

# **METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN II** **OLD ALBUQUERQUE HIGH SCHOOL**

## **Preface**

This revised plan for redevelopment of the Old Albuquerque High School Metropolitan Redevelopment Area has been prepared pursuant to the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code of the State of New Mexico, Sections 3-60A-1 to 3-60A-48 NMSA (1978 Comp.) and applicable Albuquerque City Council Resolutions.

The Plan complements and conforms with the policies established for the project area by the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan and by the Huning Highland Sector Development Plan. The high school area is also one of the a priority projects in the Downtown Revitalization Plan.

The purpose of the Plan is to identify the project area, to present a general plan for eliminating the blight found within the project area as set forth in City Council Resolutions 4-1980 and 65-1983, and to describe the process by which redevelopment will be carried out.

This Plan is an important step in the improvement and revitalization process. Drawn to meet the requirements of New Mexico state statutes, the Plan provides a basis for continuing and coordinating a variety of public and private actions that will lead to the total renovation and historic preservation of the project site. It will produce an attractive area which will be a major benefit to the City of Albuquerque, the Old Albuquerque High School Metropolitan Redevelopment Area and the surrounding neighborhoods for decades to come.

This Plan may be amended in accordance with the provisions of the New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code.

## **I. PROJECT AREA**

### **A. General Description**

The area under consideration is the entire portion of the Old Albuquerque High School Metropolitan Redevelopment Area, (the Area) bounded by Central, Broadway, Martin Luther King, Jr., Arno, and Copper (all N.E.) in the northwestern corner of the Huning Highland neighborhood (see attached map). The site encompasses 7.26 acres or 316,246 square feet.

### **B. Legal Description**

Lots A-1, A-2, B, and C of the Banner Square Addition, being a replat of portions of Arno St. (vacated, but not closed), the Huning Highland Addition, and the Belvidere Addition as those lots are shown and designated on the Corrected Replat filed with the Bernalillo County Clerk on June 26, 1985, in Map Book C-27, page 134 and Plat of tracts A-1, A-2 and C-1 filed with the Bernalillo County Clerk on February 24, 1997.

### **C. Prevailing Conditions**

Lot A-1 and A-2, the main campus block of the Old Albuquerque High School (OAHS), contains five historic buildings (Buildings) constructed between 1914 and 1940. Lot B to the north contains two small, one story, modern buildings and a dirt parking lot. The half block to the east, lot C-1, is vacant.

The Buildings have been vacant since 1977. A 1977 re-use study found the Buildings to be structurally sound for their original uses. The electrical, air conditioning and heating systems need to be replaced and plumbing must be brought up to current code.

Since 1977, the Buildings have deteriorated further. Many of the windows are broken and the frames are deteriorating. A 1995 stabilization study found interior water damage due to leaking roofs with a possibility of damage to the structural integrity of the Buildings due to water. The roofs are in need of immediate repair if the Buildings are to be saved. A chain link fence encircling the property and private security have helped diminish break-ins and vandalism, but have not eliminated this problem entirely.

## **II. THE PLAN**

### **A. Objective**

The Plan's objective is to effectuate redevelopment of the Old Albuquerque High School site in a manner that will eliminate the blighting conditions, preserve the historic integrity of the high school buildings, conform to the general plan for the municipality as a whole, and provide the maximum opportunity for rehabilitation/redevelopment by a public/private partnership consistent with the needs of the community, and the contiguous neighborhoods and the AHS Alumni.

### **B. Process**

The City of Albuquerque completed the purchase of Lots A-1, B and C-1 (Property) in February, 1997. Lot A-2, the Manual Arts Building, is owned by the Battaglia Family Trust. The City of Albuquerque issued a three stage RFP consisting of: I Developer Qualifications/Project Submission, II Developed Proposal Submission by Qualified Proposers, and III Contract Negotiations with a selected Developer. The first stage of the RFP seeking developers was released in May of 1997. The City of Albuquerque received five proposals which were reviewed by a task force which made recommendations to the Albuquerque Development Commission (ADC). The selection of Stage II proposals will be based on criteria set forth in this plan.

### **C. Project Activity**

#### **1. Land Acquisition**

The owners of Lot A-2 have expressed an interest in disposing of their property; therefore, it is possible that this property may be purchased as part of the redevelopment. The City will show preference to a property developer who is willing to either partner with the current owners of Lot A-2 (the Manual Arts Building); or purchase this building outright for redevelopment. If neither of these options are possible, then the City of Albuquerque will purchase this property to expedite the redevelopment process.

#### **2. Land Disposition**

In order to make the redevelopment of OAHS economically feasible, The City of Albuquerque, if requested to do so, will convey the Property to the developer(s) at no cost to them or enter into a long term land lease that would enable the developer to receive tax abatement.

### **3. Land Uses, Zoning, and Planning**

The project area is currently zoned SU-2/SU-1 Planned Development Area to allow for the tailoring of design and uses. A site development plan is required. Possible uses would include, but not necessarily be restricted to, limited residential (including apartments), educational, cultural, retail, office, medical center, commercial service (no outside storage), entertainment, restaurant, parking, hotel, museum, library, sports facilities and community center. A manufacturing or industrial use is ruled out. In conformance with state law, sale and service of alcoholic beverages are allowed only in conjunction with full service restaurant operations and must be more than 300 feet from the property line of any neighboring churches or schools. Package sales are prohibited. Current zoning restricts liquor service to the area that lies more than 125 feet north of the southern property line along Central Ave. This Plan supports an amendment of current zoning in order to accommodate the development of a full service restaurant on Central that is located over 300 feet from the property line of any neighboring churches or schools (see attached map). It does not, however, support an amendment that would allow liquor sales in the Library Building.

### **4. Demolition and Removal of Structures**

The city requires all the Buildings to be historically rehabilitated and re-used. The northern lot bounded by Broadway on the west, Martin Luther King, Jr. on the north, Arno on the east, and vacated Tijeras on the south shall be redeveloped by either the City, or the developer, with new construction compatible with the historic nature, size, scale and uses of the Buildings. The Court order which facilitated the sale of Lots A-1, B and C-1 requires that the two modern, one story buildings on that site be demolished or removed. Inasmuch as the North lot is a part of the designated historic property any demolition or removal of the buildings on that site must be approved by the City Landmarks and Urban Conservation Commission, as well as by any ancillary regulatory agency with jurisdiction.

### **5. Building Restrictions, Requirements, Conservation**

The Area carries several historic designations. It has been declared a City

of Albuquerque landmark, requiring a certificate of appropriateness from the City Landmarks and Urban Conservation Commission (LUCC) for any alteration in exterior appearance, construction of new structures; or alteration or destruction of interior features that have been, or may be, listed or declared worthy of preservation in the Landmark's Preservation Guidelines (see attached). It also is designated a significant building in

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Huning Highland Historic Overlay Zone, is individually listed on the State Register of Cultural Properties, and is listed as a contributing building in the Huning Highland Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. All designations make it subject to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, if state loans, tax credits, or public funds are used for rehabilitation.

The Buildings also are subject to Section 18-8-7, NMSA 1978 (1994 Supplement), which prohibits funding by any subdivision of the New Mexico State government of any use of a registered historic property that adversely affects that site, unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative, and all possible planning to minimize harm to the property has occurred.

Any new construction must be compatible in scale, massing and exterior material with the original structures. The height of any new building may not exceed the height of adjacent buildings.

## **6. Old Albuquerque High School Historic Preservation and Memorials**

An appropriate location within the redevelopment project shall be designated to create "Bulldog Plaza" as a permanent memorial to Albuquerque High School history. Further, engraved, bronze, building history plaques are to be adhered to the exterior wall surfaces of each Old Albuquerque High School Building, at an appropriate location, to be accessible and visible to the public.

Signage designating the Area as an historic site shall be placed at appropriate locations to be clearly visible to both the pedestrian and automobile public. Additionally, the developer shall consult with the

AHS

Alumni Association to provide appropriate interior wall space on the ground floors of each Building, which is publicly accessible, for OAHS historical displays and permanent exhibits.

The central plaza is felt to be a very important part of the high school and was the essential gathering space while the school was open. It is

important to preserve the character of this central plaza space.

## **7. Redevelopment and Improvements**

and The City is seeking a mixed use concept which provides public access,

which is compatible with historic designations and requirements. The Buildings should not be developed for a predominately residential use. It is desirable that any residential uses be market rate apartments or privately owned condominiums. This Plan does not allow for a low income housing tax credit project. The extent of redevelopment and improvements will vary with whatever final proposal is selected subject to the above referenced guidelines.

If a phased development is proposed, the developer will need to provide a time line as to when and what reuse(s) will be constructed. New development on Lots B and C should be compatible with the reuse of the original Buildings.

Intensity of development is of little concern to the surrounding neighborhood as long as proper parking and infrastructure are provided and maintained. A development with twenty-four hour activity, such as the mixed use of housing and commercial, is desired for increased safety and security.

The Downtown core boundary needs to be amended to include OAHS in order to facilitate the relocation of Federal offices into the project. The City will be encouraged to use this space for rental office space.

## **8. Recreation and Community Facilities**

Two of the buildings, notably the gym and the library, have been characterized in reports as particularly suitable for community re-uses. The City, or a private developer, will rehabilitate the gymnasium, in accordance with historic preservation guidelines, into a community center. Management and security of the community center will be coordinated with the rest of the development. Contemplated uses include, but are not limited to; daycare center for neighborhood residents and downtown employees, which could be provided by either the City or a private provider, after school programs, DARE offices, PAL youth programs and adult recreation/fitness training.

## **9. Stabilization**

In order to halt deterioration of the Buildings, the City will implement an immediate short term and a long term stabilization strategy. In the short term, the City will repair or replace (as needed) the roofs on Old Main, Classroom and Library Buildings. Following this, the window openings on each Building will be closed. The short term stabilization of the Gymnasium will consist of replacement of the roof and repairing or replacing the windows.

the The long term strategy will be implemented in such a way as to allow the developer to capture Historic tax credits. City subsidies will be used to stabilize the buildings through structural repairs and repair of the windows and roofs. The developer will fully rehabilitate the Buildings as part of long-term redevelopment of OAHS.

Prior to development, the developer(s) shall conduct a current technical study of the structural conditions of the buildings - including damaged and eroded areas - and correct any deficiencies required during the redevelopment process.

## **10. Financing**

The City is amenable to low interest loans, Metropolitan Redevelopment or Industrial Revenue Bonds, master leases and possibly the waiver of City fees for permits, utility expansion and parks development fees in order to facilitate redevelopment of OAHS.

## **11. Connections**

OAHS is an important property to the Downtown core and its connection to the downtown and the Huning Highland neighborhood is vital. An improved pedestrian connection to downtown along Central Ave. is primary. Current plans including straightening the curve on the South side of Central Avenue to allow pedestrians to see from one side of the pedestrian path running under the railroad bridge to the other, which is not possible now. More measures need to be taken to insure proper visibility and safety on this path. The City needs to provide funding in the next CIP cycle to perform architectural and engineering design work and construction of these improvements or an overpass that would connect to the transit center. Also, no loitering signs on the bridge railings above the path would help to prevent people from hovering over the path and making it even more intimidating. Developers should also develop a pedestrian link to the Tijeras underpass to facilitate connection to the Convention Center and the new Federal Courthouse.

Strong transit connections are also necessary to connect the OAHS project

to other activities in the downtown area and throughout the city. A bus pull-off lane would be helpful in promoting transit to the site. There is a strong core of cultural and tourist activities which run along Central Ave. from Nob Hill all the way to the river and throughout downtown. (please see attached map) The development of OAHs should take these areas into account and address how the site can complement the Downtown core and Huning Highland neighborhood. The City has completed a study of the South Broadway corridor and is in the process of developing a streetscape. The streetscape of OAHs should be designed with compatible lighting and landscaping.

## **12. Time Frame/Project Schedule**

The City is interested in developing this site in an expeditious manner. Developers will need to provide a realistic development time line with their Stage II RFP responses.

If the developer is going to hold Lots B and C for future redevelopment, they must be developed in a specific amount of time (no more than 5 years from the contract date) and in a compatible use to the original Buildings.