

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE



PLANNING DEPARTMENT
URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
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OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

March 12, 2020

Sandia Foundation
6211 San Mateo Blvd. NE
Suite 100
Albuquerque NM 87109

Project #2020-003336
RZ-2020-00001 – Zone Map Amendment (Zone Change)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

The above action for all or a portion of Lot JJ Block 0000 of Southwest Construction Company Subdivision, located on Lomas NE, between Interstate 25 and University Blvd. NE, approximately 3.7 acres (J-15)
Staff Planner: Leslie Naji

PO Box 1293

On March 12, 2020, the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) voted to Approve Project # 2020-003336/ RZ-2020-00001, a Zone Map Amendment (Zone Change), based on the following Findings:

Albuquerque, NM 87103
FINDINGS:

1. This is a request for a Zoning Map Amendment (Zone Change) for a site approximately 3.70-acres known as Lot JJ Block 0000 of Southwest Construction Co. Subdivision. It is located at 1200 Lomas Boulevard NE between Interstate 25 and University Blvd. NE. The site is currently vacant.
2. The Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) is hearing this case because the EPC is required to hear all zone change cases, regardless of site size, in the City.
3. The subject site is zoned MX-H (Mixed-Use High Intensity); the intention of the MX-H zone district is to provide for large-scale destination retail and high-intensity commercial, residential, light industrial, and institutional uses, as well as high-density residential uses, particularly along Transit Corridors and in Urban Centers. The MX-H zone district is intended to allow higher-density infill development in appropriate locations. The applicant is requesting a zone change to MX-M (Mixed-Use Medium Intensity) in order to allow for outdoor auto sales, which is prohibited in MX-H.
4. The subject site is located within an Area of Change and along a Major Transit Corridor as designated in the Comprehensive Plan. The subject site is not located within a Protection Overlay Zone.

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5. There is MX-M zoning to the west of the site. Lots to the south of the subject site are zoned MX-T and to the east are lots zoned MX-H.
6. The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan and the City of Albuquerque Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) are incorporated herein by reference and made part of the record for all purposes.
7. The request generally furthers the following, applicable Comprehensive Plan Goals and policies in regards to Community Identity:

POLICY 4.1.2- Identity and Design: Protect the identity and cohesiveness of neighborhoods by ensuring the appropriate scale and location of development, mix of uses, and character of building design.

The requested MX-M zone furthers this policy by proposing a downzone from MX-H to MX-M on the south side of Lomas Boulevard next to existing MX-M and MX-T properties, which further transition to R-1D along Sigma Chi Road in the Spruce Park neighborhood. The MX-M zone provides a similar mix of uses at a slightly lower scale and intensity appropriate along a Major Transit Corridor that is also nearby a residential neighborhood.

Although the proposed use does not fulfill the maximum potential of the site, the scale of the use is the same as has been previously on the site. The downzone also protects the neighborhood character of low-rise medical arts buildings and, further to the south, single-family residences.

8. The request generally furthers the following, applicable Comprehensive Plan Goals and policies in regards to Land Use:
 - (a) GOAL 5.1- Centers & Corridors: Grow as a community of strong Centers connected by a multi-modal network of Corridors.

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

The request furthers this policy by allowing for near term development of the property so it can continue to provide needed employment and commercial services along a Major Transit Corridor. Over time, the requested zone, which allows largely the same uses as the existing zone, will provide new opportunities for nearby residents to work, shop, and play by walking rather than driving. This site (and others around it) was long used for auto dealerships and auto related uses. It has remained vacant for years and redevelopment would put this property back into productive use.

POLICY 5.1.2- Development Areas: Direct more intense growth to Centers and Corridors and use Development Areas to establish and maintain appropriate density and scale of development within areas that should be more stable.

The request directs more intense commercial growth to the subject site, which is located along a designated Corridor and is considered an Area of Change. The request furthers this policy because changing the zoning for the property to MX-M will allow for more

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intense growth to occur while at the same time providing an appropriate density and scale for future development adjacent and transitioning to lower intensity zones and land uses.

The current state of the site is one of vacant neglect. The downzoning of the site would allow for activation of a site along a major transit corridor. Redevelopment of the site will promote stability for the area and the lots to the east and west of the site.

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

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

The subject site is located along Lomas Boulevard, which is designated as a Major Transit Corridor. The request supports this policy by continuing to provide opportunities for pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development while slightly decreasing the number of very intense uses available between the Major Transit Corridor and the single-family residential area within the Spruce Park neighborhood.

Allowing car rental at the site provides a service to the area easily accessible by bus or by pedestrians. Having this service on a Major Transit Corridor will provide an option more convenient to in-town renters than existing airport locations.

- (b) **GOAL 5.2- Complete Communities:** Foster communities where residents can live, work, learn, shop, and play together.

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.
- (g) Locate quality commercial development and redevelopment in existing commercial zones and designated Centers and Corridors as follows:
- (h) Encourage infill development that adds complementary uses and is compatible in form and scale to the immediately surrounding development.
- (n) Encourage more productive use of vacant lots and under-utilized lots, including surface parking.

The request furthers this goal and policy because it will allow for infill development of quality commercial uses along Lomas Boulevard. subject site and surrounding area have long been zoned for commercial development and has been used for light vehicle sales and rental for many years. The property sits between Downtown Albuquerque to the west and UNM Hospital and the University to the east. The zone change will help facilitate the development of a use that provides a level of convenience to tourists, residents, and people who are visiting their family members while being a patient at UNMH.

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The requested downzone to MX-M will encourage this more productive use of the subject site, which is currently a vacant building and parking lot with uses that are complementary and compatible with the surrounding area and its history. Future redevelopment of the subject site will bring those goods and services within walking and biking distance of nearby neighborhoods.

- (c) GOAL 5.3- Efficient Development Patterns: Promote development patterns that maximize the utility of existing infrastructure and public facilities and the efficient use of land to support the public good.

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

The request furthers this goal and policy because the change would support development of the site, which is located in an older, developed area of Albuquerque and has access to existing infrastructure including multiple-lane arterial roadways, storm drainage facilities, water and sewer, and other dry utilities.

- (d) 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.

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.
- (e) Encourage job creation in business and industrial parks, near freight routes, and where adequate transitions and buffers can be provided to protect abutting residential uses.
- (g) Encourage development where adequate infrastructure and community services exist.

The request furthers this goal and policy because it directs growth and redevelopment to a site designated as an Area of Change. The requested change will facilitate redevelopment of the subject site with a use compatible and consistent with the historical use in the surrounding area. It will expand employment opportunities and encourage job creation near Interstate 25, a primary regional freight corridor, and existing infrastructure. The downzoning, along with adjacent MX-T properties, ensures that an adequate transition and buffer is afforded to the nearby residential areas.

- 9. The applicant has adequately justified the request pursuant to the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) Section 6-7(F)(3)-Review and Decision Criteria for Zoning Map Amendments, as follows:

- A. Criterion A: Consistency with the City's health, safety, and general welfare is shown by demonstrating that a request furthers applicable Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies (and other plans if applicable) and does not significantly conflict with them. The applicant has adequately demonstrated, in policy-based response, that the request would be

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consistent with the City's health, safety, and general welfare. The response to Criterion A is sufficient.

B. Criterion B: The proposed amendment is located wholly in an Area of Change, so this criterion does not apply.

C. Criterion C: The subject site is located wholly in an Area of Change. The existing zoning is inappropriate because a different zone district is more advantageous to the community as articulated by the ABC Comp Plan.

The requested downzone to MX-M furthers numerous goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, as specifically described in the policy analysis in the response to criterion (a). Approving a change to the MX-M zone in the proposed location will implement the appropriate pattern of land use, development density, and intensity for this location by facilitating redevelopment of the subject site with uses consistent with the historical uses in the area. This redevelopment will eliminate a currently vacant and underutilized property along this stretch of Lomas Boulevard and utilize existing infrastructure and public services. The request will also lead to additional job creation while providing an adequate transition and buffer to nearby low-density residential areas.

D. Criterion D: None of the permissive uses in the MX-M zone will be harmful to the adjacent property, neighborhood, or community. As a downzone, generally there will be fewer intense land uses available for development compared to those currently available in the MX-H zone.

E. Criterion E: The proposed zone change will not require major and unprogrammed capital expenditures by the City. The subject site has access to roadways, sewer, water, and storm water facilities with adequate capacity to serve the development made possible by the request. Ant extensions of these services, if required, for any specific development proposal will be the sole responsibility of the developer.

F. Criterion F: The justification for the request is not solely based on the property's location on a major street although it is a factor. The basis is connected more to the historic use of the property and the existing on-site buildings.

G. Criterion G: The request is not based primarily upon the cost of land or economic considerations. The request is support for Comprehensive Plan policies making the request more advantageous to the community by providing jobs through redevelopment of a vacant and underutilized property.

H. Criterion H: The request would not result in a spot zone as the property to the west is currently zoned MX-M. The proposed site is more suitable to the proposed use than the existing MX-M property to the west as it has existing buildings to be utilized by the activity.

10. The applicant's policy analysis adequately demonstrates that the request generally furthers a preponderance of applicable Goals and Policies in the Comprehensive Plan and does not

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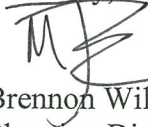
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significantly conflict with it. Based on this demonstration, the proposed zone category would be more advantageous to the community than the current zoning.

11. The affected neighborhood organizations are Spruce Park Neighborhood Association, Santa Barbara Martineztown Neighborhood Association, and the Martineztown Work Group. Property owners within 100 feet of the subject site were also notified as required.
12. As of this writing, Staff has received no letters in support or opposition of this request.

Nikaela Renz-Whitmore
for
Sincerely,

Brennon Williams
Planning Director

BW/LN

cc: EPC file

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