



7.0 Site Development Standards General to All Zones

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- 7.1. Gated Communities:** In order to meet the intent of a walkable, urban environment that serves as a Major Activity Center, gated and/or walled developments are prohibited.
- 7.2. Structure Heights**
- 7.2.1.** Structures within the Impact Area as designated by the Rank III Northwest Mesa Escarpment Plan shall be limited to 15 feet. No **exceptions** or variances shall be granted.
- 7.2.2.** Structures within 200 feet of either the Rank III Northwest Mesa Escarpment Plan Impact Area or a Park Edge Street shall be limited to 18 feet, with a second story up to 26 feet permitted for no more than 50% of the building footprint.
- 7.2.3.** In Town Center only, if a developer can show documentation that a **major employer** (i.e. 150+ employees on-site) will be part of the project, that project is exempt from height maximums and bonus height criteria, subject to a Development Agreement with the City, including clawback provisions in the case the employer leaves the Plan area before 5 years have passed. This provision is to be approved by the City Economic Development Department.
- 7.2.4. Structure height** shall be measured from approved grade to the eave line in the case of a pitched roof or to the roof line in the case of a **parapet**. See **Section 7.4** for grading standards.
- 7.2.5.** A **stepback** may occur at a minimum height of 26 feet, but no building shall be built taller than 40 feet without a **stepback**. The minimum depth of a **stepback** shall be 12 feet.
- 7.2.6.** Cupolas may extend 10 feet beyond height limits. Flagpoles may extend 6 feet above the height limit. Solar panels shall not count toward height limits. Equipment on the roof other than solar panels visible from the public **ROW** shall be screened by louvered or metal screen, or by a **parapet** for flat roofs. Screened equipment shall not exceed 6 feet beyond height limits. Screened equipment on the roof shall be set back 15 feet from **façades**. Equipment screening shall not be made of chain link or vinyl materials.
- 7.3. Optional Bonus Heights**
- 7.3.1. Purpose / Intent:** This Plan offers an optional bonus height system in order to balance the intent to create an urban, walkable Major Activity Center with the intent to respect and honor the unique cultural, historical, geological, and volcanological area. In order to go beyond height maximums in the Center and Mixed-Use Zones (which correspond to maximum heights in the City's NWMEP), development projects shall provide commensurate benefits to both the Natural and Built Environments.
- 7.3.2. Structure height** maximums are set by Site Development Standards for each zone. All non-Transition Zones are eligible to opt in to a voluntary bonus height system per **Table 7.1** and **Table 7.2**, with associated criteria in **Table 7.3**.

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7.3.3. In order to earn a height bonus in non-Transition Zones, projects shall incorporate required criteria to earn points for both the Built Environment and Natural Environment, per **Table 7.1**, **Table 7.2**, and **Table 7.3**.

- (i) These points have been assigned values relative to the priorities and goals that meet the intent of this Plan for a high-quality built environment balanced with respect for a unique natural environment that enhances property value and adds to the quality of life for existing and future residents, employers, and employees. Point values are weighted toward their contribution to either the built or natural environment. Point values also reflect an assumed difference in cost and ease of implementation.
- (ii) The total points required for each zone are calibrated based on the desired balance of urban character versus open space amenities in each zone, as well as a relative balance among all zones within the Plan area.

7.3.4. A project may shift up to 10 points between the Natural and Built Environment totals in order to better meet the intent of this Plan and/or accommodate site context.

7.3.5. The Planning Director or his/her designee shall certify and approve projects that meet the criteria for height bonuses in **Table 7.3**. The Volcano Heights Review Team may be consulted to assess whether individual standards have been met to satisfy the bonus criteria. See **Section 3.2.6**.

7.3.6. Projects that incorporate a bonus shall be required to provide a Site Development Plan for Building Permit or Site Development Plan for Subdivision that documents bonus criteria.

7.3.7. This requirement does not affect the eligibility of Site Development Plans for administrative **approval** by the Planning Director.

7.3.8. Projects incorporating bonus heights are subject to code enforcement to ensure ongoing provision of bonus criteria in the future, including maintenance of private amenities accessible by the public and preservation of natural vegetation in perpetuity.

7.3.9. Private property owners may pay for or construct improvements to City-owned open space that meet bonus requirements and transfer this bonus to the property they own. Such improvements shall be coordinated with and acceptable to the City Open Space Division and meet all City standards as well as requirements in this Plan.



TABLE 7.1 – TOTAL POINTS FOR HEIGHT BONUS BY CHARACTER ZONE

Height Bonus Criteria	Height Bonus			
	VHTC	VHRC	VHVC	VHMX
Maximum Height Allowed by Zone	40 ft.	40 ft.	40 ft.	26 ft.
Maximum Height with Bonus	75 ft.	60 ft.	60 ft.	40 ft.
I. Natural Environment Bonus Criteria	50 pts.	35 pts.	25 pts.	50 pts.
II. Built Environment Bonus Criteria	50 pts.	40 pts.	25 pts.	50 pts.
Total Points Required to Receive Height Bonus	100 pts.	75 pts.	50 pts.	100 pts.

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TABLE 7.2 - BONUS HEIGHT POINTS PER CRITERION

Criteria for Optional Height Bonuses	Points
I. Natural Environment Bonus Criteria	
a. Rock outcropping dedications	25
b. Rock outcropping private preservation*	20
Public Access Easement (<i>Optional Bonus</i>)	5
c. Open space dedications	20
For dedications abutting rock outcroppings or other features deemed significant by the City Open Space Division (<i>Optional Bonus</i>)	5
d. Private park construction	20
e. Public park land dedication of at least 2 acres	15
f. Pedestrian walkway connection to rock outcropping, parks, trails, rock outcroppings, or other features deemed significant by the City Open Space Division	10
Up to 2 additional connections to features deemed significant by the City Open Space Division (<i>Optional Bonus</i>)	5 each
g. Landscaping / natural buffers in addition to what's required by Zone	10
h. Shared drainage/swales on adjacent developments / Low Impact Design (LID)	10
i. View preservation	10
j. Community garden	10
k. Interpretive signage	5
l. Preservation of native vegetation	5
m. Other benefits to the natural environment	5

Criteria for Optional Height Bonuses	Points
II. Built Environment Bonus Criteria	
a. Publicly accessible plazas / courtyards in addition to what's required by Section 10.4.4 on page 156.	25
b. Living roof or accessible roof garden	25
c. Grey water retention system	25
d. Transit shelters on transit corridors	20
e. LEED certification	20
f. Transit Center within 500 feet of proposed project	15
g. Public art	15
h. Solar panels	15
i. Permeable paving	10
j. Permanent streetscape/plaza furniture and/or features	10
k. Gateway feature at key intersections	10
l. Rooftop water harvesting / cisterns	5
m. Other sustainable building practices	5

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TABLE 7.3 – STANDARDS FOR OPTIONAL HEIGHT BONUS CRITERIA

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I. Natural Environment Bonus Criteria	
a.	Dedicating a rock outcropping shown in Exhibit 10.1 plus a buffer acceptable to City Open Space Division shall meet the criteria for these points. The land shall be dedicated to the City following the process outlined in City Zoning Code §14-16-3-8(A) or by plat, deed, or other legal instrument acceptable to City Real Property.
b.	Private preservation may be accomplished through Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), conservation easement, or platting as private open space . The additional 5 points for public access may be accomplished through granting a public access easement that stays in place in the event of transfer of property ownership.
c.	Open space dedications, either on-site or offsite, shall be a minimum of one-half acre and acceptable to the City Open Space Division. Points may be granted at a rate of 5 points per acre up to a total of 20 points.
d.	A private park shall be one-half acre or larger and maintained by the property owner or property owner association. A public access easement shall be granted and filed with the City. In order to gain the bonus points, a park shall include shade trees in addition to two (2) or more of the following features: playground or equivalent recreational amenity, shade structure, seating area or tables, a sculpture or other artwork. These points may be granted per the discretion of the Planning director or his/her designee.
e.	Land dedicated for City-owned public parks shall be 2 acres or larger and must meet the approval and standards of the City Parks and Recreation Department.
f.	Pedestrian walkways constructed according to criteria in Table 10.3 (ix) shall meet the criteria for these points. Pedestrian walkways that provide connections to rock outcroppings or other features deemed significant by City Open Space Division, including those features mapped in Exhibit 10.1 , shall be eligible for an additional 5 bonus points per feature connected.
g.	Landscaped area at least 25% in excess of the requirement shall meet the criteria for these points.
h.	Shared swales shall be designed for the secondary purpose of additional open space OR to water living material in the landscaping on the site or streetscaping. They shall be privately constructed and maintained.
i.	Developments that can graphically demonstrate an arrangement of roadways, building placement, and/or building setback to preserve views toward the Sandia Mountains, volcanoes, or City vistas across the Rio Grande shall meet the criteria for these points.
j.	See Table 10.3 (vi) .
k.	Projects that include at least 2 educational, cultural, and/or historical signs or markers pertaining to Volcano Heights that are accessible to pedestrians and cyclists shall meet the criteria for these points. Signs shall be a minimum of 18 by 18 inches and a maximum of 24 by 36 inches.
l.	Projects that preserve native vegetation, especially juniper trees, are eligible for 5 bonus points per 100 square feet up to 50 total points. Native vegetation in usable and/or detached open space on-site may be counted toward this bonus. Applicants shall provide a site plan, photographs, and other relevant documentation of original site conditions.
m.	Applicants may demonstrate other benefits to the natural environment. These points may be granted per the discretion of the Planning director or his/her designee.

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TABLE 7.3 – STANDARDS FOR OPTIONAL HEIGHT BONUS (Cont'd)

II. Built Environment Bonus Criteria	
a.	Plazas or courtyards at least 25% in excess of the requirement per General Standard 10.4.4 on page 156 AND incorporating at least two (2) of the following features: shade structure, seating area or tables, water features with low-water use and/or recycled water, a sculpture or other artwork. These points may be granted per the discretion of the Planning director or his/her designee. A public access easement that stays in place in the event of transfer of property ownership shall be granted and filed with the City.
b.	Improving rainwater quality by removing sediment and floatables.
c.	Incorporation of a retention system on-site that stores greywater for re-use for irrigation and/or building systems. These points may be granted per the discretion of the Planning director or his/her designee (e.g. the City hydrologist).
d.	Transit shelters shall be built per City ABQRide standards and in coordination with ABQRide staff. Transit shelters built on private land (i.e. not in the public ROW) may also be counted as usable or detached open space .
e.	LEED certification or equivalent for buildings or for Neighborhood Design are both eligible for points toward the Height Bonus. Individual elements matching other criteria in this Table shall also be eligible for points toward the Height Bonus.
f.	Sites located within 500 feet of a developed or permitted City of Albuquerque Transit Center.
g.	One percent (1%) of project budget devoted to installation and maintenance of public art in plazas and/or outdoor spaces or incorporated into the architecture of buildings on private property or in public spaces, to be commissioned by a New Mexico artist registered with City Department of Cultural Services and managed in any combination of the following methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property owner or designee to pick the artist and install and maintain the art, in which case 10% of the 1% shall be allocated to City Department of Cultural Services and earmarked for 5 years to be used in the event that the property owner ceases to maintain the art. After 5 years, these funds revert to the general Department budget. • Property owner or designee to allocate funds to City Department of Cultural Services, in which case 90% of the 1% pays for initial art installation on the property, and 10% is kept in reserve for ongoing maintenance by the City. • Property owner or designee to allocate funds to City Department of Cultural Services for installation of art anywhere in the Plan area, in which case 90% of the 1% pays for initial art installation, and 10% is kept in reserve for ongoing maintenance by the City.
h.	Photovoltaic or other equivalent technology that is designed and installed to generate at least 40% of the project's power needs.
i.	At least 50% of the project's surface parking areas shall be paved with a surface of equal or superior performance characteristics to asphalt but allowing permeability of runoff, such as compacted, stabilized crusher fines.
j.	Permanent furniture/features includes interactive public amenities such as but not limited to lifesize gameboards, tables & seating, low water-use fountains, amphitheaters, labyrinths, shade structures, etc.
k.	Per criteria in Section 10.6.4 on page 163.
l.	Incorporation of systems that store stormwater for future on-site uses such as irrigation.
m.	These points may be granted per the discretion of the Planning director or his/her designee.

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7.4. Grading

- 7.4.1. **Purpose / Intent:** This Plan restricts grading in order to protect natural topography and distinct topographic and natural character to the extent possible. Natural terrain and geological features make the area unique, desirable, and of value to residents and the larger community.
- 7.4.2. Cut and fill slopes shall be no steeper than 3:1 on average, and retaining walls shall not exceed 4 feet in height unless incorporated within a building’s foundation or approved by the City Hydrologist as necessary for development.
- 7.4.3. Graded areas shall maintain the character of the natural terrain by varying gradients, undulating contours, and rounding the toe and crest of any slope greater than 10 feet in height.
- 7.4.4. Fill shall be limited to the minimum required for site development and drainage. When more than 4 feet of fill is proposed, a project shall require DRB **approval** in order to ensure coordination with the City Hydrologist, City Open Space Division, and other relevant City staff.
- 7.4.5. Fill shall not exceed the existing highest natural grade point on site, unless approved by the City Hydrologist for required drainage. Fill height shall be measured from the natural grade.

7.5. Construction Mitigation

- 7.5.1. **Purpose / Intent:** Any damage to the vegetation, slope, or placement of boulders due to or related to construction shall be mitigated as provided herein.
- 7.5.2. Grading permits for commercial **lot** developments in the Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan area shall only be issued concurrently with the respective commercial **building permits**. Grading permits for residential developments greater than 10 acres shall require soil stabilization, approved by the Environmental Health Department, which shall be applied to the disturbed area within three months after grading of the site commences. Grading within public rights-of-way or public drainage easements is exempt.
- 7.5.3. Prior to beginning construction, the property owner shall construct a temporary silt fence at the site boundary **adjacent to sensitive lands** (i.e. the Escarpment buffer, **Major Public Open Space**, archeological site, or public or private conservation area to be maintained in natural desert-scape) to effectively protect them from heavy equipment and vehicles. Photographs of the site in its original condition shall be submitted with the application for **building permit**, subdivision, and/or site development plan.

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7.5.4. Public- and private-sector projects facing the Escarpment and **adjacent** to archeological sites must include geotechnical data and analysis that demonstrate to the satisfaction of the City Engineer, in coordination with the City Open Space Division and National Park Service, that proposed trenching or blasting will not affect the face of the Escarpment, whether by potentially causing erosion or caving of the slopes and boulders, threatening public safety or welfare, or otherwise damaging archeological resources.

7.5.5. In the selection of alignment and in site design, grading plans shall demonstrate that cut and fill has been kept to a minimum consistent with the standards in this Plan. Generally, the overall topography of the site is not to be substantially altered. Development must comply with the joint Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Fugitive Dust Ordinance found in the New Mexico Administrative Code 20.11.20.

7.5.6. Replacement of boulders shall approximate the original location, angle, and surface exposure. Revegetation to approximate original cover with appropriate native or naturalized plants as identified in the appropriate Plant List (see **Appendix E**) is required within 90 days of project completion. A deviation may be granted by the Planning Director or his/her designee if the type of vegetation or time of year make revegetation within 90 days impossible. For infrastructure projects on public lands, the construction company shall post a warranty bond effective for three years after completion of the infrastructure work to ensure successful revegetation.

7.6. Infrastructure

7.6.1. Utilities

(i) Easements

- a. In order to facilitate pedestrian movement and maintain accessibility, utility infrastructure such as poles, transformers, boxes, and access panels shall be planned for minimal visual intrusion and mobility impediment to pedestrians. Overhead and underground electric distribution lines are typically located within public utility easements (PUE) or private easements. They are compatible with other “dry” utilities such as cable, telephone, and fiber optic facilities. The width of the PUE is typically 10 feet in order to provide necessary clearances for safety.
- b. Water lines, sewer lines and storm water drainage or “wet” utilities are not compatible with “dry” utilities, and separation is required for safety purposes.
- c. In all zones, utility easements shall be located in **alleys** or rear access and parking areas, if available. Where there is no alley, utility infrastructure may be placed in a PUE or private easement in the front **setback** of the property, provided it does not substantially affect the pedestrian realm and is located on the edge or side of property and as far away from the main entrance and pedestrian access paths as possible.

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- (ii) **Clearance**
 - a. Any screening and vegetation surrounding ground-mounted transformers and utility pads shall allow 10 feet of clearance in front of the equipment door and 5 feet of clearance on the remaining 3 sides for access and to ensure work crew and public safety during maintenance and repair.
 - b. Non-permanent use of clearance, such as for parking, is permitted.
 - c. Aesthetic improvements are encouraged to minimize visual impact of ground-mounted utility equipment.
 - d. Trees and shrubs planted in the PUE should be planted to minimize impacts on facilities maintenance and repair.

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