

PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT DIVISION  
600 2nd Street NW, 3rd Floor, Albuquerque, NM 87102  
P.O. Box 1293, Albuquerque, NM 87103  
Office (505) 924-3860 Fax (505) 924-3339



## OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

December 16, 2021

City of Albuquerque  
Planning Department  
Urban Design & Development  
600 2nd Street NW, 3rd Floor  
Albuquerque, NM 87102

**Project #2018-001843**

RZ-2021-00049 – Amendment to the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) Text – Small Areas for the 2021 Annual Update

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**

To amend the text of the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO). This third annual update includes changes requested by neighbors, developers, Staff, and Council Services to the standards applicable to the following small area: Old Town HPO-5.

Staff Planner: Silvia Bolivar

On December 16, 2021, the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) voted to forward a recommendation of APPROVAL of Project 2018-001843/RZ-2021-00049, Amendment to the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) Text – Small Area, based on the following Findings:

1. The request is for Small Area amendments to the text of the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) for the Annual Update required by IDO Subsection 14-16-6-3(E). The proposed Small-area amendments, when combined with the proposed City-wide amendments, are collectively known as the 2021 IDO Annual Update.
2. These text amendments to specific Small Areas in the City are accompanied by proposed City-wide text amendments, which were submitted separately pursuant to Subsection 14-16-6-7(D) and are the subject of another Staff report (RZ-2020-00048).
3. The Small Area text amendments include proposed changes requested by neighbors, developers, staff, and Council Services that affect the following Small Area: Old Town HPO-5.
4. The IDO applies City-wide to land within the City of Albuquerque municipal boundaries. The IDO does not apply to properties controlled by another jurisdiction, such as the State of New Mexico, Federal lands, and lands in unincorporated Bernalillo County or other municipalities.
5. The EPC's task is to make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the proposed amendments to IDO text. As the City's Planning and Zoning Authority, the City Council will make

the final decision. The EPC is a recommending body to the Council and has important review authority. This is a quasi-judicial matter.

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 meets the Review and Decision Criteria in Subsection 14-16-6-7(E) of the IDO, as follows:

- A. Criterion A: The proposed small area amendment is consistent with the health, safety, and general welfare of the city as shown by furthering (and not being in conflict with) a preponderance of applicable Goals and Policies in the ABC Comp Plan, as amended, and other applicable plans adopted by the City.

The City Council moratorium (Bill R-21-165) prohibited permissive and conditional uses for cannabis and cannabis products outlined in the IDO in the Old Town HPO-5 zone. The proposed IDO text amendments-Small Areas are generally consistent with the health, safety, and general welfare of the City by showing a preponderance of applicable goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan, and other policies and plans adopted by the City.

The proposed amendments to prohibit cannabis uses in the Old Town HPO-5, are consistent with adopted policies that would protect the identity and existing character of the area. Old Town HPO-5 is designated primarily as an Area of Consistency and the proposed amendments would enhance the unique qualities of the neighborhood and commercial district found in the area. The City is not involved in regulation of personal uses; these are addressed in State regulation and statute. Overall, the request meets Criterion 14-16-6-7(a).

- B. Criterion B: If the proposed small area amendment is located partially or completely in an Area of Consistency (as shown in the ABC Comp Plan, as amended), the applicant must demonstrate that the proposed amendment would clearly reinforce or strengthen the established character of the surrounding Area of Consistency and would not allow development that is significantly different from that character. The applicant must also demonstrate that the existing zoning regulations are inappropriate because they meet any of the following criteria:

1. There has been a significant change in neighborhood or community conditions affecting the small area.
2. The proposed zoning regulations are more advantageous to the community as articulated by the ABC Comp Plan, as amended (including implementation of patterns of land use, development density and intensity, and connectivity), and other applicable adopted City plan(s).

The Old Town HPO-5 is an extension of the NRHP Old Albuquerque Historic District. Old Town has been seen as an important feature of the City since 1959 when it was made its own zoning category H-1 (Historic-1).

The Old Albuquerque Historic District is important for its' long history, for its' historic sites, for its' ancient pattern of church, plaza, and streets, and for its' collection of important historic buildings. The district has historic buildings mainly erected between 1870 and 1915, with a few

major earlier structures' its street patterns and church buildings are vivid reminders of the much earlier history of the Village of Albuquerque.

The proposed amendments would clearly reinforce and strengthen the established character of the surrounding Areas of Consistency and would result in continued development that is consistent with the established character of the area. Over the years, the character of the area and surrounding areas has been consistent and continued to be residential and commercial. The proposed text amendments are quasi-judicial in nature. The request meets Criterion 14-16-6-7(E)(3)(b).

C. Criterion C: If the proposed small area amendment is located wholly in an Area of Change (as shown in the ABC Comp Plan, as amended), the applicant must demonstrate that the existing zoning regulations are inappropriate because they meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. There has been a significant change in neighborhood or community conditions affecting the small area that justifies this request.
2. The proposed zoning regulations are more advantageous to the community as articulated by the ABC Comp Plan, as amended (including implementation of patterns of land use, development density and intensity, and connectivity), and other applicable adopted City plan(s).

Criterion 14-16-6-7(E)(3)(c) does not apply because the proposed amendments are not located wholly in an Area of Change.

D. Criterion D: If the proposed amendment changes allowable uses, the proposed amendment does not allow permissive uses that would be harmful to adjacent property, the neighborhood, or the community, unless the Use-specific Standards in Section 16-16-4-3 associated with that use will adequately mitigate those harmful impacts.

The proposed amendments include three changes to the IDO that would result in changes affecting uses. The proposed changes would prohibit cannabis uses in the Old Town Historic Protection Overlay (HPO-5) zone.

Although associated use specific standards for cannabis retail include a provision that makes the use conditional within 600 feet of another cannabis retail, some neighbors have noted that this could push the use onto the edges of Old Town.

E. Criterion E: The applicant's justification is not based completely or predominantly on the cost of land or economic considerations.

The small area amendments are not based completely or predominantly on the cost of land or economic considerations. The request furthers Criterion 14-16-6-7(E)(3)(e).

8. These proposed Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) Text Amendments– Small Areas would generally protect public health, safety, and welfare and promote economic growth and investment in the City as a whole as required pursuant to 14-16-6-7(E)(3).

9. The request generally furthers the following relevant City Charter articles:
  - A. Article I, Incorporation and Powers. Amending the IDO via text amendments is consistent with the purpose of the City Charter to provide for maximum local self-government. The revised regulatory language and processes in the IDO will generally help implement the Comprehensive Plan and help guide future legislation.
  - B. Article IX, Environmental Protection. The proposed Small Area text amendments to the IDO will help ensure that land is developed and used properly. The IDO is an instrument to help promote and maintain an aesthetic and humane urban environment for Albuquerque's citizens, and thereby promote improved quality of life. Commissions, Boards, and Committees will have updated and clarified regulations to help facilitate effective administration of City policy in this area.
  - C. Article XVII, Planning. Amending the IDO through the annual update process is an instance of the Council exercising its role as the City's ultimate planning and zoning authority. The IDO will help implement the Comprehensive Plan and ensure that development in the City is consistent with the intent of any other plans and ordinances that the Council adopts (Section I). Amending the IDO through the annual update process will help the Administration to implement the Comprehensive Plan vision for future growth and development, and will help with the enforcement and administration of land use plans (Section II).
  
10. The request generally furthers the following, applicable Goal and policies in Chapter 4: Community Identity:
  - A. Goal 4.1 – Character: Enhance, protect, and preserve distinct communities.

As a whole, the proposed text amendments would generally enhance, protect, and preserve Old Town – HPO-5, a distinct community because provisions would be included that would strengthen the use-specific standards.

The IDO is intended to make zoning and land use entitlements in our community more transparent, accurate, and contextually compatible in order to enhance, protect, and preserve distinct communities, neighborhoods, and traditional communities. The IDO provides protections for residential neighborhoods through dimensional standards specific to residential zone districts in Part 2, tailored regulations in Overlay Zones in Part 3, use-specific standards that require distance separations between non-residential and residential uses and zone districts in Part 4, and development standards that apply to adjacent residential uses or zone district, especially edge buffers and neighborhood edges in Part 5.
  - B. 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.

If approved, the request would further the Identity and Design Policy (4.1.2). The request protects the identity of neighborhoods and commercial districts by clarifying standards and regulations that are unclear. This will better ensure appropriate scale, design, and location of development.
  - C. Subpolicy 4.1.2(a): Maintain and preserve the unique qualities of historic areas.

The request would allow for the maintenance and preservation of the unique qualities of the historic area by prohibiting cannabis uses in the Old Town HPO-5. The Old Albuquerque

Historic District is important for its' long history, for its' historic sites, for its' ancient pattern of church, plaza, and streets, and for its' collection of important historic buildings. The district has historic buildings mainly erected between 1870 and 1915, with a few major earlier structures' its street patterns and church buildings are vivid reminders of the much earlier history of the Village of Albuquerque.

- D. Policy 4.1.4 – Neighborhoods: Enhance, protect, and preserve neighborhoods and traditional communities as key to our long-term health and vitality.

The request enhances, protects, and preserves neighborhoods and traditional communities by clarifying standards and regulations that are unclear. This will improve the implementation of the original goals and intent of the regulations as adopted through Sector Development Plans and the IDO. The proposed new regulations, including expanding the height restriction area and adding new use restrictions in the Northwest Mesa VPO, are intended to protect and enhance the existing character of those areas.

- E. Subpolicy 4.1.4(a): Respect existing neighborhood values and social, cultural, recreational uses.

The Old Town HPO-5 encompasses an area roughly between Mountain Road and Central Avenue on the north and south, Rio Grande Boulevard, and 19<sup>th</sup> Street on the west and east. It contains a mix of residential, institutional, and commercial properties. The historic zone was created with the adoption of the City's first Zoning Code in 1959 to preserve and promote the educational, cultural, and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of the traditional architectural character of historic Old Albuquerque. At that time, decades before there would be such things as the National Register of Historic Places or Registered Historic Districts, Albuquerque created its own historic H-1 zone that regulated architectural styles, permissive uses, alcohol consumption restrictions along with specific development guidelines.

Albuquerque is recognized for its collection of distinctive historic resources that are enjoyed by residents, business owners, and visitors as links to the city's heritage, and that set the stage for a vibrant future. Preserving these historic assets is essential to Albuquerque's well-being, identity, and character. The proposed text amendments would further this subpolicy by respecting the existing neighborhood values and social, cultural, and recreational sources.

11. The request generally furthers the following, applicable Goals and policies in Chapter 5- Land Use pertaining to Areas of Consistency and procedures and processes:

- A. 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 the development reinforces the scale, intensity and setbacks of the immediately surrounding context.

The proposed amendments would apply to the Old Town HPO-5 and would generally protect and enhance the existing character of the area while clarifying how to apply the regulations.

- B. Goal 5.7 Implementation Process: Employ procedures and processes to effectively and equitably implement the Comprehensive Plan.

The request would further the Implementation Process Goal (5.7). The intent of many of the proposed changes is to clarify how to read and apply provisions in the IDO, which would result in a more predictable development outcomes and consistent decision-making.

- C. Policy 5.7.2 - Regulatory Alignment: Update regulatory frameworks to support desired growth, high quality development, economic development, housing, a variety of transportation modes, and quality of life priorities.

The IDO's procedures and processes in Part 6 have been developed to effectively and equitably implement the Comprehensive Plan. In order for the City's land use, zoning, and development regulations to stay up-to-date, the IDO established an annual update requirement into the regulatory framework. Changes proposed are intended to continually improve how the IDO implements the comp Plan by aligning regulations with Comp Plan goals and policies.

The annual amendment process for the IDO – small areas is a procedure to continue to effectively and equitably implement the Comprehensive Plan that results in an updated regulatory framework. The proposed text amendments would better link applicable Comprehensive Plan Goals and policies and the IDO, the implementation mechanism.

- D. Policy 5.7.5 – Public Engagement: Provide regular opportunities for residents and stakeholders to better understand and engage in the planning and development process.

The annual update process for the IDO – small areas provides residents and stakeholders with an opportunity to better understand and engage with the planning and development process.

- E. Policy 5.7.6 – Development Services: Provide high-quality customer service with transparent approval and permitting processes.

The annual amendment process to the IDO-small areas is a procedure that implements the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed text amendments will provide clarification on how to read and apply provisions to the IDO, resulting in a more predictable development outcome.

12. The request generally furthers the following Goals and policies in Chapter 7- Urban Design:

- A. Policy 7.3.3 – Placemaking: Encourage efforts to establish and strengthen district identity within Centers, business districts, and neighborhoods.

The proposed text amendments would include changes that would establish and strengthen the Old Town HPO-5 district identity by prohibiting cannabis uses and would help to continue to reinforce the experiences for residents and visitors in the historic district. The zoning standards for small areas (Part 14-16-3), residential neighborhoods, and within Centers within the IDO implement the Comprehensive Plan.

- B. Subpolicy Placemaking 7.3.3(a): Identify, celebrate, and leverage special places

Albuquerque is recognized for its collection of distinctive historic resources that are enjoyed by residents, business owners, and visitors as links to the city's heritage, and that set the stage for a vibrant future. Preserving these historic assets is essential to Albuquerque's well-being, identity, and character. The proposed text amendments would further this subpolicy by celebrating and leveraging special places such as Old Town HPO-5.

C. Policy 7.3.2 – Community Character: Encourage design strategies that recognize and embrace the character differences that give communities their distinct identities and make them safe and attractive places.

Subpolicy Community Character 7.3.2(a): Design development to reflect the character of the surrounding area and protect and enhance views.

The proposed text amendments would make communities and their distinct identities safe and attractive places by encouraging design strategies that recognize the character differences in communities.

13. The request furthers and partially furthers the following, applicable policies from Chapter 8- Economic Development:

A. Policy 7.3.3 – Placemaking: Encourage efforts to establish and strengthen district identity within Centers, business districts, and neighborhoods.

The proposed text amendments include changes that would contribute to creating interesting places with different development intensities and densities and would help preserve interesting places. The Old Albuquerque Historic District is important for its' long history, for its' historic sites, for its' ancient pattern of church, plaza, and streets, and for its' collection of important historic buildings. The district has historic buildings mainly erected between 1870 and 1915, with a few major earlier structures' its street patterns and church buildings are vivid reminders of the much earlier history of the Village of Albuquerque. The changes to prohibit the retail, cultivation, and manufacturing of cannabis products in Old Town HPO-5 would continue to protect this historic district.

14. The request furthers the following, applicable Goal and policy from Chapter 11- Heritage Conservation:

A. Goal 11.1 – Traditional, Rural & Agricultural Heritage: Preserve and enhance farmland, the acequia system, and traditional communities.

The proposed amendments would further Goal 11.1 – Traditional, Rural & Agricultural Heritage by preserving and enhancing a traditional community such as Old Town HPO-5. The proposed amendment to prohibit cannabis uses in Old Town HPO-5 would add protections that would facilitate the preservation and enhancement of traditional communities such as Old Town HPO-5 and would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan policies that aim to protect and contribute to reinforce traditional communities.

B. Goal 11.2 – Historic Assets: Preserve and enhance significant historic districts and buildings to reflect our past as we move into the future and to strengthen our sense of identity.

The proposed text amendments fulfill this goal by requiring the preservation and enhancement of significant historic districts such as Old Town HPO-5 that reflect our past as we move into the future and to strengthen our sense of identity.

C. Policy 11.2.2 – Historic Registration: Promote the preservation of historic buildings and districts determined to be of significant local, State, and/or National historic interest.

The preservation of historic districts is crucial to cities, specifically to Albuquerque because historic preservation districts provide benefits to people, whether or not they own a home or business in them. Old Town HPO-5 serves as a living history lesson, and tangible reminders of the city's past as it helps tell the story of the community.

- D. Subpolicy 11.2.2(b): Recognize historic buildings and districts as vital elements of the community.

The proposed text amendments would help recognize historic buildings and districts as vital elements of the community. The IDO has a role in this process as subpolicy 11.2.2(b) would help preserve the character of the area through conservation of buildings and sites.

- E. Goal 11.3 – Cultural Landscapes: Protect, reuse, and/or enhance significant cultural landscapes as important contributors to our heritage and rich and complex identities.

The proposed text amendment would protect and enhance cultural landscapes by proposing changes to the Old Town Historic Protection Overlay (HPO-5) zones.

15. For an Amendment to IDO Text, the required notice must be published, mailed, and posted on the web (see Table 6-1-1). A neighborhood meeting was required and held on October 6, 2021 via Zoom. The City published notice of the EPC hearing as a legal ad in the ABQ Journal newspaper. First class mailed notice was sent to the two representatives of each Neighborhood Association and Coalition registered with the Office of Neighborhood Coordination (ONC) as required by IDO Subsection 14-16-6-4(K)(2)(a). Notice was posted on the Planning Department website and on the project website.
16. In addition to the required notice, on October 25, 2021, notification letters were mailed to 246 property owners within or adjacent to the Old Town HPO-5.
17. On October 25, 2021, the Planning Department hosted a public open house meeting via Zoom to review the proposed 2021 Annual Update to the Old Town HPO-5. The email notice and the required neighborhood association notification letter included information about the public open house.
18. The EPC held a study session regarding the proposed 2021 IDO amendments on December 9, 2021. This was a publicly-noticed meeting.
19. As of this writing, Staff has received two comments expressing support for the recommend change.

Sincerely,

for Alan M. Varela,  
Planning Director

AV/SB

cc: Jesse Ehrenberg, [jdehrenberg@outlook.com](mailto:jdehrenberg@outlook.com)  
Sylvia Ramos Cruz, [jdehrenberg@outlook.com](mailto:jdehrenberg@outlook.com)  
Kathy Hiatt, 110 San Felipe St NW, Albuquerque NM, 87104  
Ricardo Guillermo, 1108 11th St NW, Albuquerque NM, 87102  
Carla Villa, 607 Solano Dr. SE, Albuquerque NM, 87108