



Landmarks & Urban  
Conservation Commission



**Agenda Number: 4**  
**Case No.: 10LUCC50007**  
**Project # 1001246**  
**March 9, 2011**

**Staff Report**

<b>Agent</b>	Jake Rodriguez, ORR Architects
<b>Applicant</b>	San Felipe de Neri Parish
<b>Request</b>	Certificate of Appropriateness
<b>Legal Description</b>	Tract 201 MRGCD Map 38
<b>Address/Location</b>	2005 No Plaza NW
<b>Size</b>	1.33 ac.
<b>Zoning</b>	H-1
<b>Historic Location</b>	Old Town Historic Zone

**Staff Recommendation**

*APPROVAL of Case # 10LUCC50007, Project #1001246, a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for alteration, based on the Findings 1 - 12 beginning on page 12.*

*Staff Planners*  
*Ed Boles and Maryellen Hennessy*  
*Senior Planners*

**Summary of Analysis**

*This is an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to church buildings at San Felipe de Neri catholic church, Old Town Plaza.*

*The applicant proposes to rehabilitate the sacristy portion of the church building, rectory building, parish hall and interior courtyard to include re-roofing of the sacristies, north wing offices and parish hall, rebuilding the courtyard portals, interior renovation of the sacristies, offices and parish hall including floor level changes to accommodate ADA access, repair and/or replacement of selected doors and windows in the rooms surrounding the courtyard and improvements to the courtyard.*

*Staff recommends approval based upon compliance with the relevant guidelines.*

**PRIMARY REFERENCES:**  
*Landmarks and Urban Conservation Ordinance; Development Guidelines for the Old Town Historic Zone.*

*No other City Departments or other agencies were asked to review this application as such review was deemed not relevant.*

***Development Review Division Report:***

***SUMMARY OF REQUEST***

<b><i>Requests</i></b>	<i>Certificate of Appropriateness for alteration to a Contributing building.</i>
<b><i>Historic Location</i></b>	<i>Old Town Historic Zone</i>

***AREA HISTORY AND CHARACTER***

***Surrounding architectural styles, historic character and recent (re)development***

	<b><i># of Stories</i></b>	<b><i>Roof Configuration, Architectural Style and Approximate Age of Construction</i></b>	<b><i>Historic Classification &amp; Land Use</i></b>
<b><i>General Area</i></b>	1-2	Flat; Pitched (gabled and hipped), Carpenter Gothic, Spanish-Pueblo Revival and contemporary interpretations; Territorial Revival, Brick Commercial, Prairie, 1796 – 1990’s.	Contributing, Unclassified Residential and Commercial
<b><i>Site to the North</i></b>	1	Flat, Spanish Pueblo and Spanish Pueblo Revival, 1860’s - present	Contributing; Residential
<b><i>Sites to the South</i></b>	1	Old Town Plaza	Contributing
<b><i>Sites to the East</i></b>	1-2	Flat, Spanish Pueblo and Spanish Pueblo Revival, 1880’s – 1950’s	Contributing; Residential
<b><i>Site to the West</i></b>	2	Flat, Spanish-Pueblo Revival and contemporary interpretations; Territorial Revival, Brick Commercial, Prairie, 1880’s - present	Contributing; Residential

***1. INTRODUCTION***

***Proposal***

The applicant is proposing renovation work to San Felipe de Neri church buildings and courtyard. The work is generally confined to the sacristies at the east side of the church building, the north side of the rectory building and the south and west sides of Moreno Hall, all of which are visible from the interior courtyard. The courtyard is not visible from the street. Improvements to the courtyard are also proposed. Work that affects the interior of the buildings is not subject to LUCC review and is not addressed in the analysis contained in this report. The work includes:

- Re-roofing of the sacristies, north wing offices and parish hall.
- Rebuilding the courtyard portals
- Interior renovation of the sacristies, offices and parish hall including floor level changes to accommodate ADA access.

- Repair and/or replacement of selected doors and windows in the rooms surrounding the courtyard.
- Paving of the courtyard with brick and other improvements.

### ***Context and history***

San Felipe de Neri church has operated as a center for religious life in the community continuously for over three hundred years. The original San Felipe de Neri church, built in 1706 and named for San Francisco Xavier, was located on the west side of the plaza at Old Albuquerque. That church was maintained through the eighteenth century until 1792 when extensive deterioration led to its “collapse”. Construction of a new (existing) church and a one-story convent (now part of the rectory building) was begun in 1793. The narthex and twenty-foot tall Gothic Revival towers were added to the church in 1861 – 1862 and new rooms added along the east side of the church in 1871-1872. These rooms constitute the sacristy rooms that are affected in this alteration.

A second story was added to the original convent, (rectory building), in 1889 – 1890. The arched porch on the south façade of the rectory building was added in 1941.<sup>1</sup> The rectory buildings, as well as Moreno Hall are also affected in this alteration.

San Felipe de Neri Church was listed on the New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties (SR# 39) and on the National Register of Historic Places in 1969. The Old Albuquerque Historic District was listed on the State of New Mexico Register of Cultural Places (SR#749) in 1979. The National Register nomination notes:

*“Adjacent to the church on the east is a file of interesting rooms which contains the sacristy and several store rooms. These rooms have fine vigas and Territorial windows filled with old glass which seems to date from a refurbishment in perhaps the middle [eighteen] sixties...Beyond these rooms is a delightful patio which has great potential for restoration”* (Bunting, New Mexico Architecture, May-June 1966).

Dr. Bunting adds:

*“San Felipe de Neri is notable primarily for its surviving and easily interpreted record of architectural evolution spanning more than two and a half centuries...Throughout the centuries the church has been in continuous use by a population which has progressively adapted the building to new conditions and new preferences. Considered separately, each stratum of construction provides as fine an example of its period as may be found in New Mexico today...The great architectural value of the complex derives from the unique amalgamation of work from each era. Essentially all of New Mexico’s post-Spanish past is contained and synthesized in San Felipe de Neri”.*

More recently, rehabilitation and maintenance of the church building has included re-roofing and reconstruction of the widow’s walk on the rectory building in 1994 (94-LUC-56), restoration of the Gothic Revival bell towers in 1997 (97-LUC-49 and previously in 1970) and restoration of the convent building in 2004/05 (04LUC-01476).

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<sup>1</sup> Works and Days: A History of San Felipe Neri Church, Thomas J. Steele, S.J. The Albuquerque Museum, Albuquerque. 1983.

The agent for the applicant, Ortega, Rodriguez, Romero Architects, are experienced in the restoration of historic church buildings in New Mexico and have enjoyed professional recognition for their work. Mr. Rodriguez and his partner, Antonio Ortega, were the architects for the 2005 – 2006 restoration project on the convent building at San Felipe de Neri . The firm was recognized for that project with an award from the Southwest General Contractor’s Association. Ortega, Romero, Rodriguez Architects was also presented with an Award of Excellence in 2010 from the Santa Fe Chapter of the AIA for the renovation of the Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi in Santa Fe. The firm received an award for that project from the City of Santa Fe Historic Design Review Board.

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## II. APPLICABLE PLANS, ORDINANCES, DESIGN GUIDELINES & POLICIES

### *Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan of 1988, amended 2003*

The plan sets out goals and policies concerning land use, environmental protection and heritage conservation.

#### LAND USE

Section II.B.5 This site is located in the Established Urban Area as defined in the Comprehensive Plan. The Goal of the Established Urban Area is to "create a quality urban environment which perpetuates the tradition of identifiable, individual, but integrated communities within the metropolitan area and which offers variety and maximum choice in housing, transportation, work areas, and life styles, while creating a visually pleasing built environment." Applicable Established Urban Area policies include:

Policy d: "The location, intensity, and design of new development shall respect existing neighborhood values, natural environmental conditions and carrying capacities, scenic resources, and resources of other social, cultural, and recreational concern."

Policy o: "Redevelopment and rehabilitation of older neighborhoods in the Established Urban Area shall be continued and strengthened."

Section II.B.6 This site is also located in the Central Urban Development Area, a portion of the Established Urban Development Area as defined in the Comprehensive Plan, and is subject to the Central Urban policies as well as the Established Urban Area policies. The Goal of the Central Urban Area is to "promote the Central Urban Area as a focus for arts, cultural, and public facilities/activities while recognizing and enhancing the character of its residential neighborhoods and its importance as the historic center of the City."

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Section II.C.5 The goal for Historic Resources is "to protect, reuse or enhance significant historic districts and buildings." Applicable Historic Resources policies include:

Policy b: "Research, evaluation, and protection of historical and cultural properties in the City and County shall be continued where appropriate."

Section 11.C.9 Community Identity and Urban Design goal is "to preserve and enhance the natural and built characteristics, social, cultural and historical features that identify Albuquerque and Bernalillo County sub-areas as distinct communities and collections of neighborhoods."

Policy b: "In each Community Area, strategic planning, neighborhood planning, development and redevelopment shall be evaluated in light of its relationship to and effect upon (3) Local history, specifically architectural styles and traditions and current and historic significance to Albuquerque.

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***H-1 Zone***

The Old Town Historic Zone was developed in 1957 with the adoption of the first Zoning Code for the City of Albuquerque. Old Town was recognized even then as a very special location within Albuquerque, and the H-1 Zone was developed specifically to address the development within Old Town. The H-1 Zone was later amended to include a 300 foot "buffer" zone surrounding Old Town to ensure a coherent visual character for the district. Signage, architectural style, and permissive uses are controlled through the H-1 Zone. The code provides that a Certificate of Appropriateness approved by the LUCC is required for development within the H-1 and the Buffer zones. Relevant sections of the H-1 Zone (§14-16-2-25, R.O.A., 1994) are attached.

***Old Town Historic Zone Design Guidelines***

Design Guidelines (as amended through April 9, 1998) have been adopted by the Landmarks and Urban Conservation Commission for building projects in the H-1 Historic Old Town Zone. The Specific Design Guidelines for the Old Town Historic District also apply to the buffer zone within 300 feet of the historic district. The Guidelines are general, and along with standards applicable to the rehabilitation of historic properties, they address contemporary new buildings and pedestrian safety. The specific development guidelines for Old Town area attached.

***Landmarks and Urban Conservation Ordinance***

This site consists of a contributing property in the Huning Highland Historic Overlay Zone and the project is subject to certain provisions of the Landmarks and Urban Conservation Ordinance (Article 12, R.O.A., 1994). The purpose of this ordinance is to:

“Preserve, protect, enhance, perpetuate and promote the use of structures and areas of historical, cultural, architectural, engineering, archeological or geographic significance located in the city; to strengthen the city’s economic base by stimulating the tourist industry; to enhance the identity of the city by protecting the city’s heritage and prohibiting the unnecessary destruction or defacement of its cultural assets; and to conserve existing urban developments as viable economic and social entities.”

Section 14-12-8 (A) of the LUC ordinance provides that "Within the boundaries of a historic zone, urban conservation overlay zone, or landmark site, the exterior appearance of any structure shall not be altered, new structures shall not be constructed, and existing structures shall not be demolished until a Certificate of Appropriateness has been duly approved."

### *III. ANALYSIS*

#### *Old Town Development Guidelines*

The San Felipe Church complex comprises several buildings and outdoor spaces, and this request affects the following buildings and spaces. The analysis is organized accordingly.

- Church including rooms east of the nave and Gasparri Chapel
- Rectory
- Moreno Hall including Kitchen/Pantry and adjacent Offices
- Courtyard including the Portal and Zaguán

Before delving into the details of the proposed work, we observe that this group of buildings has undergone many changes since each was constructed as illustrated in the photographic and other attachments to this report. H-1 Zone Guideline 5 reads, **“Many changes to buildings and environments which have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history of the building and the neighborhood. These changes may have developed significance in their own right, and this significance should be recognized and respected.”**

The key word in Guideline 5 is “significance,” and previous decisions on the San Felipe complex by the LUCC have acknowledged that many previous alterations are not significant. This request is similar in nature – it differentiates significant alterations such as the addition of the Portal from non-significant ones including metal casement windows in the Rectory and other buildings. In short, the request is very respectful of the complex significance of this group of buildings.

Also worth noting is the long-term value of some of the proposed work. Current conditions on some roofs and in the Courtyard are detrimental to the physical integrity of the complex. The proposed drainage improvements are needed to prevent structural deterioration. Proposed security and privacy alterations also support the ongoing use of the San Felipe complex for its original purpose and complementary role as a heritage site.

#### Church

Windows and doors alterations are the main exterior work. Some units should be preserved and others may be replaced with no appreciable loss of historic value, if the replacements are appropriate in design and material. The design sorts out these distinctions well, as noted above. Existing exterior doors require taller openings to be safe, and a new door opening will be made from an existing window. Since these changes are respectful of the existing pattern of openings in the Church, significant windows will be retained, and appropriate new doors are specified for the enlarged and new door openings, applicable H-1 Zone Guideline 2 is met: **“Rehabilitation work should not destroy the distinguishing qualities or character of the property and its environment. The removal or alteration of any historic material or architectural features should be held to the minimum, consistent with the proposed use.”**

Of particular interest are several multi-light, wood windows at the ground floor under the Portal. From their wavy texture we know that some glass panes in these windows were either hand-blown or manufactured as “cylinder glass,” probably in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However they were made, these windows impart strong character at eye level, and it’s appropriate that they be repaired and retained as proposed. Note H-1 Zone Guideline 4: **“Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize older structures and often predate the mass production of building materials should be treated with sensitivity.”**

Doors along the east wall of the church are of less concern except for their placement among the windows. The proposal to alter door heights and widths, and to replace existing wood doors units with new wood ones, is appropriate.

The new north entry to Gasparri Chapel will change window proportions and units from metal casement to appropriate wood double-hung sash windows, and add a door in an area little seen by the public. Window and roofing work above this space will improve drainage and be minimally visible to the public.

#### Rectory

Existing rectory windows are metal replacements of original windows, which they resemble only in being glazed with glass. The new proposed replacements are more appropriate -- wood double-hung windows with 2-over-two glazing. This pattern is seen in historic photos of the building in its two-story, Italianate form with brick facade. While the brick façade was long ago stuccoed, the building form and some Italianate details remain. The proposed replacement windows fit the openings and style of this building. They are also characteristic of some styles of pre-1912 New Mexico buildings, which the H-1 Historic Old Town Zone seeks to preserve.

Rectory door changes and security/privacy alterations are designed appropriately. Enclosing the East Portal with an easily removable screen of iron and translucent back-up material allows the East Portal to “read” as a continuous feature and gives Rectory residents and users an outdoor place to occupy privately. Note H-1 Guideline 9: **“Wherever possible, new alterations or alterations to buildings should be done in such a manner that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the original building would be unimpaired.”**

#### Moreno Hall

This shed-roofed building north of the Courtyard has make-do, non-original windows whose replacement with 2/2 wood double-hung is more than appropriate. While we have found no old photos of the south side of Moreno Hall, its north wall appears in an old photo with 2/2 wood windows. The new wood four-panel door proposed for the east wall also fits.

Proposed new windows along the north wall of this building and adjacent offices are similarly appropriate replacements of existing non-significant windows.

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Courtyard including the Portal (N,S,W legs) and Zaguan

The proposed Portal reconstruction is true to the existing Portal but provides for more effective (and architecturally integrated) drainage from roof to ground. It's part of a larger effort to control runoff, which will help protect all the buildings around the Courtyard. While no H-1 Zone Guidelines emphasize measures to protect buildings structurally, doing so is necessary.

A portion of the North Portal is to be enclosed as a vestibule for Moreno Hall. Like the East Portal alterations, the design is compatible and consistent with H-1 Zone Guideline 9 in being removable without impairing the essential form and integrity of the original building. The use of large windows in this vestibule will make it "read" as a compatible alteration.

The proposal to pave the Courtyard with brick may not meet the letter of H-1 Zone Guideline 7: **"The design and general appearance of any development or alteration in the Old Town Historic Zone should be limited to the range of design options possible and commonly chosen in Albuquerque prior to the opening of the Santa Fe Railroad in April 1880. The design of any alteration to currently existing structures erected between 1880 and 1912 should be limited to the range of design options possible and commonly chosen at the time of the building's construction."**

While brick paving was possible for outdoor space in pre-1880 Albuquerque, it does not appear to have been commonly chosen. Some locally fired brick was available but it wasn't suitable for paving. However, the San Felipe Church complex, among many other Old Town sites, has brick paving in other outdoor spaces and there is no known objection to this later feature.

**NOTE: Following discussion with staff, the proposal was revised (see revised elevation sheet and roof plan) to use painted wood windows rather than clad. The canales have also been inserted into the parapet rather than in cut-outs that are open above. This analysis includes those revisions.**

**LUC Ordinance**

The table below provides an evaluation of the submittal as it relates to the LUC Ordinance and the specific development guidelines as analyzed above.

LUC Ordinance (§14-12) Guidelines for New Construction	Analysis	Does the application satisfy the ordinance criteria?
§14-12-8-B- (1) The change is consistent with the designation ordinance and specific development guidelines for the historic overlay zone	As discussed in the above analysis, and subject to recommended conditions, the change is consistent with the ordinance and the development guidelines.	YES
§14-12-8 (B) (2) The architectural character, historical value, or archaeological value of the structure or site itself or of any historic zone in which it is located will not be significantly impaired or diminished.	The proposed alterations Neither the site nor the zone will be impaired or diminished.	YES
§14-12-8 (B) (3) The change qualified as a “certified rehabilitation: pursuant to the Tax Reform Act of 1976	Not applicable	N/A
§14-12-8 (B) (4) The structure or site’s distinguished original qualities or character will not be altered. Original shall mean at the time of initial construction or developed over the course of history of the structure.	The characteristic elements of the historic buildings are not diminished by this proposal. Those features such as the metal casement windows to be replaced are not considered significant to the buildings historic value.	YES
§14-12-8 (B) (5) Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced, if possible. If replacement is necessary, the new material shall match the original as closely as possible in like material and design;	Not applicable to this proposal.	
§14-12-8 (B) (6) Additions to existing structure and new construction may be of contemporary design if such design is compatible with the historic zone in which it is to be located	Not applicable	YES
§14-12-8 (B) (7) Demolition shall only be permitted. . . .	Not applicable	

***Additional Considerations***

The Historic Old Town Property Owners Association was notified of this application. No comment has been received to date and there is no know opposition to this request.

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***Conclusion***

Except as noted about the Courtyard above, LUCC Staff finds that the request meets all applicable H-1 Zone guidelines, and that approving this request will benefit the condition, historic appearance, and useful quality of the San Felipe de Neri Church complex.

***FINDINGS for a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for alteration – Case # 10-LUCC-50007 / Project #1001246 (March 9, 2011)***

1. This application is a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for alteration at 2005 North Plaza NW, described as Tract 201 MRGCD Map 38 in the H-1 Historic Zone and a contributing property in the Old Albuquerque Historic District.
2. The subject property contains the San Felipe de Neri church and associated church buildings.
3. The applicant proposes to rehabilitate the sacristy portion of the church building, rectory building, parish hall and interior courtyard to include re-roofing of the sacristies, north wing offices and parish hall, rebuilding the courtyard portals, interior renovation of the sacristies, offices and parish hall including floor level changes to accommodate ADA access, repair and/or replacement of selected doors and windows in the rooms surrounding the courtyard and improvements to the courtyard.
4. Section 14-12-8(A) of the Landmarks and Urban Conservation Ordinance states that within the boundaries of a historic zone, the exterior appearance of any structure shall not be altered, new structures shall not be constructed, and existing structures shall not be demolished until a Certificate of Appropriateness has been duly approved.
5. The LUC Ordinance specifies that an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be approved if it complies with several specified criteria. The LUC Ordinance Section 14-12(8)(B)(1) states that a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be approved if “the change is consistent with the designation ordinance and specific development guidelines for the landmark or historic zone”. The proposed alterations comply with 14-12(8)(B)(1).
6. The proposed alterations are consistent with the specific development guidelines for the Old Town Historic Zone as analyzed in the staff report. Current conditions on some roofs and in the Courtyard are detrimental to the physical integrity of the complex. The proposed

drainage improvements are needed to prevent structural deterioration. Proposed security and privacy alterations also support the ongoing use of the San Felipe complex for its original purpose and complementary role as a heritage site.

7. The LUC Ordinance Section 14-12(8)(B)(2) states that a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be approved if “The architectural character, historical value, or archaeological value of the structure or site itself or of any historic zone or urban conservation overlay zone in which it is located will not be significantly impaired or diminished” The proposed alteration comply 14-12(8)(B)(2). The proposed new building does not impair or diminish the historical value and architectural character of the historic zone due to its compatibility with the development guidelines. The proposal does not impair or diminish the character of the structure.
8. The *Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan* Established Urban Area policies include: Policy d: “The location, intensity, and design of new development shall respect existing neighborhood values, natural environmental conditions and carrying capacities, scenic resources, and resources of other social, cultural, and recreational concern.” The proposed new building supports Established Urban Area Policy d because the alteration conserves the historic value and architectural character of the historic buildings while providing for new development to meet the needs of the San Felipe parish.
9. The *Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan* contains goals and policies related to Environmental Protections and Heritage Conservation. Section 11.C.5 Historic Resources goal is to protect reuse or enhance significant historic districts and buildings. The proposed alterations support the Historic Resources goal or policy b and c because the alteration conserves the historic value and architectural character of the resources and is consistent with the development guidelines.
10. The *Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan* Section 11.C.9 Community Identity and Urban Design goal is “to preserve and enhance the natural and built characteristics, social, cultural and historical features that identify Albuquerque and Bernalillo County sub-areas as distinct communities and collections of neighborhoods.” Policy b states “In each Community Area, strategic planning, neighborhood planning, development and redevelopment shall be evaluated in light of its relationship to and effect upon (3) Local history, specifically architectural styles and traditions and current and historic significance to Albuquerque. The Community Identity and Urban Design goal is supported by the proposed alterations because they reflects the building traditions of the historic zone and preserves the built characteristics and historical features that characterize the Old Albuquerque historic district.

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***RECOMMENDATION - Case No. 10LUCC50007, Project #1001246***

**APPROVAL** of *10LUCC50007/ Project # 1001246*, an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for alteration, located at 2005 North Plaza NW, described as Tract 201 MRGCD Map 38 in the H-1 Historic Zone and a contributing property in the Old Albuquerque Historic District, based on the above 14 Findings.

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**Maryellen Hennessy, Senior Planner  
Urban Design and Development Division**

Attachments

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## ***CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE AGENCY COMMENTS***

### ***ZONING CODE SERVICES DIVISION***

None requested.

### ***BUILDING & SAFETY SERVICES DIVISION***

None requested.

### ***HISTORIC PRESERVATION/ADVANCED PLANNING***

**Incorporated**

### ***TRANSPORTATION***

None requested.

### ***PNM***

***ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT  
FIRE DEPARTMENT/Planning***

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### ***COMMENTS FROM OTHER AGENCIES, WHEN APPLICABLE:***

***TRANSIT DEPARTMENT  
POLICE DEPARTMENT  
PARKS AND GENERAL SERVICES  
OPEN SPACE DIVISION  
BERNALILLO COUNTY  
ALBUQUERQUE FLOOD CONTROL AUTHORITY  
ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
MIDDLE RIO GRANDE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS***

None requested.