

PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT DIVISION  
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## OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

September 15, 2022

The Albuquerque Bernalillo County  
Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA)  
PO Box 568  
Albuquerque NM, 87103-0568

**Project # PR-2022-007447**  
SI-2022-01468– Site Plan- EPC for Extraordinary Facility

### LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

The Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA), requests a Site Plan-EPC for an Extraordinary Facility for all or a portion of Parcels A & B, Plat of Parcels A & B, Alameda Open Space, located at 1295 Alameda Blvd. NW, between the Albuquerque Riverside Drain and Rio Grande Blvd. NW, approximately 17 acres (B-14 & B-15)  
Staff Planner: Silvia Bolivar

On September 15, 2022, the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) voted to APPROVE Project # PR-2022-007447, SI-2022-01468, a Site Plan- EPC for an Extraordinary Facility, based on the following Findings and Conditions of Approval:

### FINDINGS – SI-2022-01468

1. The request is for a Site Plan-EPC for an Extraordinary Facility for the Rio Grande/Alameda Open Space. The subject site is approximately 17-acres and is legally described as Parcel A (City of Albuquerque) & Parcel B (Bernalillo County), Plat of Parcels A & B, Alameda Open Space (the “subject site”).
2. The subject site is zoned County A-1 (Agricultural/Residential).
3. The request is a collaborative effort between the City of Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, and the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA).
4. The EPC is hearing the request because the IDO states that any Extraordinary Facility shall be reviewed and decided upon pursuant to subsection 14-16-6-6(J).

To provide citizen oversight to the MPOS Program, the City established the Open Space Advisory Board (OSAB) in 1983. The OSAB is an appointed citizen board that, along with staff, is charged with reviewing and recommending acquisition priorities and additions to the network. OSAB makes recommendations regarding extraordinary facilities to the City’s Environmental Planning Commission (EPC). The OSAB also makes recommendations to the EPC, Mayor and City Council as appropriate

policies, implementation of adopted Open Space plans, proposed development adjacent to MPOS and proposals to sell, lease or exchange trust lands.

On December 9, 2020, the OSAB voted that the Alameda Open Space project be included in the January agenda for action by the board. The project was discussed and approved at the January 26, 2021 OSAB meeting and approved (see attachments).

5. The request requires Site Plan-EPC approval because the subject site is over 5 acres and adjacent to Major Public Open Space (MPOS). Compliance with IDO Section 5-2 Site Design and Sensitive Lands is required.
6. The Bosque Action Plan-Rio Grande Valley State Park is a Rank III Plan developed by the Open Space Division of the City Parks and Recreation Department to provide guidance on how to manage and protect natural, historic, or cultural resources and/or scenic views. The Plan identifies specific environmental and recreational improvements for the RGVSP.
7. Uses and development standards specified in a Resource Management Plan or Master Plan approved or amended by the Open Space Division of the City Parks and Recreation Department for each facility or in the Facility Plan for Major Public Open Space prevail over IDO standards and may be reflected in Site Plans approved pursuant to this IDO.
8. The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, the Major Public Open Space Facility Plan, the Bosque Action Plan-Rio Grande Valley State Park, and the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) are incorporated herein by reference and made part of the record for all purposes.
9. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies from Chapter 4: Community Identity pertaining to character, natural resources and process.
  - A. Goal 4.1 – Character: Enhance, protect, and preserve distinct communities.
  - B. Policy 4.1.1 – Distinct Communities: Enhance quality development that is consistent with the distinct character of the communities.

The Rio Grande/Alameda Open Space is a prime location for preservation and protection due to proximity to the Bosque, which contributes to distinct communities. The area is mostly characterized by a rural character. Development made possible by the request will help protect and preserve the distinct community by building over an existing paved lot.

- C. Policy 4.1.5 – Natural Resources: Encourage high-quality development and re-development that responds appropriately to the natural setting and ecosystem functions.

The solar covered parking made possible by this request is a means to encourage a natural setting and ecosystem functions. The solar energy generation will promote conservation of natural resources.

- D. Goal 4.2 – Process: Engage communities to identify and plan for their distinct character and needs.

The applicant worked with communities to determine concerns and character of the area so the development made possible by the request is consistent with this Goal.

- E. Policy 4.2.2 – Community Engagement: Facilitate meaningful engagement opportunities and respectful interactions in order to identify and address the needs of all residents

The request is consistent with this policy as the applicant had meaningful engagement opportunities with neighborhood associations and interested parties. The resulting site plan is a response to concerns and response to public comments.

10. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies from Chapter 5: Land Use.

- A. Goal 5.5 – County Development Areas: Use Development Areas to foster the distinctness of communities in the unincorporated County by guiding their form, character, and density

The request is consistent with this Goal because the development of Rural Areas in the County must follow Rural Area development policies which must identify and conserve environmental resources which this request complies with. The development made possible by the request takes into consideration the character and environmental conditions of the site and its surroundings.

- B. Policy 5.5.1 – 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 as mapped in Figure 5-3.

The request is consistent with this policy as the request will allow for opportunities for education, recreation and conservation of natural resources. The Memorandum of Agreement stipulates that the Water Authority will provide “Alameda Education/Interpretation Funds” that will support conservation and water-related education and public use of benefits at the Alameda Open Space and in the Bosque.

- C. Policy 5.5.3 – Rural Areas: Maintain the separate identity of Rural Areas as alternatives to urbanization by guiding development compatible with their open character, natural resources, and traditional settlement patterns.

The area’s established rural atmosphere is reflected by the Rio Grande and Bosque, acequias, canals, recreation trails and agriculture that is an alternative to urbanization. The development made possible by the request follows Rural Area development guidelines.

11. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies from Chapter 10: Parks & Open Space pertaining to facilities and access, distribution, and universal design.

- A. Goal 10.1 – Facilities & Access: Provide parks, Open Space, and recreation facilities that meet the need of all residents and use natural resources responsibly.

The Rio Grande/Alameda Open Space is open to the public but has limited parking which will help use natural resources responsibly while meeting the needs of residents.

- B. Policy 10.1.1 – Distribution: Improve the community’s access to recreational opportunities by balancing the City and County’s parks and Open Space system within the built environment.

The development made possible by the request will improve the community's access to recreational opportunities because the installation of the solar covered parking will help improve the user experience. By providing shade in the summer and cover during the winter months will encourage more residents to use the recreational facilities and will balance the City and County's parks and Open space system within the built environment.

- C. Goal 10.3 – Open Space: Protect the integrity and quality of the region's natural features and environmental assets and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and education.

The request is consistent with this Goal because the development will be confined to the existing parking area thereby protecting the region's natural features and environmental assets.

- D. Policy 10.3.2 – Preservation: Identify and manage sensitive lands within the Open Space network to protect their ecological functions.

The development made possible by the request will allow for the solar panels to be installed over an existing parking lot so the sensitive lands nearby will be protected.

12. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies from Chapter 10: Parks & Open Space pertaining to coordination and system planning.

- A. Goal 10.4 – Coordination: Coordinate across disciplines, jurisdictions, and geographies to leverage limited resources, maximize efficiencies, and best serve the public's needs for parks and recreation facilities.

The request is a collaborative effort between the City of Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, and the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA) so the development made possible by the request is maximizing efficiencies while best serving the public's need for amenities located near parks and recreation facilities.

- B. Policy 10.4.2 – System Planning: Coordinate among departments and across jurisdictional boundaries to plan interconnected networks, manage natural resources, leverage public investment, eliminate gaps in service, and avoid duplication in effort.

The request is consistent with this policy as the collaborative effort between departments/jurisdictional boundaries will avoid duplication of efforts while promoting clean, pure energy efforts near the Bosque.

13. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies from Chapter 11: Heritage Conservation.

- A. Policy 11.1.2 – Rural Character: Protect the character of rural areas and ensure that development is sensitive to historic and cultural patterns.

The installation of the solar panels over the existing parking lot will help protect the rural area as agricultural land will not be lost due to the request.

14. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies from Chapter 12: Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services.

- A. Policy 12.1.1 – Infrastructure Design: Encourage design of visible infrastructure (surface and overhead) that respects the character of neighborhoods and communities and protects significant natural and cultural features.

The request will allow for overhead, visible infrastructure that is being installed over an existing parking lot thereby protecting significant natural features.

- B. Policy 12.1.2 – Water and Wastewater Utility: Ensure consistency between Comp Plan and ABCWUA policies by coordinating infrastructure planning and programming.

Similar to Goal 10.4 – Coordination, the request is a collaborative effort between the City of Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, and the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA) so the development made possible by the request is consistent between the Comp Plan and ABCWUA policies.

15. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies from Chapter 13: Resilience & Sustainability.

- A. Policy 13.2.2 – Water Conservation: Foster the efficient management and use of water in development and infrastructure.

The development made possible by the request will foster efficient management and use of water in development and infrastructure. The Juan-Chama station is a raw water pump station that draws water from the Rio Grande and is treated and used as drinking water which will allow for approximately 36% of raw water pump station electric usage to be offset.

- B. Goal 13.4 – Natural Resources: Protect, conserve, and enhance natural resources, habitat and ecosystems.

The development made possible by the request will conserve energy as solar powered systems drive clean energy from the sun. Renewable energy also improves public health.

- C. Policy 13.4.3 – Energy Resources: Conserve energy and capitalize on renewable energy resources that are plentiful in our region, especially solar and wind energy.

The development made possible by the request will conserve energy as solar powered systems derive clean energy from the sun. The solar covered parking will help combat greenhouse gas emissions that will help protect the region.

16. The request meets the Site Plan-EPC Review & Decision Criteria in IDO Section 14-16-6-6(J)(3) as follows:

- A. 14-16-6-6(J)(3)(a) As demonstrated by the policy analysis of the Site Plan-EPC for an Extraordinary Facility is consistent with the ABC Comp Plan goals and policies especially in an Area of Consistency because the project will protect and enhance the character of the surrounding area located in the Rio Grande Boulevard Character Protection Overlay Zone (CPO-11).
- B. 14-16-6-6(J)(3)(b) The subject site is zoned A-1; therefore, this criterion does not apply.
- C. 14-16-6-6(J)(3)(c) With the application of conditions of approval, the site plan would comply with all applicable provisions of the IDO.

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- D. 14-16-6-6(J)(3)(d) The City's existing infrastructure has adequate capacity for the proposed development.
  - E. 14-16-6-6(J)(3)(e) The future, proposed development would be required to comply with the decisions made by the EPC. The EPCs' conditions of approval would improve compliance with the IDO, which contains regulations to mitigate site plan impacts to surrounding areas.
  - F. 14-16-6-6(J)(3)(f) The subject property is within an approved Master Development Plan and the Site Plan meets relevant standards in the Bosque Action Plan.
  - G. 14-16-6-6(J)(3)(g) The subject property is not within a Railroad and Spur Area therefore this criterion does not apply.
17. The subject site is adjacent to Major Public Open Space and is therefore subject to all of the regulations in IDO Section 5-2(J)(2), Lots Adjacent to Major Public Open Space.
- Pursuant to IDO Section 5-2(C)(1) both the subdivision and site design process shall begin with an analysis of the constrains related to sensitive lands.
18. There are no known archaeological sites on the subject site. A "Certificate of No Effect" from the City of Albuquerque was issued on June 7, 2022
19. The affected, registered neighborhood organization is the Alameda North Valley Association which was notified as required. Property owners within 100 feet of the subject site were also notified, as required.
20. A pre-submittal neighborhood meeting was held on February 1, 2022 via Zoom to discuss the proposed solar covered parking project. A presentation by the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Authority and a representative from Triple H Solar discussed the benefits of the project and showed slides of examples of similar canopies located throughout the Southwest.
21. As of this writing, Staff has not received any comments in support or opposition to the request.

**CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL – SI-2022-01468**

- 1. The EPC delegates final sign-off authority of this site development plan to the Site Plan-Administrative Process as per IDO Section 6-5(G)(1). The reviewer will be responsible for ensuring that the EPC Conditions have been satisfied and that other applicable City requirements have been met.
- 2. The applicant shall submit a fully dimensioned site plan for filing at the Planning Department. The site plan shall include:
  - A. Date of drawing or last revision
  - B. Scale: 1.0 acre or less 1" = 10'
    - 1.0 – 5.0 acres 1" = 20'
    - Over 5.0 acres 1" = 50'
    - Over 20 acres 1" = 100'
  - C. Bar scale.

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- D. North arrow.
- E. Legend.
- F. Scaled vicinity map.
- G. Property lines (clearly defined).
- H. Existing and proposed easements (identify each).
- I. Phases of development, if applicable.

3. The applicant shall submit a grading and drainage plan.
4. The applicant shall submit a landscaping plan.
5. CPTED comments shall be addressed at the time of building permitting.
6. Condition from the Parks & Recreation Department shall be addressed at the time of building permitting.
  - A. Clearly delineate the City of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation Department Open Space Division and the Bernalillo County property lines in the Site Plan package on all scaled drawings.
  - B. The Site Plan application did not include a Landscaping Plan. PRD typically reviews landscaping quantity and plant material. The MOA between the ABCWUA and the COA PRD OSD requires replacement of mature trees (number of trees shown in the Sensitive Lands Analysis) The MOA clause 1. D states:

*“The Water Authority will replace all trees and shrubs removed from the parking lot by the Solar Energy Project with mature planting stock specified by the Open Space Division at a 4:1 ratio. New plantings may be on the periphery of the Alameda Open Space parking area and wetlands and shall be located by agreement between the Water Authority and PRD Open Space. The new plantings will be maintained by the PRD Open Space Division.”*

Please note this clause on the EPC – Site Plan.

- C. The Moa between ABCWUA and COA PRD OSD requires the ABCWUA to *“restore the site to its pre-project condition to the extent possible within a reasonable time following completion of construction.”*

Please note this clause on the EPC – Site Plan.

- D. A Temporary Construction Easement was issued for the COA property. An Access Easement for maintenance shall be acquired subsequent to this approval.

**APPEAL:** If you wish to appeal this decision, you must do so within 15 days of the EPC’s decision or by **September 30, 2022**. The date of the EPC’s decision is not included in the 15-day period for filing an appeal, and if the 15<sup>th</sup> day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or Holiday, the next working day is considered as the deadline for filing the appeal.

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For more information regarding the appeal process, please refer to Section 14-16-6-4(V) of the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO), Administration and Enforcement. A Non-Refundable filing fee will be calculated at the Land Development Coordination Counter and is required at the time the appeal is filed. It is not possible to appeal an EPC Recommendation to the City Council since this is not a final decision.

You will receive notification if any person files an appeal. If there is no appeal, you can receive Building Permits at any time after the appeal deadline quoted above, provided all conditions imposed at the time of approval have been met. Successful applicants are reminded that other regulations of the IDO must be complied with, even after approval of the referenced application(s).

Sincerely,

*Catalina Lehner*

for Alan M. Varela,  
Planning Director

AV/CL/SB

cc: Raymond Sandoval, Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA), [rsandoval@abcwua.org](mailto:rsandoval@abcwua.org)  
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