



***Environmental
Planning
Commission***

***Agenda Number: 02
Project Number: 1008444
Case #s: 10EPC-40045
October 6, 2011***

Supplemental Staff Report

<i>Agent</i>	COA, Planning Department
<i>Applicant</i>	City of Albuquerque
<i>Request(s)</i>	Withdrawal of the July 2010 Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan
<i>Legal Description</i>	See attached map
<i>Location</i>	Area boundaries are the Petroglyph National Monument to the east, Paseo del Norte alignment to the south (before it turns north), Universe to the west, and Paseo del Norte (before it turns south) and the Town of Alameda Grant line to the north.
<i>Size</i>	Approximately 570 acres
<i>Existing Zoning</i>	RD, SU-1 for PRD, SU-1 for C1 uses
<i>Proposed Zoning</i>	New zoning: SU-2 VH Town Center, SU-2 VH Neighborhood Mixed Use, SU-2 VH Urban Campus, SU-2 VH Urban Residential, SU-2 VH Neighborhood Residential. General Design Regulations are associated to varying degrees with all properties within the Volcano Heights SDP boundary.

Staff Recommendation

Recommendation of WITHDRAWAL of 10EPC-40045.

Staff Planners

Petra Morris, Planner

Mikaela Renz-Whitmore, Planner

Summary of Analysis

This fifth hearing for the Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan (SDP) is a continuance from July 7th 2010.

The Volcano Heights SDP was proposed to provide regulatory guidance for the development of a large-scale, mixed-use, major activity center serving regional needs. The Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan area was designated as a Major Activity Center (MAC) in the Volcano Mesa Amendment to the West Side Strategic Plan adopted in March 2011.

Since the July 7, 2010 hearing, Planning and Council Staff has held two days of focus group sessions with property owners and stakeholders to address shortcomings with the July 2010 draft plan. These discussions indicate that substantial revisions are needed to the 2010 draft plan. These extensive revisions exceed the practicality of tracking each change within the approval process.

The Planning Department requests that the 2010 Draft Plan be withdrawn in order to prepare a new submittal that can be reviewed and vetted by City departments, other agencies and jurisdictions, and stakeholders.

A new land-use consultant, Gateway Planning Group, has been hired to help create a new Draft Plan that can allow flexibility for development over time and across multiple land owners given new market conditions, while protecting the predictability of development outcomes for property owners and existing residents to the north of the plan area.

This supplemental staff report should be read in conjunction with the September 2, 2010; November 4, 2010; February 3, 2011, and July 7, 2011 staff reports.



I. REASONS FOR WITHDRAWAL

Background, Planning Process, and History

At previous EPC hearings for Volcano Heights, property owners and developers expressed concerns that the proposed Plan's regulations did not allow development that the market could support. Existing residents north of the Plan area expressed concern about the compatibility of an Urban Campus zone adjacent to their single-family, residential subdivisions.

Based on these and other substantive stakeholder comments representing a wide range of interests from prior EPC hearings, Council Services hired land-use consultant Gateway Planning Group in early 2011 to work with Staff to revise the July 2010 draft to accomplish the following goals:

- (1) ensure zoning and regulations are feasible in the market,
- (2) create zoning and regulations that would result in a high-quality, urban environment,
- (3) ensure zoning and regulations that provide predictability of development over time and across multiple property owners, and
- (4) provide adequate transitions between zones to protect existing residents from negative impacts of higher-intensity development.

Planning and Council Staff held focus groups in August and September to propose and review changes to the draft with property owners and stakeholders. While significant progress was made, it became clear to Staff that the entire 2010 Draft Plan would be affected by changes and require substantial revisions. Such a wholesale modification of the Plan would be impractical to track within the current review and approval process.

Next Steps

Staff plans to continue its work with Gateway Planning Group, City departments, regional agencies, the National Park Service, utility providers, property owners, existing residents, and other stakeholders to create a new Draft Plan to regulate and encourage development in Volcano Heights, including the following goals:

- Maximize opportunities for a regional destination center for employment, retail, and entertainment,
- Provide more analysis and careful consideration of design regulations, incentives for quality development and density, and coordination with a proposed Bus Rapid Transit Corridor and Transit Center and road network.
- Conduct a traffic study with modeling to ensure that transportation will work at the regional and local level.
- Coordinate with the results of the MRCOG feasibility study for an east/west Bus-Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor connecting Paseo del Norte and the North-I-25 / Jefferson Boulevard Major Activity Center expected in Spring 2011.
- Create a map of priority landforms to preserve, as well as a preferred trail corridor to connect them; legal mechanisms and incentives for preservation; trails, bikeways, and parks throughout the Plan area to connect other trails and open space in the region.

- Introduce Transition Zones next to existing single-family residential subdivisions and the Petroglyph National Monument in order to limit development intensities, building heights, and the mix of uses to achieve better compatibility with adjacent development.
- Incorporate a mandatory street that is single-loaded where it abuts the Monument to act as a buffer between development and the Monument.
- Finalize a proposed voluntary system of bonus criteria for additional height in all but the Transition zones. The additional heights system will address allowable heights in each zone, the stepping down of building heights as development moves toward existing residents or the Monument, and the particular incentives, bonuses, and criteria by which they would be granted.

II. CONCLUSION

The Planning Department requests that the July 2010 Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan be withdrawn.

Staff believes that the extent of revisions required to meet the expectations of stakeholders should be fully reviewed by City departments as part of a new submittal. Staff intends to use the next several months to create a new Draft Plan to submit to the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) for recommendation to City Council. The Planning Department expects to resubmit the Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan in the spring of 2012.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION – 10EPC 40045, 06 October 2011.

WITHDRAWAL of 10EPC 40045, the Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan, based on the need to prepare a substantially revised Draft Plan for review by City departments and submittal to the EPC.

*Petra Morris and Mikaela Renz-Whitmore
Planners*

Attachments

Attachment 1. Public comments and correspondence from July – September 23, 2011