



Environmental Planning Commission

**Agenda Number: 4
Project Number: 1010180
Case #: 14EPC-40049
September 11, 2014**

Staff Report

Agent	Laurie Moye
Applicant	Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM)
Request	Site Development Plan for Building Permit
Legal Description	Tract 26, Ladera Business Park, Unit 1
Location	2300 Vista Oriente St. NW, east of Unser Boulevard NW and north of Ladera Drive NW
Size	Approximately 3.2 acres
Zoning	SU-1 for Light Industrial Uses No change proposed

Staff Recommendation

APPROVAL of 14EPC-40049, based on the Findings beginning on Page 13, and subject to the Conditions of Approval beginning on Page 16.

**Staff Planner
Catalina Lehner, AICP-Senior Planner**

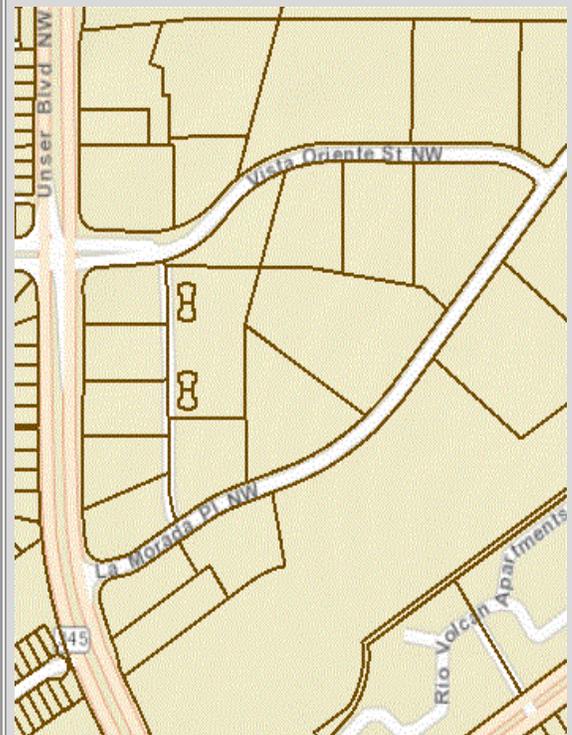
Summary of Analysis

This request is for a site development plan for building permit for an approximately 3.2 acre site in the Ladera Business Park (the "subject site"). The subject site is vacant.

The applicant proposes to develop an electric substation (the "La Morada Substation") to meet Westside electricity needs and to provide back-up to three existing substations. The substation would consist of electrical equipment surrounded by a perimeter wall.

Overall, the request furthers applicable goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan, the West Side Strategic Plan, the El Rancho Atrisco Phase III Sector Development Plan, and complies with applicable design standards in the 2010 Electric System Transmission & Generation Plan. Minor conditions of approval are needed to provide clarification and ensure compliance.

There is no known neighborhood or other opposition as of this writing. Staff recommends approval.



City Departments and other interested agencies reviewed this application from 8/4/2014 to 8/15/2014
Agency comments used in the preparation of this report begin on Page 18.

I. AREA CHARACTERISTICS

Surrounding zoning, plan designations, and land uses:

	Zoning	Comprehensive Plan Area; Applicable Rank II & III Plans	Land Use
Site	SU-1 for Light Industrial Uses	1. Developing Urban, 2. West Side Strategic Plan 3. Facility Plan: Electric System Transmission & Generation (2010- 2020) 4. El Rancho Atrisco Phase III Sector Dev. Plan	Vacant
North	SU-1 for Light Industrial Uses	Same as above	Vacant, single-family homes, electric switching station
South	SU-1 for Light Industrial Uses	Same as above	Vacant, early education center
East	SU-1 for Light Industrial Uses	Same as above	Vacant, early education center, transmission lines
West	SU-1 for Light Industrial Uses	Same as above	Light Industrial

II. INTRODUCTION

Request

This request is for a site development plan for building permit for a new electric substation on an approximately 3.2 acre lot (Lot 26) in the Ladera Business Park. The proposed La Morada electric substation would be located near the northwestern portion of the subject site, through which an existing 115kV electric transmission line runs. The subject site is located about 700 feet SW of PNM’s approximately 36-acre West Mesa Switching Station. The proposed substation would provide back-up capacity to three existing Westside substations.

The La Morada Substation is project #4 on the “Description of proposed electric facilities projects for 2010- 2020” in the Facility Plan: Electric System Transmission & Generation (2010- 2020) (the “2010 Electric System Facilities Plan”) (see Table 5, p. 24) and is required to comply with applicable design standards contained therein.

Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) Role

The EPC is the final approval body for the request, unless the EPC decision is appealed. The 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan states that projects included in the Plan’s list of proposed electric projects for 2010-2020 are to be submitted to the EPC (see Table 1, p. 20) for review.

Context

The subject site is in the Developing Urban Area of the Comprehensive Plan and within the boundaries of the West Side Strategic Plan and the El Rancho Atrisco Phase III Sector Development Plan. The Facility Plan: Electric System Transmission & Generation (2010- 2020) applies. The subject site is not located in a designated Activity Center. Nor is it in a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA).

The subject site is located approximately 1,200 feet east of Unser Blvd., near the intersection of Vista Oriente St. NW and La Morada Pl., and is north of Ladera Dr. NW. The site is mostly surrounded by vacant land mostly intended for light industrial/storage and warehouse uses. A few couple of lots nearby have developed: one with a light industrial use (ice-cream plant) and another with an early education learning center. The Westside Switching Center, an electric facility, is north of the subject site. There are several large transmission lines in the area.

Long Range Roadway System

The Long Range Roadway System (LRRS) map, produced by the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG), identifies the functional classifications of roadways.

The LRRS designates Unser Blvd. NW as an Existing Urban Principal Arterial. Vista Oriente St. and La Morada Pl. are designated as local streets.

Public Facilities/Community Services

Susie Rayos Marmon Elementary School along with the Ouray Off-Leash Dog Park, ParkWest, Rinconada Point Park, Ladera Golf Course and the Ladera Pond are all located within one mile of the site. Please also refer to the public facilities map (see attachment).

III. HISTORY

In 1981, the EPC approved the annexation, establishment of zoning and a sector development plan amendment for a 360-acre area which includes the subject site. At that time, the EPC approved an amendment to the El Rancho Atrisco Sector Plan map establishing SU-1 for Light Industrial zoning for the subject site (Z-81-49).

On November 16, 2001 the EPC approved a site development plan for subdivision with design standards for the Ladera Industrial Center (Project #1001523), containing approximately 105 acres and located on Unser Blvd. between Ladera Drive and 98th St. NW. Finalized in January 2004, this IP Master Plan includes the subject site. Though the design standards state that all site development plans for building permit are delegated to the Development Review Board (DRB), The 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan states that projects included in the Plan's list of proposed electric projects are to be submitted to the EPC for review (see Table 1, p. 20).

IV. ALBUQUERQUE COMPREHENSIVE ZONING CODE

Definitions (§14-16-1-5)

Public Utility Structure: A structure, owned by a unit of government or by a public utility company which is an electric switching station; electric substation operating at voltages greater than 50

kilovolts (kV); gas transfer station or border station; city-owned lift station, odor control (or chlorine) station, water well or pump station, or water reservoir; or any other public utility structure controlled by a rank two facility plan.

Structure: Anything constructed or erected above ground level which requires location on the ground or attached to something having a location on the ground but not including a tent, vehicle, vegetation, or public utility pole or line.

Zoning

The subject site is zoned SU-1 for Light Industrial Uses. The purpose of the SU-1 zone (§14-16-2-22) is to provide “suitable sites for uses which are special because of infrequent occurrence, effect on surrounding property, safety, hazard, or other reasons, and in which the appropriateness of the use to a specific location is partly or entirely dependent on the character of the site design. A public utility structure is a permissive use pursuant to Subsection (B)(26)

This zoning designation most closely approximates the IP (Industrial Park) zone in the Zoning Code (§14-16-2-19). The purpose of the IP zone is to provide “suitable sites for a wide range of industrial and commercial uses, provided such uses are conducted in a compatible and harmonious manner within industrial environments achieved through a Development Plan.” In this case, the relevant development plan is the master plan for the Ladera Business Park.

Subsection (A)(19) of the IP zone states that a public utility structure, such as the proposed electric substation, is a permissive use provided that its location “is in accord with an adopted facility plan and a site development plan for building permit purposes has been approved by the Planning Commission.” The facility plan is the 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan and the site development plan for building permit is the current request.

V. ANALYSIS -CONFORMANCE TO ADOPTED PLANS AND POLICIES

A) Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan (Rank I)

The subject site is mostly located in an area that the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan has designated as Developing Urban. The goal of the Developing and Established Urban Areas 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 policies include:

Land Use Policies-Developing & Established Urban Areas

Policy II.B.5d: 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, recreational concern.

The request would result in development of a new electric substation, to be located in a business park. Its intensity would be generally appropriate for the immediate area, where industrial and warehousing uses have developed. A large switching station is nearby. The

proposed substation would be in the middle of the business park and therefore would have lesser effect on scenic and other resources than if it were located closer to the nearby residential uses. Colors and materials would be generally compatible with existing development and natural surroundings. There is no known neighborhood opposition. The request generally furthers Policy II.B.5d-neighborhood /environmental/ resources.

Policy II.B.5e: New growth shall be accommodated through development in areas where vacant land is contiguous to existing or programmed urban facilities and services and where the integrity of existing neighborhoods can be ensured.

The request furthers Policy II.B.5e-programmed facilities/neighborhood integrity. The business park, is contiguous to developed land where urban services are available. Existing overhead power lines are available for the proposed electric substation, which is unlikely to affect the integrity of the nearby, existing neighborhood regarding use of existing facilities and services.

Policy II.B.5l: Quality and innovation in design shall be encouraged in all new development; design shall be encouraged which is appropriate to the plan area.

The proposed electric substation would be a new development, designed using standard PNM design that includes a CMU wall, gates, gravel and specific colors. The colors (browns and golds) would generally be appropriate to the Plan area and in the context of the applicable Master Plan; the design standards apply to all lots. The design does not lend itself to quality and innovation; this is a standard utility. However, a design feature could be added to the wall to increase its quality and help the utility fit in better with the rest of the business center. The request partially furthers Policy II.B.5l-quality design/new development.

Policy II.B.5m: Urban and site design which maintains and enhances unique vistas and improves the quality of the visual environment shall be encouraged.

The electric substation is proposed is a business park that has architectural design standards to create a built environment of high quality and consistent design. Though the utility cannot contribute to the quality of the visual environment in the same way as buildings in this context, the design standards apply to all lots. That said, the wall colors would generally blend in with the surroundings. However, the utility structures would be visible from the roadway and would not enhance the vistas in the area. The request does not further Policy m- site design/visual environment.

Environmental Protection and Heritage Conservation- Noise

Policy II.C.4a: Noise considerations shall be integrated into the planning process so that future noise/land use conflicts are prevented.

The proposed electric substation is required to follow the design standards in the 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan. Design Standard #11 states that the noise level of new substation facilities shall not exceed National Electric Manufacturer's Association (NEMA)

guidelines (see Appendix E of the 2010-2020 Electric System Facilities Plan). Noise considerations are integrated into the planning process for electric facilities to help prevent land use/noise conflicts, though a note is needed on the site development plan. The request partially furthers Policy II.C.4a.

Community Resource Management- Service Provision

The Goal is to develop and manage use of public services/facilities in an efficient and equitable manner and in accordance with other land use planning policies.

The proposed electric substation can be considered a public service/facility. It was planned to address the need for additional electric capacity and was included in the 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan project list, which is a mechanism to manage development of electric facilities. Land use planning policies are applied to the proposed project through this review. The request furthers Goal D-1.

Community Resource Management- Energy Management

The Goal is to maintain an adequate, economical supply of energy through energy management techniques and use of alternative and renewable energy sources.

The proposed electric substation would help ensure and maintain an adequate supply of electrical energy on the Westside. The proposed substation would help relieve load on three existing substations and is included in the project list in the 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan, which is a tool to manage electric facilities to ensure availability of electrical energy. Alternative and renewable energy sources, however, are not included in this request. The request partially furthers Goal D-3.

Community Resource Management- Economic Development

The Goal is to achieve steady and diversified economic development balanced with other important social, cultural, and environmental goals.

The supply of electric energy generally supports economic development. The proposed electric substation would provide additional capacity for the growing Westside. The design standards in the 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan will help ensure balance with visual, ecological and land use considerations which further overarching environmental goals. The request generally furthers Goal D-6.

B) West Side Strategic Plan (WSSP)- Rank II:

The West Side Strategic Plan (WSSP) was first adopted in 1997 and recently amended in 2002 to help promote development of Neighborhood and Community Activity Centers. The WSSP identifies 13 communities, each with a unique identity and comprised of smaller neighborhood clusters.

The subject site is located in the Atrisco Park Community. The Atrisco Park Community covers approximately 1,700 acres and includes the approximately 400-acre Atrisco Business Park. One of the policies particular to the Atrisco Park Community applies to the request.

WSSP Policy 3.3: It is appropriate for new development, both residential and non-residential, to occur in this Community. Redevelopment efforts associated with the existing five acre tracts in this area shall be encouraged (p. 68).

The request generally furthers Policy 3.33 because the proposed substation would be new development in the Atrisco Park Community.

C) Facility Plan: Electric System Transmission & Generation (2010-2020)- Rank II

OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND

The Electric Facilities Plan is a Rank II facility plan that addresses the electric transmission system and projects. Electric distribution to individual customers and electric rates are not addressed. In 1971, the Albuquerque City Council and the Bernalillo County Board of Commissioners (BCC) adopted the first Electric Facilities Plan, which was subsequently amended in 1972, 1981, 1985, 1995, 2005 (County only) and 2011.

The Albuquerque City Council adopted the Rank II Facility Plan: Electric System Transmission & Generation (2010-2020) (the “2010 Electric System Facilities Plan”) via Council Bill No. R-11-311 on February 22, 2012 (see attachment). The Plan became effective in March. The BCC adopted the 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan via Resolution 69-211 on November 15, 2011. The Facility Plan: Electric Service Transmission & Subtransmission Facilities (1995-2005) was repealed by both bodies.

The 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan describes the electric transmission and generation system serving the City of Albuquerque and unincorporated Bernalillo County. The Plan’s main components are a list of proposed projects for 2010-2020, a table explaining the review process, location standards for transmission line corridors, design standards for electric transmission facilities and examples of generation technologies. The purpose of the 2011 update was to update the project list, clarify the review process and address generation technologies.

SITING STUDY

The Electric Facility Plans contain the “Outline for a typical siting study.” This is Appendix A in the 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan. A siting study has been prepared and submitted for the proposed “La Morada Substation” in accordance with the outline (see attachment). The siting study describes the proposed project and addresses the need for it, alternative sites, and siting considerations. Staff would like more explanation regarding the alternative sites considered (see Executive Summary, Section B).

LOCATION & DESIGN STANDARDS

The Electric Plans, including the 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan, contain standards for the location and design of transmission and substation facilities to be applied to minimize potential

siting impacts when building new facilities (p. 3, 2010 Plan). The following standards apply to the request:

Location Standard #9: In siting new transmission and station facilities, the following siting constraints shall be considered:

- a. Exclusion Area – Resource factors or land use values that preclude siting electric facilities due to officially stated or approved safety restrictions, plans or policies such as FAA-regulated areas at airports.
- b. Environmental Considerations –Resource factors or land use values where the presence of electric facilities may conflict with that resource or land use value. Environmental sensitivities do not preclude development of an overhead transmission line, but because of their conflict potential, are given special consideration in designating the alignment, substation location, and facility design and construction.
- c. FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area—Due to their conflict potential, these areas are given special consideration at the early stages in the designation of the line alignment, substation location and facility design and construction.

The subject site is not located in an Exclusion Area (a). The subject site is in the Ladera Business Park, and no resource factors have been identified that warrant special environmental considerations (b). The subject site is in Flood Zone X, which is outside the area determined to be potentially affected by a 100 year flood event (c). The request complies.

Design Standard #11: The noise level of new substation facilities shall not exceed guidelines set by the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) in Appendix E. Electric facilities shall be located and screened to minimize sound impacts to the surrounding environment.

The proposed substation would be located in the middle, interior portion of an approximately 117 acre business park, which has developed with industrial park (IP) uses. A note is needed on the site development plan regarding compliance with NEMA noise guidelines. The request partially complies.

Design Standard #12: When physically and economically feasible, new substations shall be located immediately adjacent to transmission and subtransmission corridors to preclude the extension of new lines.

One reason the subject site was chosen for the proposed substation is due to its adjacency to three existing 115kV transmission lines, which would help preclude extension of new lines. The request complies.

Design Standard #13: Substations should be located to take advantage of available topography and vegetation to minimize their visual impact. Screening shall be provided by the appropriate electric utility according to the standards set out in Appendix C as appropriate.

The siting of the proposed substation would not take advantage of existing vegetation because the native wildflowers and shrubs are too short to help buffer the substation from the single-family homes to the northwest, and from other uses in the business park. The subject site's topography is not sloped sufficiently to be a resource usable for screening/visual mitigation purposes. The standard PNM screen wall would be provided, however, and the site is designed according to the landscape guidelines in Appendix C and the applicable design standards for the Ladera Business Park. The request partially complies.

Design Standard #14: Substation profile and size should be as unimposing as possible. Sample station plans are shown in Appendix B.

An electric substation may be considered imposing by nature. The equipment is a variety of standard heights and it must connect to existing utility poles, which are typically taller than most other structures. The proposed substation is designed using the Appendix B example as a baseline, but differs with respect to wall design and structure height. These differences would make the proposed substation less imposing than the example. The request generally complies.

Design Standard #15: All new and expanded substations will be standard PNM design, surrounded by a 12-foot wall and landscaped and approved through the site development plan approval process. If located in the City of Albuquerque, they shall be landscaped pursuant to Section 14-16-3-10 (Landscaping regulations pertaining to apartment and nonresidential development) of the City of Albuquerque Zoning Code and the Water Conservation Landscaping and Water Waste Ordinance. All existing substations that undergo expansion shall meet the design standards for new substations. All facilities shall be maintained free of graffiti.

The proposed substation would be standard PNM design, with the typical 12 foot wall, steel grills, and electrical equipment. The proposed landscaping would include mostly xeric plants, with trees that comply with the Ladera Business Park design standards. The City's landscaping regulations would be mostly met regarding landscape buffers and vegetative coverage. The Water Conservation Ordinance would be adhered to. A note can be added regarding maintaining the site free of graffiti. The request partially complies.

D) El Rancho Atrisco Sector Development Plan Phase III (ERASDP)- Rank III:

The subject site is located within boundaries of the El Rancho Atrisco Phase III Sector Development Plan (ERASDP3), which was adopted by the City Council in 1981 (Enactment R70-1981). The ERASDP, prepared for Westland Development Company ("Westland") and submitted to the City Planning Department, covers 297 acres north of Interstate 40 and east of Unser Blvd. Upon Plan adoption, Westland petitioned for annexation and zoning of the sector plan area. Development was planned to be phased.

The plan provides the following, general guideline for the development in the vicinity of the subject site:

“Development of the area north of the flood management system is governed almost entirely by the presence of several high voltage power line easements which restrict the use of that land significantly. The presence of these easements seems to limit the use of that land to types of light industrial and commercial development....therefore, it is proposed that this area, when annexed, be zoned SU-1 for a planned light industrial and business development. (p.12)

The area referred to probably contains the present-day Ladera Business Park, which has developed with a mixture of commercial and light industrial uses. An electric substation in this area is generally consistent with the Plan.

VI. SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR BUILDING PERMIT & Master Plan for the Ladera Business Park

Design Standards

The applicant proposes to develop an electric substation, the “La Morada Substation”, on an approximately 3.3 acre site.

⇒ Applicable design standards in the 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan are discussed in Section V of this report.

The master plan for the Ladera Business Park (LBP), an IP master plan, applies and contains design standards that address landscaping, lighting, setback, site objectives, signage, and utilities. The design standards “apply to all properties within the Ladera Business Park.”

The standards on the first sheet apply to the subject site, Lot 26. The standards on the second sheet apply only to Lots 12-23 and 29. The few design standards that apply are discussed here as they relate to the proposed site development plan for building permit.

Site Plan Layout / Configuration

The proposed site development plan is for an ≈139 square foot (sf) by 138 sf (19,182 sf) area of the subject site.

Vehicular Access, Circulation and Parking

Vehicular access (for maintenance purposes) would be from Vista Oriente St. and La Morada Pl. Maintenance vehicles would drive in using the gravel road that leads to the gate, open the gate and park inside. A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) was not required.

Walls/Fences

The electrical equipment is proposed to be surrounded by a CMU wall, of the 12 foot PNM standard height. The wall would have split-face along the bottom portion and smooth-face CMU along the top portion, and a block cap. The elevations show that both block types are a medium brown color, but the color copies show different colors used to create a mountain-like motif on the wall. The block colors need to be different and match the rendering.

A note needs to be added to state that the substation will be maintained graffiti free, see Design Standard #15 in the 2010 Electric Systems Facility Plan. A standard in the LBP states that wrought

iron or decorative fencing should be incorporated into walls, which is shown on the proposed elevations. A separate wall detail, on the detail sheet, is needed.

Lighting and Security

The proposed substation would be secured and not accessible to the public. No lighting is proposed.

Landscaping

Landscape buffers are proposed along the subject site's northern and diagonal southern sides. The landscape palette consists of Chamisa, Apache Plume, Sotol, Globemallow and two types of Sumac, with brown rock mulch. A xeric seed mix is proposed around the substation and driveway leading to it. The remainder of the site inside the wall would not be disturbed.

The easement along La Morada Pl. necessitates that short trees, Desert Willow and Rocky Mountain Juniper, are proposed. Along Vista Oriente St. NW, a major local street, street trees are required (Street Tree Ordinance §6-6-2-1). A design standard for the LBP states that one tree is required for every 25 linear feet of public or main access roadway. Total linear feet on the site is ≈970. Trees required are 39; 41 are provided.

The trees can be taller along Vista Oriente St. Desert Willow and Austrian Pine, however, are not good as street trees because they don't have definite trunks (street trees are supposed to be deciduous). Staff suggests Chitalpa and that the quantity of elms be increased (v.1 of the site plan had more elms). Regarding the Austrian Pines, a LBP standard states that the mixture of required trees shall be "a 60/40 mix of deciduous to evergreen trees." The landscaping plan complies.

Zoning Code §14-16-3-10, Landscaping Regulations Applicable to Apartment and Non-Residential Development, applies. The request would meet the minimum requirement for 75% coverage with living, vegetative materials provided that a few more plants are added to the sparse areas along the northern boundary. An irrigation system is proposed.

Grading & Drainage Plan

The subject site slopes slightly downward approximately from southwest to northeast, from about 5,176 feet to about 5,170 feet. Grading would occur at the location of the substation itself, so that it would be about 4 feet higher in the center than at the land around it.

The Ladera Channel and the Mirehaven Diversion Channel run to the north and southeast of the subject site, respectively. The subject site is not within a flood zone. First flush storm water techniques were not applied since most of the site would remain impervious. An off-site basin, along the adjacent property to the west, would capture excess storm water.

Utilities

There are several easements on the subject site: a 100 foot easement along the eastern side (est. 1956), a 60 foot easement along the western side (est. 1953) and a 10 foot easement along the north and eastern boundaries.

The proposed substation would connect to the existing 115kV transmission lines on the site. This should be specified in the keyed notes. A storm drain inlet and proposed water line connection are along Vista Oriente St.

Design

The proposed substation would be 138.75 feet long on the west and east elevations and 138 on the north and south elevations. There are gates on the north and south elevations. The grill (which doesn't open) is on the east elevation.

The proposed electrical equipment would consist of a new tap pole (62 feet high) and four new steel poles (45 feet high) and other items such as insulators and connection wires. All would be an aluminum grey color. The surfaces would be non-reflective. The LBP design standards regulate building height to a maximum of 32 feet, but do not specify structure height.

The proposed substation does not comply with two design standards: one regarding screening ground-mounted equipment from public view and the other regarding the top of equipment not extending above the screen wall. These standards, listed under Architecture, were likely meant for buildings. It appears that an electrical utility was not accounted for in the design standards, though it is allowed by the LBP's zoning.

Signage

Two standard, wall mounted signs are proposed. The warning sign, about 2 sf, would be 3 of the 4 elevations; usually it is on all four. Colors are orange and white, with white and black letters. The PNM sign, 16 sf, would be on only the east elevation only. It has white lettering on a blue and black background.

A LBP standard states that one wall sign shall be permitted per façade per business. Three signs are proposed on the south and north elevations, four signs on the east elevation and no signs on the west elevation. On an SU-1 zoned site, however, the EPC has discretion regarding signage. Staff does not recommend that design standards are overlooked; however, in this particular circumstance, the EPC may want to consider it.

VII. COMMENTS

Concerns of Reviewing Agencies/Pre-Hearing Discussion

City Departments and other agencies reviewed this application from 8/4/'14 to 8/15/'14. Few agency comments were submitted. Zoning Enforcement Staff have no adverse comments and state that the use is allowed permissively through EPC approval pursuant to §14-16-2-19(A)(19), the IP zone. Police Department Staff recommends installation of motion lighting to detect possible threats to the infrastructure. The applicant attended the pre-hearing discussion meeting on August 20, 2014. Agency comments begin on p. 18.

Neighborhood Concerns

The affected neighborhood organizations are the Ladera West Neighborhood Association (NA) and the Westside Coalition of NAs, which were notified as required (see attachments). A facilitated meeting was neither recommended nor held. There is no known neighborhood or other opposition.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The request is for a site development plan for building permit for an approximately 3.2 acre site, which is Lot 26 of the Ladera Business Park (the “subject site”). The subject site is vacant. The 2010 Electric System Facility Plan requires that the EPC review the request. The proposed substation is #4 on the project list in the facilities plan.

The applicant proposes to develop an electric substation known as the “La Morada Substation” to serve the Westside’s current and future electricity needs. The substation would consist of electrical equipment surrounded by a perimeter wall. Signage and two access roads are also proposed.

Overall, the request mostly furthers applicable goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan, the West Side Strategic Plan (WSSP), and the El Rancho Atrisco Phase III Sector Development Plan (EASDP3). The request mostly complies with applicable design standards in the Ladera Business Park Master Plan, though it conflicts with a couple that pertain more to buildings than utilities.

There is no known neighborhood or other opposition. Staff recommends approval subject to minor conditions needed for clarification.

FINDINGS -14EPC-40049, September 11, 2014-Site Development Plan for Building Permit

1. This request is for a Site Development Plan for Building Permit for Lot 26, Ladera Business Park Unit 1, an approximately 3.2 acre site located at 2300 Vista Oriente Street NW, east of Unser Boulevard NW and north of Ladera Drive NW, zoned SU-1 for Light Industrial Uses (the “subject site”). Three existing 115kV electric transmission lines run north-south over the site.
2. The applicant proposes to develop an electric substation on the subject site. The proposed “La Morada Substation” is Project #4 on the “Description of proposed electric facilities projects for 2010- 2020” (the “Project List”) in the Facility Plan: Electric System Transmission & Generation (2010- 2020) (the “2010 Electric System Facilities Plan”) (see Table 5, p. 24).
3. The 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan contains “Standards for the Location and Design of Transmission and Substation Facilities” with which the proposed substation is required to comply. The 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan also specifies approval processes; requests for development of projects on the Project List are required to be reviewed through the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) process.
4. The subject site is part of the Ladera Business Center, an approximately 117-acre industrial park controlled by a master plan (a site development plan for subdivision). The master plan contains design standards that apply to all lots in it.
5. The subject site is located in the Established and Developing Urban Areas of the Comprehensive Plan, and within the boundaries of the West Side Strategic Plan (WSSP), the Northwest Mesa Escarpment Plan (NWMEP) View area, and the Volcano Cliffs Sector Development Plan (VCSDP). The 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan also applies.
6. The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, the West Side Strategic Plan (WSSP), the 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan, and the El Rancho Atrisco Phase III Sector Development Plan (ERASDP) and the City of Albuquerque Zoning Code are incorporated herein by reference and made part of the record for all purposes.
7. The request furthers the following, applicable Comprehensive Plan Goals and policies:
 - A. Goal- Service Provision. The proposed substation is a public service/facility planned to address the need for additional electric capacity and provide backup to three existing substations. It was included in the 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan, which is a mechanism to manage development of electric facilities.
 - B. Goal- Economic Development. The proposed electric substation would provide additional electric energy and support for existing electric energy sources, which generally support economic development.

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- C. Policy II.B.5d-neighborhood /environmental/ resources. The intensity of the proposed substation would be generally appropriate for the immediate area, where industrial and warehousing uses have developed. The proposed substation would be in the middle of the business park and therefore would have less effect on scenic and other resources than if it were located closer to nearby residential uses. Colors and materials would be generally compatible with existing development and natural surroundings. There is no known neighborhood opposition as of this writing.
- D. Policy II.B.5e- programmed facilities/neighborhood integrity. The business park is contiguous to developed land where urban services are available. The proposed substation would utilize the existing overhead power lines. The integrity of the nearby, existing neighborhoods would not be adversely affected.
8. The request partially furthers the following, applicable Comprehensive Plan Goal and policies:
- A. Goal- Energy Management. The proposed substation, which would help ensure an adequate supply of electrical energy and relieve load on three existing substations, is included in the project list in the 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan. Alternative and renewable energy sources, however, are not included in this request.
- B. Policy II.B.5l-quality design/new development. The proposed substation would be a new development. Though its colors would generally be appropriate for the Plan area, the standard utility design does not lend itself to quality and innovation.
- C. Policy II.C.4a-noise/planning. Noise considerations are integrated into the planning process for electric facilities. The proposed substation cannot exceed National Electric Manufacturer's Association (NEMA) guidelines, though a note is needed on the site development plan.
9. Regarding the West Side Strategic Plan (WSSP), the request generally furthers Policy 3.33 because the proposed substation would be new development in the Atrisco Park Community.
10. The request complies with the following, applicable standards in the 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan:
- A. Location Standard #9: The subject site is not located in an Exclusion Area (a) and no resource factors have been identified that warrant special environmental considerations (b). The subject site is in Flood Zone X, which is outside the 100 year flood zone (c).
- B. Design Standard #12: The proposed substation would be located adjacent to three existing 115kV transmission lines, which would help preclude extension of new lines.
- C. Design Standard #14: The electric equipment is a variety of heights and must connect to existing utility poles. The proposed substation is designed using the Appendix B example as a baseline, but differs with respect to wall design and structure height. These differences would

make the proposed substation less imposing than the example. The wall design is more contextual and the structure height is lower.

11. The request partially complies with the following, applicable standards in the 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan:
 - A. Design Standard #11: The proposed substation would be in the interior of a business park, which has developed with industrial park (IP) uses. A note is needed regarding compliance with NEMA noise guidelines.
 - B. Design Standard #13: The siting of the proposed substation would not take advantage of existing vegetation, which is too short to help buffer it. The subject site's topography is not sloped sufficiently to be a resource for screening/visual mitigation purposes. The standard wall would be provided, however, and the site is designed according to the landscape guidelines in Appendix C and the design standards for the Ladera Business Park.
 - C. Design Standard #15: The proposed substation would be standard PNM design. Landscaping regulations would be met and the Water Conservation Ordinance adhered to, though maintenance of graffiti-free conditions needs to be addressed.
12. The El Rancho Atrisco Phase III Sector Development Plan (ERASDP3) provides a general guideline for the development of the area north of the flood management system, noting that the presence of easements seems to limit land uses to light industrial and commercial development. The Ladera Business Park has developed in this area. An electric substation in this area is generally consistent with the Plan.
13. With respect to the Design Standards for the Ladera Business Park, the request:
 - A. Complies with the two, applicable landscaping standards because an approximately 60/40 deciduous/evergreen mixture of trees is proposed and an irrigation system is proposed.
 - B. Does not comply with standards regarding screening ground-mounted equipment from public view and not extending equipment above the screen wall.
 - B. Does not comply with the standard stating that each business is allowed one sign per façade; more than one safety sign is proposed on three elevations of the perimeter wall.
14. Conditions of approval are recommended to ensure compliance with the design standards in the 2010 Electric System Facilities Plan and, as applicable, in the Ladera Business Park and to provide clarification.
15. The affected neighborhood organizations are the Ladera West Neighborhood Association (LWNA) and the Westside Coalition of NAs, which were notified as required. A facilitated meeting was

neither recommended nor held. As of this writing, there is no known neighborhood or other opposition and Staff has not received any correspondence.

RECOMMENDATION - 14EPC-40049, September 11, 2014, Site Development Plan for Building Permit

APPROVAL of 14EPC-40049 a site development plan for building permit for Lot 26, Ladera Business Park Unit 1, an approximately 3.2 acre site located at 2300 Vista Oriente Street NW, zoned SU-1 for Light Industrial Uses, based on the preceding Findings and subject to the following Conditions of Approval.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL- 14EPC-40049, September 11, 2014, Site Development Plan for Building Permit

1. The EPC delegates final sign-off authority of this site development plan to the Development Review Board (DRB). The DRB is responsible for ensuring that all EPC Conditions have been satisfied and that other applicable City requirements have been met. A letter shall accompany the submittal, specifying all modifications that have been made to the site plan since the EPC hearing, including how the site plan has been modified to meet each of the EPC conditions. Unauthorized changes to this site plan, including before or after DRB final sign-off, may result in forfeiture of approvals.
2. Prior to application submittal to the DRB, the applicant shall meet with the Staff planner to ensure that all conditions of approval are met.
3. 2010 Electric Systems Facility Plan- Siting Study:
Additional explanation regarding the alternative sites considered shall be provided (Executive Summary, Section B).
4. 2010 Electric Systems Facility Plan- Design Standards:
 - A. A note shall be added to state that the substation will comply with NEMA noise guidelines (Design Standard #11).
 - B. A note shall be added to state that the substation will be maintained graffiti free (Design Standard #15).
5. Landscaping:
 - A. Chitalpa shall be used instead of Desert willow Along Vista Oriente St. NW.
 - B. Additional plant material shall be added to two areas along Vista Oriente St. NW: the area just east of the entry and the area about 80 feet east of the entry.
 - C. Juniper shall be noted as female only allowed.

6. Screening & Design:

- A. A wall detail, in plan view, shall be added to the detail sheet and specify dimensions, material(s) and colors.
- B. The split-faced and smooth-faced block shall be noted as different colors so they match the color rendering.

7. Signage:

A note shall be added to the elevations sheets to explain that the signage is for safety purposes (though it doesn't comply with the design standards in the Ladera Business Park).

8. Minor Clarifications:

- A. Add date to site development plan.
- B. Add a keyed note to state that the substation will connect to existing power lines.
- C. The symbol for textured, colored concrete shall be different from the symbol for standard sidewalk.

9. The following condition from Transportation Development Staff shall be met:

The Developer is responsible for permanent improvements to the transportation facilities adjacent to the proposed site development plan, as required by the Development Review Board (DRB).

***Catalina Lehner, AICP
Senior Planner***

Notice of Decision cc list:

Laurie W. Moye, PNM, Public Participation & Regulatory Relations, 2401 Aztec Avenue NE, Mail Stop Z-200, Albuquerque, NM 87107
Steven Collins, 7517 Vista Alegre NW, Albuquerque, NM 87120
Sheriesse McCannon, 2808 El Tesoro Escondido NW, Albuquerque, NM 87120
Jerry Worrall, 1039 Pinatubo Pl. NW, Albuquerque, NM 87120
Harry Hendriksen, 10592 Rio Del Sol Ct. NW, Albuquerque, NM 87114

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE AGENCY COMMENTS

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Zoning Enforcement

Proposed public utility structure within the Ladera Business Park; allowed as a permissive activity through EPC approval per Sec. 14-16-2-19(A)(19).

Project appears to meet applicable standards for landscaping, screening (wall/fence), and use.

No adverse comment to this proposal.

Office of Neighborhood Coordination (ONC)- No comments received.

Long Range Planning- No comments received.

Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency- No comments received.

CITY ENGINEER

Transportation Development (City Engineer/Planning Department):

- No objection to the request.

Hydrology Development (City Engineer/Planning Department):

- No adverse comments.

Traffic Engineering Operations (Department of Municipal Development):

- No comments received.

Street Maintenance (Department of Municipal Development):

- No comments received.

New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT):

- The NMDOT has no objections to the site development plan.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS FROM CITY ENGINEER, MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT and NMDOT:

The Developer is responsible for permanent improvements to the transportation facilities adjacent to the proposed site development plan, as required by the Development Review Board (DRB).

DEPARTMENT of MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

Transportation Planning

Reviewed, but there are no comments pertaining to roadway, trail or bicycle facilities.

WATER UTILITY AUTHORITY - No comments received.

Utility Services

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT- No comments received.

Air Quality Division

Environmental Services Division

PARKS AND RECREATION

Planning and Design

No comments.

Open Space Division- No comments received.

POLICE DEPARTMENT/Planning

Siting Study, D-5, Lighting indicates “The substation will not be illuminated” except during emergency situations. Recommend the installation of motion lighting along the perimeter of the wall line and at both approaches to the facility. Motion lighting could detect or illuminate possible sabotage or threats to the infrastructure.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

Refuse Division- No comments received.

FIRE DEPARTMENT/Planning- No comments received.

TRANSIT DEPARTMENT

Project # 1010180 14EPC-40049 SITE DEVELOPMENT - BUILDING PERMIT. LOT 26 LADERA BUSINESS PARK, SECTION 9 & 10, TION, R2E, TOWN OF ATRISCO GRANT UNIT 1, ZONED SU-1 OR LT INDUSTRIAL, LOCATED ON INTERSECTION OF VISTA ORIENTE AND LA MORADA APPROXIMATELY 3.12 ACRES (H-10).		Route #94, Unser Express commuter route, is the nearest route on Unser 1600’ west from the NW corner of the property.
	Adjacent bus stops	Nearest bus stop is 1600 west from the NW corner of the property serving the above-mentioned route in the NB direction.
	Site plan requirements	None
	Large site TDM suggestions	None.
	Other information	None.

COMMENTS FROM OTHER AGENCIES

BERNALILLO COUNTY- No comments received.

ALBUQUERQUE METROPOLITAN ARROYO FLOOD CONTROL AUTHORITY

Reviewed, no comment.

ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Ladera Business Park Lot 26, Town of Atrisco Grant Unit 1 Section 9 and 10 TION, R2E, is located on the intersection of Vista Oriente NW and La Morada Pl NW. The owner of the above property requests approval of a Site Development Plan for Building Permit to allow for the development of an Electric Substation for approval for a Site Development Plan for Building Permit. This will have no adverse impacts to the APS district.

MID-REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

- We encourage the applicant to ensure that nothing obstructs the sight distance approaching the intersection of Vista Oriente Street and La Morada Place.
- We hope ADA sidewalks will be put in on both Vista Oriente Street and La Morada Place.

MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT- No comments received.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF NEW MEXICO

As the applicant, PNM is available to answer any questions that the EPC or staff may have about the proposed La Morada Substation Project.