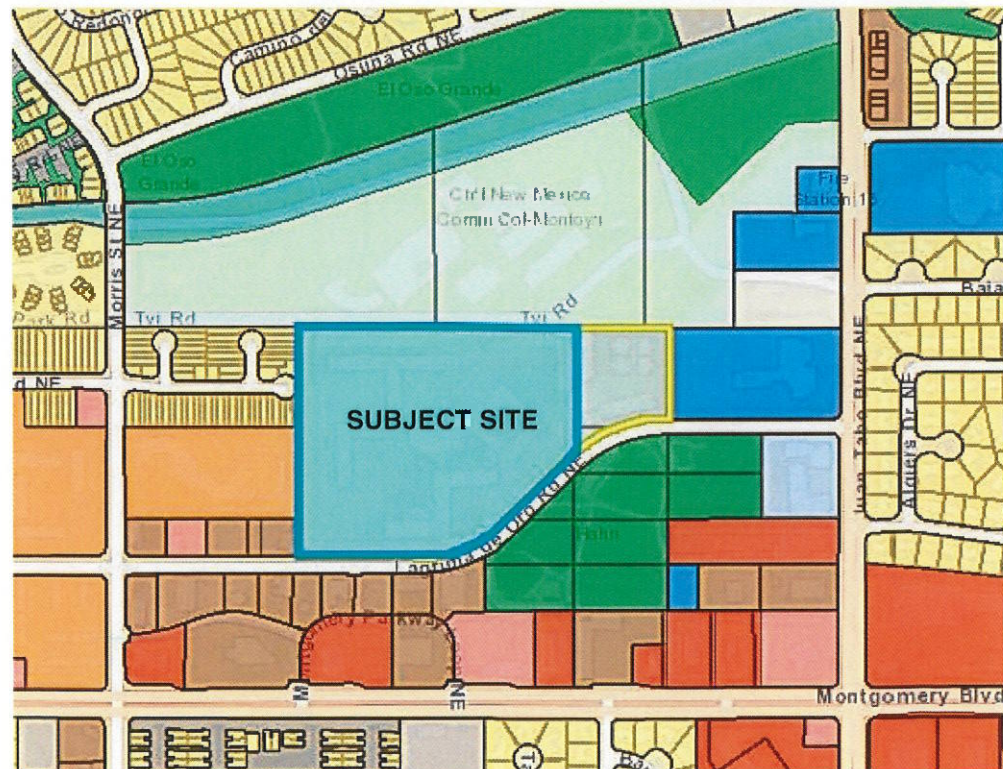
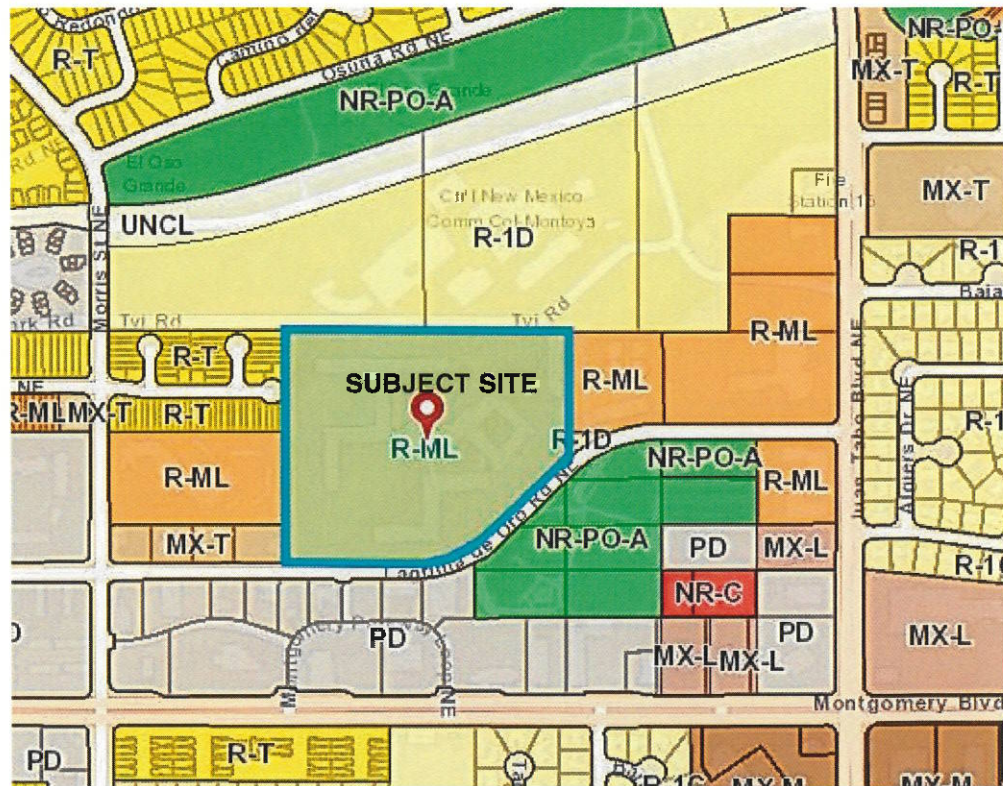
James K. Strozic, FAICP
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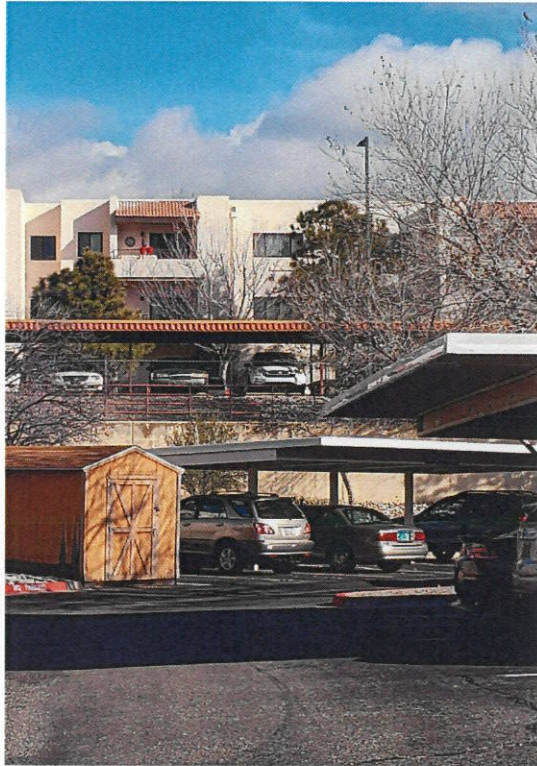
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- East: La Vida Llena (Alta Vista apartments and casitas), zoned R-ML and Juan Tabo Community Church, also zoned R-ML
- West: Townhouses, zoned R-T; Bear Canyon Estates (Assisted Living), zoned R-ML; and office, zoned MX-T



Above: Subject site and existing zoning. Below: Subject site and existing land use.



View east from Bear Canyon Estates.



Northeast corner of LVL campus adjacent to Alta Vista casitas (LVL) – notice the existing grade changes. The east end of the IL building site will be excavated by approximately 10 feet, further increasing the grade change.

Functional Road Classification: The LVL campus is situated between Juan Tabo Boulevard, an Urban Principal Arterial, and Morris Street, an Urban Major Collector, and north of Montgomery Boulevard, an Urban Principal Arterial. Lagrima de Oro is a local urban street.

Transit Connectivity: The LVL campus is well connected with transit service. It falls partially within 660 feet of a designated Major Transit Corridor along Montgomery Boulevard. Bus Route 5 (Montgomery-Carlisle) runs along Montgomery with a peak and off-peak frequency of 25 minutes, frequency on Saturday of 40 minutes, and



frequency on Sunday of 65 minutes. Bus Route 1 (Juan Tabo) runs along Juan Tabo with a weekday peak frequency of 25 minutes, off-peak frequency of 70 minutes, and a weekend frequency of 80 minutes. There are two westbound and two eastbound bus stops on Montgomery between Juan Tabo and Morris, and one northbound bus stop on Juan Tabo just north of Montgomery and a southbound bus stop just north of Lagrima de Oro.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity: The LVL campus is also well connected with bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Nearby bike facilities include bike lanes in Morris Street to the west, Bear Canyon Arroyo Trail to the north of the CNM campus, and a planned bike route along Lagrima de Oro.

History of La Vida Llena: In 1979, four local churches (St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, First Presbyterian, First United Methodist, and St. Paul's Lutheran) recognized the need for a retirement community that could provide an independent, active lifestyle, with customized levels of Life Plan to meet residents' needs through the aging process. LVL opened its doors in 1983 and continues to be the only Life Plan community in Albuquerque that offers all levels of care – Independent Living (IL), Assisted Living (AL), Memory Care (MC), and Skilled Nursing (SN). LVL's Nueva Vista building, located at the southwest corner of Lagrima de Oro and Juan Tabo, is a 4-story building containing 58 IL units that opened in 2012. New residents of LVL sign a Life Care Agreement and pay an entrance fee and monthly service fee, which goes towards paying life time health care for the resident as they age in place, even if through no fault of their own, they are no longer able to pay the monthly service fee.

OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE FOR PROJECT

Over the past decade, LVL has heard concerns from its residents regarding the design and layout of LVL's Health Care component. Primary to these concerns was the residents' desire to have single occupancy health care rooms rather than the double occupancy rooms currently in use. In 2017, LVL created a Master Plan to address this primary concern. The outcome of the Master Plan yielded the following:

Phase 1

- The relocation of displaced Assisted Living and Memory Care (AL/MC) functions out of the existing health care building and into a new building addition.

Phase 2

- The expansion of Independent Living (IL) apartments and parking to accommodate market demand. The proposed IL building (85,000 SF) includes structured parking on the ground floor and four stories of living units above.
- The IL commons area (8,192 SF) is an expansion of dining, exercise, and physical plant facilities to enhance resident amenity options.

Future Phase

- A renovation to the interior of the existing Health Care building to create the necessary square footage for single occupancy rooms.

Building Functions and Programs

The Phase 1 Assisted Living and Memory Care (AL/MC) building addition contains 17 new MC apartments and 30 new AL apartments in a three-story addition on the



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south side of the existing LVL campus. Community support spaces include a new unified interior lobby area connecting MC, AL, and HC areas; new dining and living areas for MC and AL, and associated staff support areas.

The Phase 2 Independent Living (IL) building consists of a five-story addition including a ground floor structured parking area with 40 new IL apartments located on the four floors above. IL support spaces include an expanded dining area, a new group exercise room, a new indoor connection to the main campus dining and community areas, and associated staff and physical plant support areas.

Exterior Building Design

The proposed Phase 1 and Phase 2 additions to the LVL campus have been designed to complement both the function and aesthetic of the existing facilities. The proposed building layouts keep similar building widths to the existing residential buildings and are organized where appropriate to both create additional exterior courtyard spaces and to maintain access to existing service functions. The exterior architectural vocabulary utilizes similar stucco walls to the existing campus, extending the existing tri-colored palate. Two colors of earth tones alternate on the new residential buildings, helping to differentiate between the offset exterior walls. The third terra cotta red stucco tone is used similarly to the existing buildings, accenting building entrances and major gathering spaces. Residential windows are used at appropriate residential apartment locations, while aluminum storefront to match existing buildings is used at public entrances and public function areas.

VARIANCE REQUEST

The Applicant is requesting two variances, including 1) a building height variance to the maximum building height allowed in the RM-L zone; and 2) a variance to the required 50-foot parking area separation for Regulated Lots (LVL) within 100 feet of a Protected Lot (R-T neighborhood to the west).

1) Building Height Variance

Table 2-3-9: R-ML Zone District Dimensional Standards

G Building Height, Maximum: 35 feet

- Variance Request for IL Building: The maximum height for the proposed IL building is 64 feet, 1.5-inches, not including the small area of the elevator tower, which adds another 2 feet. Therefore, the variance request to the maximum height for the IL building located on the north side of the campus adjacent to CNM Montoya Campus is 29 feet, 1.5-inches (not including the elevator tower, which is an allowed exception to the maximum height standard).
- Variance Request for AL/MC Building: The maximum height for the proposed AL/MC building is 47 feet, 9-inches from adjacent grade, not including the small area of the elevator tower, which adds another 3 feet. Therefore, the variance request to the maximum height for the AL/MC building located along Lagrima de Oro is 12 feet, 9-inches (not including the elevator tower, which is an allowed exception to the maximum height standard).

2) Parking Area Separation Variance

5-9(F)(1) Parking and Drive-throughs or Drive-ups

For Regulated Lots 10,000 square feet or larger, parking areas and drive-through lanes shall be separated from any abutting Protected Lot by a



minimum of 50 feet. For parking areas, landscaping requirements in Subsection 14-16-5-6(F)(1) apply.

- **Variance Request:** The small proposed parking area (5,560 SF) on the west side of the property shows a setback that varies between 20 to 30 feet from the Protected Lot property line to align with existing parking south along the property edge.

The following explanation summarizes how the request for variances meets the variance criteria pursuant to Section 6-6(N)(3) of the IDO:

1. 6-6(N)(3)(a) There are special circumstances applicable to the subject property that are not self-imposed and that do not apply generally to other property in the same zone district and vicinity, including but not limited to size, shape, topography, location, surroundings, and physical characteristics, and such special circumstances were created either by natural forces or by government eminent domain actions for which no compensation was paid. Such special circumstances of the property either create an extraordinary hardship in the form of a substantial and unjustified limitation on the reasonable use or return on the property, or practical difficulties result from strict compliance with the minimum standards.

Applicant Response: The project site was originally built in the early 1980s. It was zoned SU-1 for Retirement Community/Nursing Home, which allowed greater flexibility in design and layout than the current IDO zoning designation of R-ML. The special circumstances of the LVL campus are physical and include significant grade changes within the site and in relation to adjacent properties, and the unusual shape of the property created by the alignment of Lagrima de Oro. These physical characteristics were not self-imposed, but combined create an extraordinary hardship and practical difficulty in the form of a substantial limitation on the use of the site resulting from strict compliance with the minimum standards.

There is approximately 45 feet of grade change from east to west, which has made the development of the site more difficult and at a higher cost than other property in the same zone district and vicinity. The property sits above the adjacent R-T development to the west by approximately 5 feet and includes an 8-9 foot retaining wall on the southern edge between the LVL campus and the Bear Canyon Estates senior living community. The property sits 15 feet below LVL's Alta Visa casitas to the east. The changes in grade have impacted and limited the design, location, and layout of the existing buildings as well as the two proposed building extensions.

The area where the AL/MC building will be located has steep grade changes and requires that the primary entrance facing south to be located 9 feet below the driveway entrance onto Lagrima de Oro. At the west end of the building, the basement will be located at 7 feet below the curb line of Lagrima de Oro. The site design for the IL building includes a 10-foot retaining wall in order to connect to the existing building without having to construct ramps, which furthers accessibility to mobility challenged residents. CNM to the north is 6 to 10 feet above the adjacent grade on the subject site. The Alta Vista casitas (also owned by LVL), are approximately 19 feet above the finished floor elevation of the proposed IL building.

In addition to the topography challenges, the length of the property running north-south is significantly shorter on the east side (443 feet) than the west side (821 feet). The shape of the property was not self-imposed, but rather, created by the alignment of Lagrima de Oro, which substantially limits the development of LVL and creates an extraordinary hardship and practical difficulty from strict compliance with the minimum IDO standards contained in the R-ML zone and the parking area buffer provision. Strict compliance with these regulations would prevent LVL from replacing double occupancy units with single occupancy units (a request made by the existing residents and in tune with market trends in assisted living and health care) and adding more Independent Living units that are needed in Albuquerque. In order to meet these physical challenges and add/replace senior living units and services that keep the building extensions consistent with the existing building layouts, it is necessary and unavoidable to create taller buildings in compact areas.

There would be extraordinary hardship in having to reconfigure the internal circulation of the site in order to comply with the 50-foot parking area separation requirement on the west side of the property (see dashed line for 50-foot buffer on Site Plan, sheet 1). The existing building layout, site circulation, and parking pattern was designed to respond to the shape and grade changes of the property. The alignment of the parking area is consistent with the existing parking to the south, which was laid out in compliance with the Zoning Code minimum requirements when the original site plan was approved by the EPC.

The special circumstances as described above were not self-imposed but are the result of meeting the challenge of a site with significant grade changes and an irregular shape. The special circumstances are unavoidable and create practical difficulties resulting from strict compliance with the IDO regulations, particularly related to building height and the location of the new proposed parking area, and limit the ability of LVL to create single occupancy health care units and expand needed senior living services. Approval of the variance requests for building height and parking area buffer will allow for the development of IL and AL/MC building extensions and associated parking that will comply with all other applicable IDO provisions.

2. 6-6(N)(3)(b) The Variance will not be materially contrary to the public safety, health, or welfare.

Applicant Response: The two variances (overall height and parking area within 50 feet of a Protected Lot) will not have a negative impact or be materially contrary to public safety, health, or welfare because the Applicant has demonstrated that the closest surrounding properties to the building extensions are non-residential and sit at a grade significantly higher than the buildings. The variances further Comprehensive Plan goals and policies on public health, safety, and welfare by allowing for an established senior living community to expand to meet the needs of the aging community in Albuquerque, allow residents currently in double occupancy units to be in single occupancy private units, meet privacy concerns and HIPAA rules, and ensure better health and social outcomes in residents.

Aging Population: Table 1 below provides population characteristics by age cohort for the City of Albuquerque between 1980 and 2016, which were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. The population has aged significantly from 1980



to 2016 as evidenced by a 21% increase in the median age (28.5 years to 36.0 years) and the 39% growth (8% to 14%) in the 65-85+ cohort. The LVL project and associated variances respond to the need for more senior housing in Albuquerque.

TABLE 1: CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS, 1980-2016

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2016	% Change 1980-2016
Total Population	331,767	384,736	448,607	545,852	556,859	40%
0-14 Years	22%	21%	20%	20%	20%	-14%
15-24 Years	20%	15%	15%	15%	13%	-52%
25-44 Years	31%	35%	31%	28%	29%	-7%
45-64 Years	18%	18%	22%	25%	25%	26%
65-85+ Years	8%	11%	12%	12%	14%	39%
Median Age	28.5	32.4	34.9	35.1	36.0	21%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, SF1 100%.

Comprehensive Plan: The ABC Comprehensive Plan supports and addresses the need for community health through private development, expanding the range of housing types, and providing for the development of quality senior housing. Relevant goals and policies are listed below:

Comprehensive Plan Goal 13.5 Community Health: *Protect and maintain safe and healthy environments where people can thrive.*

Policy 13.5.2: *Encourage public investments and **private development** that enhance community health.*

Comprehensive Plan Goal 9.1 Supply: *Ensure a sufficient supply and range of high-quality housing types that meet current and future needs at a variety of price levels to ensure more balanced housing options.*

Policy 9.1.1: *Support the development, improvement, and conservation of housing for a variety of income levels and types of residents and households.*
c. *Provide for the development of **quality housing for elderly residents.***

Private Health Care Rooms vs. Double Occupancy Rooms: In a white paper by Margaret P. Calkins, she states that studies have shown that people in shared rooms, particularly rooms without a clearly defined territory for each individual, are less social in shared or public areas and more territorial in claiming space, be it a section of the hallway or a chair in the day room (Kinney, Stephens, & Brockman, 1987; Lipman, 1967; Nelson & Paluk, 1980). When people do not have sufficient privacy and personal territory provided through the physical environment, they create their own social and psychological privacy by limiting their interactions with other people. The traditional nursing home model with shared rooms is associated with poor clinical and psychosocial outcomes in nursing home residents (Envisioning Your Future in a Nursing Home, Margaret P. Calkins, Ph.D). The LVL project and associated variances respond to and further the need for private health care rooms.



IL Building Height Variance: The IL building is a 5-story building with structured parking at the ground level. It is designed as an expansion to an existing building on the north side of the property. The IL building is designed and located specifically to respond to existing site conditions and minimize any potential negative impact to adjacent properties.

There is a significant separation (approximately 145 feet) between the proposed location of the IL building and the closest large institutional building on the CNM campus. There is an internal road (CNM Road) and parking lots south of the buildings on the CNM campus that provide adequate separation and ensure there is no negative impact from the IL building to CNM. Although the CNM campus property is zoned R-1D, it does not contain any residential uses and has been in use for institutional purposes for decades. CNM and LVL have an excellent and cooperative relationship with nursing students working at LVL and LVL residents taking classes at CNM. The existing pedestrian connection between the LVL campus and the CNM campus allows residents to conveniently access CNM instead of driving to Morris Street or Juan Tabo Boulevard.



Aerial showing proximity of the IL and AL/MC buildings to adjacent development.

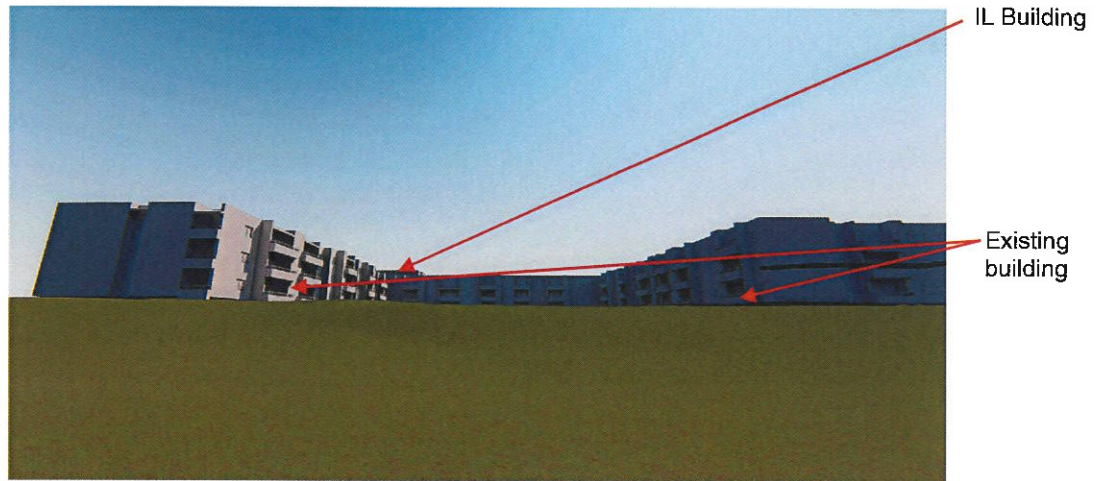
There is also a significant distance (approximately 570 feet) between the proposed IL building and the R-T development to the west. The IL building is designed and located as an extension of the existing building, ensuring that residents of the neighborhood to the west, which sits at a lower grade than LVL, will not see the IL building from their properties.

Given the existing land use on the CNM campus, the distance between the IL building and CNM buildings, the distance between the proposed IL building and the R-T development to the west, and the lower grades on this property as compared to abutting properties, there will be no negative impact on the CNM campus, the R-T neighborhood, or the community at large.

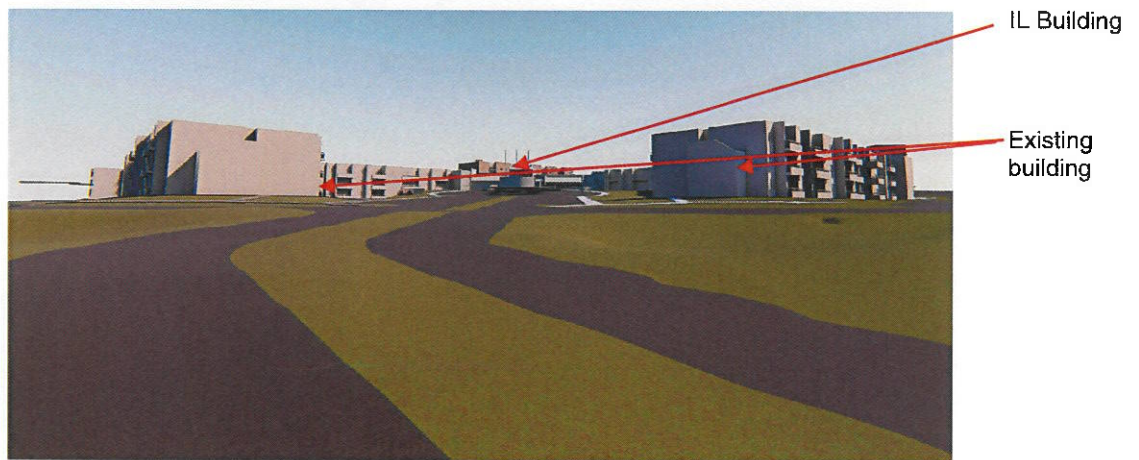


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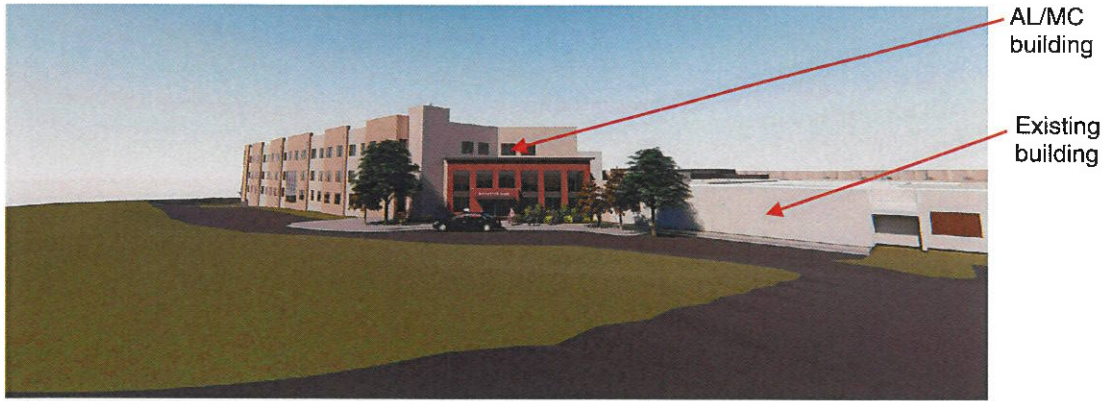
Photosimulated view from cul-de-sac on the west.



Photosimulated view from Lagrima de Oro at main entry.

AL/MC Building Variance: The AL/MC building, a 4-story building with a maximum height of 47 feet, 9-inches is an expansion of and wedged between the wings of the existing 2 to 3-story building in an area with steep changes in grade (11 feet just within the new building extension area). The height of this building extension is similar in height to LVL's Nueva Vista (48 feet) located a half block to the east at the corner of Lagrima de Oro and Juan Tabo Boulevard.

The layout of the AL/MC building is designed to create a new and protected MC interior courtyard. This area of the LVL campus was previously unavailable for building development due to the triangular, remnant piece of property owned by the City and being purchased by LVL. It is located along Lagrima de Oro, across from the Roadrunner Little League Ballfields and an office/commercial area, and not in proximity to any residential development. It will not be materially contrary to the public safety, health, or welfare; rather, this building will support public health by creating private rooms and supporting the physical and psychosocial health of the residents.



Photosimulated view of the AL/MC building at the campus entry (east of the main entry) along Lagrima de Oro.

Parking Area Separation Variance: The Applicant is proposing a small parking area (5,560 SF) with 23 spaces along the west side of the property. It will be setback similarly to the existing parking to the south along this edge of the property, which already fall within the 50-foot buffer required between Protected Lots (R-T development) and Regulated Lots (LVL). The distance between the new parking varies from approximately 20 feet on the south end to 30 feet on the north end. Approximately half of the new parking spaces will fall directly east of the cul-de-sac, which will help minimize the impact of the parking area to the residential development, and 6 of the spaces are greater than 50 feet from the property line. Further mitigation is provided by a 6-foot keystone block retaining wall along the west side of the parking area and the significant amount of landscape plantings proposed between the parking area and the houses, which meets the IDO standard for buffering and screening and will buffer any negative impact this parking area would have on the adjacent R-T development. The location of the parking area furthers public health and safety by providing more convenient parking to mobility-challenged residents, and is necessary to accommodate new residents and employees.

3. 6-6(N)(3)(c) The Variance does not cause significant material adverse impacts on surrounding properties or infrastructure improvements in the vicinity.

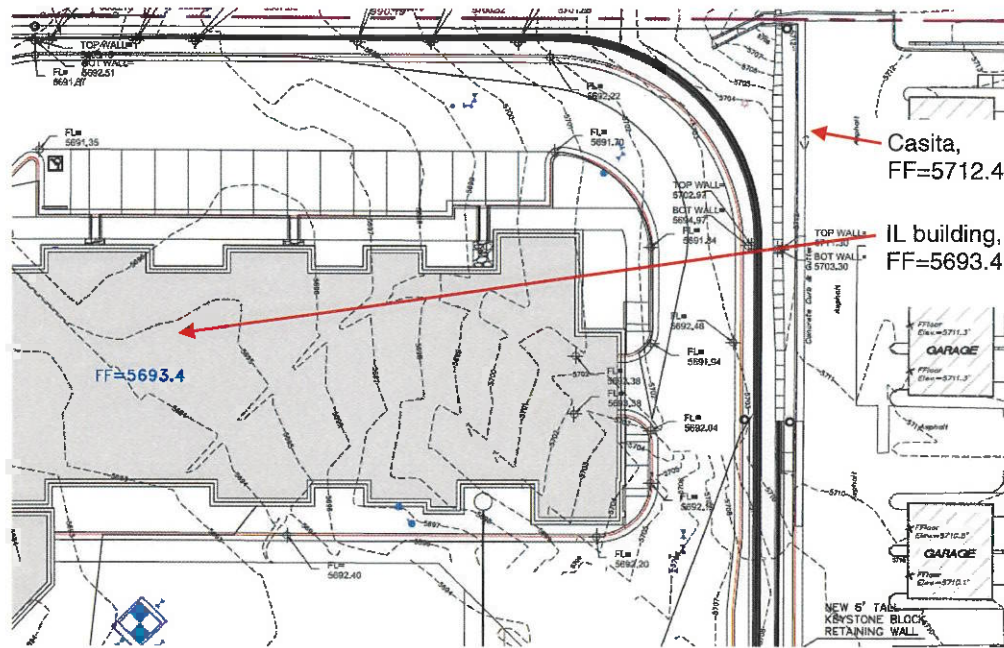
Applicant Response: Due to the thoughtful design and placement of these two building extensions on the fully developed LVL campus, the existing topography and grade changes throughout site and on adjacent properties, and the substantial distance from any residential development, the height variance requested does not cause significant material adverse impacts on surrounding properties or infrastructure improvements in the vicinity. The development closest to the IL building is CNM, who is in full support of this project and the variances proposed.

As stated above under Criterion 2, the IL Building placement is designed and tucked into the northeast area of the site, 570 feet away from the R-T development to the west and 145 feet from the closest institutional building on CNM campus to the north. To the east is LVL's Alta Vista casitas that sit at a higher grade. The finished floor of the IL building (5693.3') will require a minimum of 10 feet of excavation and will sit approximately 18-19 feet below the casitas (FF-5712.4') as shown below.



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Existing and proposed grades at the IL building area.

Also as stated above under Criterion 2, the AL/MC Building placement is designed to fit and makes good use of an area of the site that was not available for development in the 1980s when LVL was first developed. This building extension height varies more than 10 feet from one side of the building to the other from adjacent grade. The existing site topography created an at-grade basement that makes use of the 10-foot grade change. The variance is from this basement grade and not from the main entrance. Had this been a flat site and without significant grade change, the requested variance for this building may not have been necessary. The building extension, which is located along Lagrima de Oro and closest to the office/commercial center to the south, will have no material adverse impact to the surrounding properties. The maximum height of this building from adjacent grade (47 feet, 9-inches) is similar to the height of LVL's Nueva Vista building (48 feet) at Lagrima de Oro and Juan Tabo Boulevard, which like the subject site was previously zoned SU-1 and was rezoned under the IDO to R-ML.

The new parking area on the west side of the property adds 23 spaces within a total paved area of 5,560 square feet in a previously under-developed area of the site. As previously stated under Criterion 2, a large part of the parking area will be directly east of the cul-de-sac that serves the residential development (Protected Lots) to the west. The parking area will include a 6-foot retaining wall and significant landscape plantings (evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs) to mitigate any material adverse impact. The new parking area aligns with the existing, non-conforming parking to the south, but with more protection offered to the Protected Lots to the west.

The LVL property is a developed site with access to full urban services that can handily accommodate additional development to address the needs of the senior community. It is in close proximity to other large multi-family, institutional, and office buildings, and falls within a Major Transit Corridor (Montgomery Boulevard) with access to bus stops on Montgomery and Juan Tabo, City bike routes, and the multi-use Bear Canyon Arroyo Trail.

4. 6-6(N)(3)(d) The Variance will not materially undermine the intent and purpose of this IDO or the applicable zone district.

Applicant Response: The height variance for the IL and AL/MC building extensions and the parking area buffer variance will not materially undermine the intent and purpose of the IDO or the RM-L zone district. LVL has been in this location since the early 1980s and is largely a multi-family residential use with commercial and support services for the residents. The purpose of the R-ML zone district is “to provide for a variety of low- to medium-density housing options. The primary land uses are townhouses and low-density multi-family buildings, as well as civic and institutional uses to serve the surrounding residential area”. The building height and parking lot buffer variances will help further the intent and purpose of the IDO and the R-ML zone by allowing for medium density senior living at this long-established community.

The parking area separation variance furthers the IDO by adding parking in closer proximity to the residents that live in this area of the property. Residents who drive but have mobility issues will have more convenient parking, which supports public health.

The City and the IDO encourages structured parking as a method to achieve more efficient development. The IDO allows for a building height bonus for structured parking in mixed use zones, but inexplicably, not in the R-ML zone. Nonetheless, the proposed IL building furthers the IDO by providing structured parking; however, by proposing a building with structured parking, the variance needed is increased.

5. 6-6(N)(3)(e) The Variance approved is the minimum necessary to avoid extraordinary hardship or practical difficulties.

Applicant Response: The overall project has been designed to minimize the variances needed through the site location being closest to a non-residential, institutional use and excavation of existing grade. The building height variance is the minimum necessary to overcome the hardship and practical difficulties in: 1) addressing the LVL community’s need to replace the double occupancy rooms currently in use with single occupancy health care rooms and associated health care workers; and 2) to expand the number of IL units that are needed to address the increased demand for senior living options in Albuquerque and support the development of the health care rooms. Without the requested variance to the building height limitation of the R-ML zone, the project would not be feasible. Increasing the maximum height of the existing building is the most practical way to address the physical limitations (shape and topography) of the site and the requirements in the IDO.

Parking Area Separation: The proposed 5,560 square foot parking area on the west side provides an additional 23 parking spaces in an otherwise underdeveloped area of the site. Providing parking in this area expands the parking offered on the site, provides more convenient parking, and avoids the creation of a large parking field. The new parking area is in alignment and has a similar setback as the existing parking to the south, which as stated above, was the result of the shape and topography challenges in developing this property. The variance is the minimum necessary to expand parking in this area to serve residents and avoid a reconfiguration of the site circulation, which is not a



feasible option. The Applicant has agreed to construct an opaque, 3-foot screen wall along the west edge of the new parking area to protect the residential development to the west.

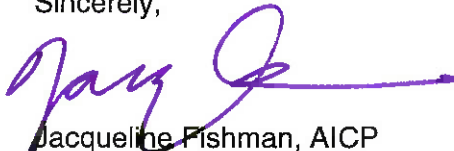
CONCLUSION

LVL had previously been zoned SU-1 for Retirement Center/Nursing Home, which allowed for greater flexibility in design than the current R-ML zone. LVL is in an area with other similar multi-family, institutional, and senior living uses (including LVL's Nueva Vista project at Juan Tabo and Lagrima de Oro, which is 48 feet in height) and is under consideration for a zone conversion under the IDO Phase 2 procedures. The LVL Campus falls partially within the Montgomery Boulevard Major Transit Corridor, which supports this use and proposed density of development. The project will help LVL fulfill its mission and provide the ability to convert the double occupancy health care units into single occupancy units, and provide needed additional IL units and associated common amenities. Without the IL units, LVL would not be able to support the additional staff required to meet the needs of the residents in the AL/MC building extension.

The two proposed building extensions have been designed and phased "to fit like a glove" into the existing LVL campus and have minimal impact to adjacent properties and the neighborhood. The IL building extension (the taller of the two extensions) has been sited to be the least obtrusive; it can just barely be seen from Lagrima de Oro or from the cul-de-sac at the residential neighborhood to the west (570 feet from the proposed site location). The proposed IL building will sit from 6 to 19 feet below the adjacent properties to the east and north. The height of the AL/MC building extension measured from the lowest adjacent grade is 47-feet, 9 inches at the southeast end of the building, which is 9 feet, 9.5-inches lower than the adjacent grade on the northeast end of the building, and 7 feet below the curb line in Lagrima de Oro. The 45-foot grade change across the site, the steep changes between the subject site and the adjacent properties, and the east side of the site running north to south being roughly half the length of the west side were not self-imposed; rather, they present significant practical difficulties and cause a hardship with strict compliance to the minimum IDO standards for the R-ML zone. The variances for building height and parking area buffer will have no material impact to adjacent properties, further Comprehensive Plan goals and policies on community health and housing for seniors, and are consistent with the public safety, health, and welfare pursuant to Section 6-6(N)(3) of the IDO.

On behalf of La Vida Llena, I respectfully request the EPC's approval of the major amendment to and replacement of the existing approved Site Plan for Building Permit and the associated building height and parking lot separation variances.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Fishman, AICP
Principal

REVISED FINDINGS

*Finding 13 has been revised and Findings 14-16 added.

Findings, SI-2019-00117

Major Amendment to a Prior Approval, Site Development Plan

13. In total, staff received two (2) letters in opposition to the request from residents of La Vida Llena including a petition with seven (7) names.
14. In total, staff received seventeen (17) letters in support to the request from residents of La Vida Llena.
15. Staff received a letter of support from CNM (Central New Mexico Community College), the property owner to the north.
16. Staff has not received comments in support or opposition from the District 8 Coalition of Neighborhood Associations or from the property owners to the west of La Vida Llena.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Betty Koch
10501 Lagrima de Oro NE
Apartment 202
Albuquerque, NM 87111

June 06, 2019

To whom it may concern:

I would like to take this opportunity to express my support for the La Vida Llena.update project.

Many changes are planned and adjustments by the residents and staff will be necessary. I have lived at La Vida Llena for almost 10 years and have seen many changes in myself and my surroundings during this period. The most positive change in this plan is private rooms in healthcare and Mi Casa. My husband was in Mi Casa for two years and I spent a lot of time there. The care he received was outstanding. The staff was professional, caring and personal. Most of the residents are in semi private rooms. Private rooms will allow family members and friends to visit comfortably. These visits are extremely important to the residents. Professional visits by doctors, nurses, clergy etc. also need privacy. Residents need the ability to be alone when he/she desires.

Private rooms in healthcare will be a blessing for all. Many residents in independent living visit their friends in healthcare on a regular basis. Many family members visit often, some daily. Private rooms will also allow healthcare residents to use their space as they choose. Most of the residents are there on a permanent basis and need privacy, this is their home. Private rooms will allow the residents to have more of their personal items as well as watch TV (or not) when they choose. Some residents like quiet time for reading and other quiet activities. Residents in healthcare for rehabilitation also need quiet time.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my support and best wishes for this project.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betty L Koch". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Betty Koch

July 7, 2019

Mr. Dan Serrano, Chair
Environmental Planning Commission
600 2nd Street
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Dear Mr. Serrano,

We write to you as six-year residents of La Vida Llena, and in support of La Vida Llena's application to allow construction of several new buildings on its current property at 10501 Lagrima de Oro Rd NE in Albuquerque.

It is apparent that, as the population at LVL (and the general population as well) ages, an increasing need for Assisted Living and Nursing Home facilities is being created. La Vida Llena has recognized this pattern, and has developed a plan to better provide for the population that it is serving. They have further determined that additional Independent Living apartments are needed to adequately fund this new endeavor.

We, as residents, agree with this effort, and hope that the Commission will grant the variances requested by La Vida Llena.

Respectfully,



Phillip A. Mann

10801 Lagrima de Oro Rd NE
Apt. 878
Albuquerque, NM 87111



Martha K. Mann

June 6, 2019

Mr. Dan Serrano, Chair
Environmental Planning Commissioner
600 2nd St. NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Dear Sir:

I am writing this letter as a testimony to you and your organization. This letter outlines the critical need for private rooms in Health Care at La Vida Llena. The reason I say this is I have been a patient in our Healthcare center numerous times (more than 7), therefore I feel like this gives me a license to write this letter to you.

Reasons for private rooms are first and foremost for the health and safety of the residents, privacy, dignity and psychological wellbeing. Privacy encompasses many needs such as personal health, individual caregiving and dining, also knowing that you will be able to invite as many family/guests into your room without disturbing others. Those in healthcare miss that dearly. Another reason for privacy in healthcare is the feeling of fulfillment you can give to yourself because this room becomes a part of your life.

Respectfully,

Howard Schneider Ph.D

Howard Schneider, Ph.D, Former Retired Mission Scientist for NASA

June 6, 2019
LVL Expansion

Dan Serrano, Chairman Environmental Planning Commission
City of Albuquerque
600 2nd St. NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Mr. Chairman:

As a current resident of LaVida Llena I am in favor of the proposed construction improvements.

I recommend you vote in favor of the proposed zoning variance.

Thanks for your attention to this request.

My name is Peter K Schmitt. I live at LaVida Llena Alta Vista complex. I am writing in support of the planned expansion of LaVida Llena. In order for this retirement facility to remain updated and competitive with other local retirement facilities, the proposed improvements and expansion need to be made.



Peter K Schmitt
10801 Lagrima De Oro, NE
Apt. 870
Albuquerque, NM 87111

Cc:
Marge Meyar