



City of Albuquerque
Planning Department
Development Review Division
P.O. Box 1293
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103

Date: November 8, 2010

OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

FILE: **Project # 1008444**
10EPC-40043 AMNDT TO THE WESTSIDE
STRATEGIC PLAN

City of Albuquerque
Planning Department
PO Box 1293
Albuquerque, NM 87102

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE PLANNING DEPT requests the above actions for the Volcano Mesa area, area boundaries are the Petroglyph National Monument on the east, south and west and Paseo Del Norte and the grant line, zoned RD, R1, A1, RO-20, SU1-PRD and SU-1 for Major Open Space, containing approximately 3,532 acres. Petra Morris, Staff Planner

On November 4, 2010 the Environmental Planning Commission voted that a **RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL** be forwarded to City Council for Project 1008444/10EPC-40043, Amendment to the Westside Strategic Plan, based on the following Findings and subject to the following Conditions:

FINDINGS:

Volcano Mesa amendment to the WSSP Findings:

1. The Volcano Mesa amendment to the Westside Strategic Plan covers an area of approximately 3,532 acres. The plan boundaries are the Petroglyph National Monument on the east, south and west and Paseo Del Norte and the grant line.
2. Volcano Mesa area contains a range of different zones, while the amendment does not propose new zoning, the three accompanying sector development plans do.

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3. The Volcano Mesa amendment to the Westside Strategic Plan contains policies related to development, land use, the environment and open and transportation.
4. The Volcano Mesa amendment to the Westside Strategic Plan proposes the designation of a Community or Major Activity Center for the Town Center in the Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan area. Future coordination with a Comprehensive Plan amendment will be necessary.
5. The Volcano Mesa amendment to the Westside Strategic Plan proposes the designation of a Neighborhood Activity Center for the Village Center in the Volcano Cliffs Sector Development Plan area. Future coordination with a Comprehensive Plan amendment will be necessary.
6. The Volcano Mesa amendment to the Westside Strategic Plan supports the following goals and policies in the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan:

Policies II.B.5.c, e, f, g, I, k, m, n: through the creation of the Volcano Mesa community and the accompanying policies that direct land use regulations, open space and transportation in the accompanying Sector Development Plans;

Policies II.B.1.c, f, j: through the policies that address the protection of open space and sensitive lands and direct the creation of a trail network;

Policies II.B.7. Goal, e: through the proposed designation of a Community or Major Activity Center on the Volcano Heights area and a Neighborhood Activity Center in the Volcano Cliffs area and the opportunity to address jobs/ housing imbalance that this will provide;

Policy II.C.6.c: through the Policies 3.102-3.108 that address archaeological and sensitive sites;

Policies II.C.9.b, c, e: through the View Study and the accompanying Policy 3.99 that call for regulations in the accompanying Sector Development Plans to address visually intrusive development, the proposed road network and through the opportunities provided in the designation of the Volcano Heights area as a Community or Major Activity Center and the Volcano Cliffs village center as a Neighborhood Activity Center;

Policies II.D.6. a, g: through the opportunities presented by the designation of a Community or Major Activity Center on the Volcano Heights area and a Neighborhood Activity Center in the Volcano Cliffs area.

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7. The Volcano Mesa amendment to the Westside Strategic Plan supports the following policies in the Westside Strategic Plan:

Policy 1.1: through the high density, and non residential uses to be located in proposed nodes;

Policy: 1.9, 1.14, 1.16 and 1.18 through the location of a Community or Major Activity Center on the Volcano Heights area and a Neighborhood Activity Center in the Village Center of Volcano Cliffs.

8. The Volcano Mesa amendment to the Westside Strategic Plan supports the following policies in the Northwest Mesa Escarpment Plan Policies 12, 20, and 21 through the View Study and Policy 3.99, written to avoid visually intrusive development. The proposed trail network and scenic corridors for the Volcano Mesa area support policy 23.
9. The Volcano Mesa amendment to the Westside Strategic Plan supports the Proposed Trails Map on page 22 and the intent of the Rank II Trails and Bikeways Facility Plan through the expansion of the trail network in this area.
10. The Volcano Mesa amendment to the Westside Strategic Plan supports the Rank II Facility Plan for Electric Service Transmission and Subtransmission Facilities, through the addition of language provided by PNM to address the address utility easements, landscaping and access to public utility facilities.
11. The Volcano Mesa amendment to the Westside Strategic Plan supports the Rank II City of Albuquerque Major Public Open Space Facility Plan policies B2-G, B2-K, C-3 and Figure 4-1 through the policies that address the environment and open space, Policies 3.102-3.108.
12. The Volcano Mesa amendment to the Westside Strategic Plan supports the Rank II Facility Plan for Arroyos: Multiple Use of Albuquerque's Arroyos and their Floodplains policies II.B. Drainage 1, II.B. Multiple Use 1, II.C.2, II.C.3, II.D.2, II.F.4 through Exhibit 2 and 5, and Policy 3.98 which discusses maintaining travel paths along arroyos.

Conditions for WSSP Amendment **For 11-4-10 EPC Hearing**

1. On page 1 of the WSSP Amendment, insert at the very top of the page: "The amendment to the West Side Strategic Plan that follows shall be inserted after page 154 of the West Side Strategic Plan, at what is currently the end of Section 3 Specific Westside Communities, to continue after Policy 3.94." Renumber existing policies in the WSSP accordingly. [423]

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2. Make Policy 3.96 “Volcano Heights Major Activity Center” on page 2 of the WSSP Amendment the first policy (Policy 3.95) in this WSSP Amendment, which will then make Policy 3.95 “New zoning...” the second policy (Policy 3.96).
3. Add the following explanation to Policy 3.96 “Volcano Heights Major Activity Center”:
“The Albuquerque Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan designates two areas on the West Side of Albuquerque as Major Activity Centers (MAC): the Cottonwood Center and the Atrisco Business Park. Due to the way in which these two areas have developed – with low-density, auto-oriented, and single-use patterns – they are not contributing to meeting the employment and other daily needs of residents of the West Side as a Major Activity Centers should. Four areas are designated as Proposed Major Activity Centers; however, these are all west of Paseo Del Volcan.

By comparison, the east side of Albuquerque contains ten designated Major Activity Centers. According to the Mid Region Council of Governments (MRCOG), in 2008, there were 152,300 jobs provided on the east side of Albuquerque in the top seven activity centers on the east side, including Downtown, Uptown, UNM/CNM/Hospitals, Jefferson/I-25, Midtown, Sunport, and Kirtland Air Force Base. This is in stark contrast to the 14,400 jobs available in 2008 on the west side in the Intel/Cottonwood and Atrisco Business Park centers. (See Exhibit 2, Employment Activity Centers)

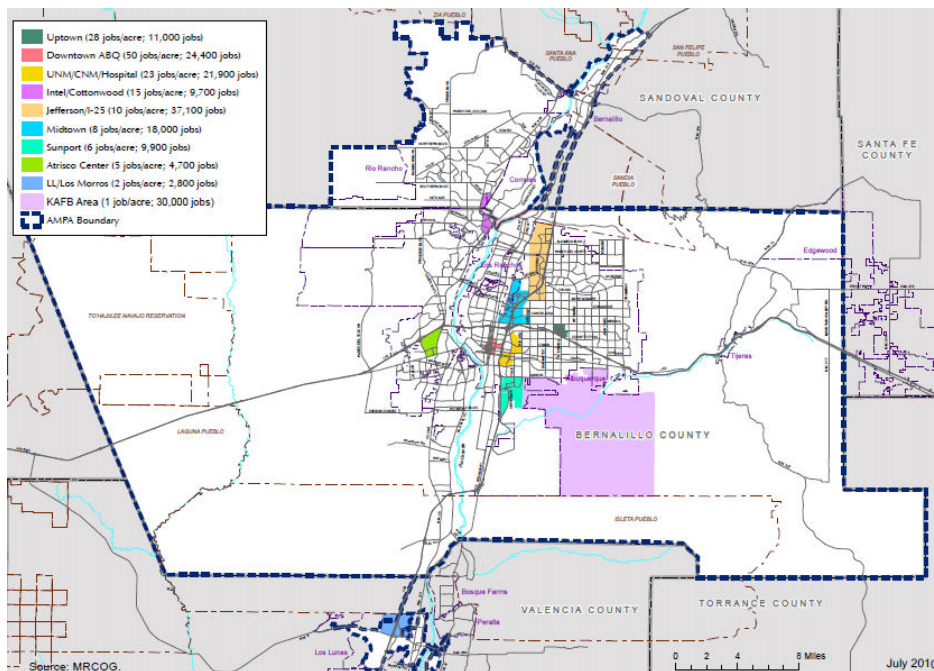


Exhibit 2, Employment Activity Centers (Source: MRCOG)

This suggests that the majority of people who live on the west side find their employment on the east side of the river, and, as an auto-oriented city, this has led to significant traffic problems today, which are predicted to continue and worsen. According to MRCOG, based on present-day land-use and zoning policies, the current trend of employment growth concentrated on the east side of the Rio Grande River will continue and will far outpace employment growth on Albuquerque’s West Side. The only way to reverse this trend is to provide significant and attractive opportunities for employers to locate on the West Side.

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Opportunities for designation of a Major Activity Center on the West Side are limited due to a lack of large, undeveloped tracts of land (300 acres or more, per the Comp. Plan) that are located at the intersection of two major roadways (also per the Comp. Plan). The Volcano Heights area provides a critical opportunity for the West Side to locate a mix of employment, commercial, service and residential uses to meet the needs of the wider area and decrease cross-river traffic. A MAC is described by the Comprehensive Plan as being 3 stories or higher, with a minimum Floor Area Ratio of 1.0. Therefore, to be considered a MAC, density and intensity of development is required. The opportunity presented by the Volcano Heights area should not be lost by allowing for development that follows the typical suburban pattern of single-story, single-use development, such as large retail facilities, that provide large areas of surface parking and cannot take advantage of or support quality transit service.” [424]

4. On page 2 of the WSSP Amendment, insert the following new Policy 3.97 and renumber subsequent policies accordingly:
“Policy 3.97 Volcano Cliffs Neighborhood Activity Center. The Volcano Cliffs Village Center should be designated as a Neighborhood Activity Center. The Volcano Cliffs Village Center provides an opportunity to provide daily services, convenience goods and personal services to the residential area that surrounds it. It is centrally located to the Volcano Cliffs area, is located at the junction of a minor arterial (Universe) and a collector (Rosa Parks) and is therefore well placed to serve the community. The proximity of the area to the Volcano Vista High School and the Tony Hillerman Middle School also make this a logical location.” [427]
5. On page 2 of the WSSP Amendment, Policy 3.97, Public Infrastructure Districts, amend the beginning of the first sentence as follows: "Public Improvement Districts (Sections 5-11-1 et seq. NMSA 1978)..." [426]
6. On page 2 of the WSSP Amendment, Policy 3.97, Special Assessment Districts, in the first sentence, add “(Chapter 3, Article 33 NMSA 1978)” after “State Statute”. [426]
7. On page 2 of the WSSP Amendment, in the section "PID/SAD Implementation" at the end of the sentence, delete "established in the plans by State statute" and insert in lieu thereof "established in the Volcano Mesa plans as required by state statute and other provisions of state statute as appropriate." [425]
8. On page 2 of the WSSP Amendment, in the section "Special Assessment Districts" in the second to last sentence delete "Heights" and insert in lieu thereof "Cliffs". [428]
9. On page 4 of the WSSP Amendment, delete the last sentence in the first paragraph in section 2. View Studies and insert in lieu thereof: "In recognition of the importance of views from afar, a Visual Sensitivity analysis, which depicts the Volcano Mesa area as viewed from distant points and that serves as the basis for the reflectivity and color standards in the Volcano Cliffs, Volcano Heights, and Volcano Trails Sector Development Plans, is included as Exhibit 3 and described below." [429]
10. On page 8 in the West Side Strategic Plan, Policy 3.108, add the following new subsection c: “c. All archeological surveys should follow a general archaeological research design that treats the Volcano Mesa Community as a whole and not as disparate sites within the area. The Volcano Mesa Community should then be treated as an integral part of the larger west mesa, including the Petroglyph National Monument, its volcanoes and escarpment faces. The area is an archaeological landscape, and data should be collected before it is lost to development. Special attention should be given to watersheds, watercourses, and adjacent lands that form cultural and spiritual linkages for past and present Native belief systems.” [430]

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11. On page 9 of the WSSP Amendment, move the sections called "Planned Roadway Improvements" and "Regional Impacts" to be directly before Policy 3.109 so that these sections are read as an introduction to / explanation of Policy 3.109. In the paragraph following Policy 3.109, amend the sentence that begins "While both roads are currently designated..." as follows: "While both roads are currently designated Limited Access Arterials, whose main function is to move traffic quickly and efficiently, these arterials must now provide access to and from adjacent neighborhoods as well as the Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan area in order to support the level of employment, commercial, and residential uses envisioned for the Volcano Heights Major Activity Center." [431]
12. On page 9 of the WSSP Amendment, in the section "Policy 3.109 The access points to Paseo del Norte and Unser, shown in Exhibit 6, Road Network Map should be adopted" delete the second-to-last sentence, which reads "As well as easing traffic at key intersections such as Universe and Paseo del Norte which are already starting to fail by providing alternate routes onto Unser and Paseo del Norte". [432]
13. On page 10 of the WSSP Amendment, delete the last sentence in recommendation "c" under Policy 3.110. [433]
14. Request comments on the proposals for changes to the bikeways network contained in Policy 3.111 of the WSSP Amendment from the Greater Albuquerque Bicycle Advisory Committee prior to consideration for approval by the Albuquerque City Council. [434]
15. On page 11 of the WSSP Amendment, add an exhibit within Policy 3.111 that shows the proposed changes to the adopted Long-Range Bikeway System map. Renumber exhibits accordingly. [435]
16. On page 11 of the WSSP Amendment, amend Policy 3.111.d as follows: "A bike lane has been constructed on the ROW of Unser through the Escarpment. In addition to continuing on-street bike lanes on Unser to connect to existing bike lanes on Unser north of Paradise Blvd., a separate bike trail should be constructed for use by recreational cyclists as well as pedestrians." [436]
17. On page 15 of the WSSP Amendment, insert a new exhibit that shows the relationship of the Volcano Mesa Area to the volcanoes and larger West Mesa Community. Renumber subsequent exhibits accordingly. [437]
18. On page 19 of the WSSP Amendment, revise Exhibit 6, Roadway Network Map to show the full limits of the frontage road system proposed along Paseo del Norte. [438]
19. The graphics accompanying the amendment to the WSSP shall be amended and produced at a better resolution to make them legible. [441]
20. The phrase "Town Center" shall be removed from Exhibits 6 and 7. [9]
21. Policy 3.95, strike 5 million square feet of non-residential building containing 18,000 jobs, and replace with "and significant non-residential building."
22. Policy 3.96 Re title: Volcano Heights Activity Center. And amend first sentence to read as "The Volcano Heights Town Center should be designated as a Community or Major Activity Center."

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IF YOU WISH TO APPEAL/PROTEST THIS DECISION, YOU MUST DO SO BY **NOVEMBER 19, 2010** IN THE MANNER DESCRIBED BELOW. 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 EPC RECOMMENDATIONS TO CITY COUNCIL; RATHER, A FORMAL PROTEST OF THE EPC'S RECOMMENDATION CAN BE FILED WITHIN THE 15 DAY PERIOD FOLLOWING THE EPC'S DECISION.

Appeal to the City Council: Persons aggrieved with any determination of the Environmental Planning Commission acting under this ordinance and who have legal standing as defined in Section 14-16-4-4.B.2 of the City of Albuquerque Comprehensive Zoning Code may file an appeal to the City Council by submitting written application on the Planning Department form to the Planning Department within 15 days of the Planning Commission's decision. The date the determination in question is issued is not included in the 15-day period for filing an appeal, and if the fifteenth day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or holiday as listed in the Merit System Ordinance, the next working day is considered as the deadline for filing the appeal. The City Council may decline to hear the appeal if it finds that all City plans, policies and ordinances have been properly followed. If they decide that all City plans, policies and ordinances have not been properly followed, they shall hear the appeal. Such appeal, if heard, shall be heard within 45 days of its filing.

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 CITY MUST BE COMPLIED WITH, EVEN AFTER APPROVAL OF THE REFERENCED APPLICATION(S).

Successful applicants should be aware of the termination provisions for Site Development Plans specified in Section 14-16-3-11 of the Comprehensive Zoning Code. Generally plan approval is terminated 7 years after approval by the EPC

Sincerely,

Deborah Stover
Planning Director

DS/PM/mc

cc: Ron Bohannon, 5571 Midway Park Place, 87109
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