

CITY of ALBUQUERQUE

TWENTY-FIRST COUNCIL

COUNCIL BILL NO. R-14-72 ENACTMENT NO. _____

SPONSORED BY: Dan Lewis, by request

1 RESOLUTION
2 AMENDING THE VOLCANO HEIGHTS SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN TO
3 UPDATE THE ROAD NETWORK, RECONCILE AMENDMENTS MADE TO
4 ADJACENT PLANS, AND MAKE MINOR CLARIFICATIONS TO DEVELOPMENT
5 STANDARDS.

6 WHEREAS, the City Council, the governing body of the City of
7 Albuquerque, has the authority to adopt and amend plans for the physical
8 development of areas within the planning and platting jurisdiction of the City
9 authorized by Statute, Section 3-19-1 et. Seq., NMSA 1978, and by its home
10 rule powers; and

11 WHEREAS, The City Council adopted the Volcano Heights Sector
12 Development Plan in August 2013, for an area of approximately 569 acres,
13 bounded generally by Paseo del Norte and existing development to the north,
14 Universe Boulevard to the west, Volcano Cliffs to the south, and the
15 Petroglyph National Monument to the east; and

16 WHEREAS, this Plan seeks to capitalize on Volcano Heights' location at the
17 intersection of two regional transportation corridors, which represents a
18 unique opportunity to address the imbalance of jobs and housing on the City's
19 West Side by enabling the development of a mixed-use, urban, walkable and
20 transit-friendly environment that attracts employers and destination retail and
21 provides higher-density residential living options; and

22 WHEREAS, the Rank 1 Comprehensive Plan's update in 2013 designated
23 Volcano Heights as a Major Activity Center, as recommended by the Rank 2
24 West Side Strategic Plan's 2011 Volcano Mesa Amendment; and

25 WHEREAS, the Rank 2 West Side Strategic Plan's Volcano Mesa
26 Amendment establishes the policy to direct growth within the three Rank 3

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1 Sector Development Plans – Volcano Cliffs, Volcano Trails, and Volcano
2 Heights; and

3 WHEREAS, the policies and regulations intended to be consistent among
4 the three plans were reviewed, revised, and refined throughout the process of
5 adopting the three Rank 3 plans, which were adopted in succession beginning
6 in May 2011 with Volcano Cliffs and ending in August 2013 with Volcano
7 Heights; and

8 WHEREAS, amendments are needed to reconcile the street network within
9 Volcano Mesa to incorporate cross sections for Volcano Cliffs and Volcano
10 Heights; and

11 WHEREAS, amendments are needed to reconcile adjustments made to the
12 design requirements for residential garages; strengthen regulations to
13 minimize fugitive dust during construction activities; organize regulations
14 regarding blasting in the Escarpment Transition zone; adjust regulations that
15 would have resulted in undesirable, unintended consequences; and correct
16 errata adopted in the original Plan; and

17 WHEREAS, amendments to the Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan
18 (VHSDP) are consistent with the applicable goals and policies of the
19 Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, the West Side Strategic
20 Plan, the Facility Plan for Major Public Open Space, the Facility Plan: Electric
21 System Generation and Transmission, the Northwest Mesa Escarpment Plan,
22 and the Comprehensive Zoning Code.

23 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF
24 ALBUQUERQUE:

- 25 Section 1. The City Council adopts the following findings:
- 26 1. The VHSDP area comprises 569 acres of land surrounding the
27 intersection of two significant regional roads, Unser Blvd. and Paseo del
28 Norte, and is bounded generally by existing development in Paradise Hills and
29 part of Paseo del Norte to the north, Universe Boulevard to the west, the
30 Volcano Cliffs Sector Plan area to the south, and the Petroglyph National
31 Monument to the east.
 - 32 2. The Plan area is primarily undeveloped except for the two regional
33 roads that traverse it. It is surrounded by existing residential subdivisions and

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1 areas of platted land awaiting development. It is divided into approximately
2 100 properties ranging from 2.5 acres to 68 acres, which are owned by about
3 35 different property owners. Five property owners account for approximately
4 75% of the Plan area.

5 3. The Plan establishes the following SU-2 zones: Volcano Heights
6 Town Center (VHTC), Volcano Heights Regional Center (VHRC), Volcano
7 Heights Mixed Use (VHMX), Volcano Heights Escarpment Transition (VHET),
8 and Volcano Heights Neighborhood Transition (VHNT). No zone changes are
9 involved in the amendments; rather, revised design standards would equally
10 affect all properties.

11 4. The majority of the VHSDP area is within a part of the city
12 designated Developing or Established Urban by the Rank 1
13 Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan).
14 The VHSDP amendments implement and further the applicable Goals and
15 Policies of the Comprehensive Plan as follows:

16 A. Amendments affecting blasting within the SU-2/VHET
17 (Volcano Heights Escarpment Transition) zone, fugitive dust, and perimeter
18 walls will protect and preserve natural and cultural resources, vistas, and the
19 visual environment; provide visual variety in this Major Activity Center; and
20 emphasize new employment opportunities (II.B.1 Policy d, II.B.5 Policy d, II.B.7
21 Policy c, II.C.8 Policy a, II.C.9 Policy b, and II.D.6 Policy a).

22 B. Amendments to the transportation standards help protect
23 the livability and safety of residential neighborhoods and match street design
24 to community identity (II.B.5 Policy k and II.C.9 Policies b and e).

25 5. The VHSDP amendments implement and further the established
26 goals and policies of the Rank 2 West Side Strategic Plan as follows:

27 A. Amendments affecting blasting within the SU-2/VHET
28 (Volcano Heights Escarpment Transition) zone, fugitive dust, and perimeter
29 walls are intended to help protect the Escarpment, view sheds, and cultural
30 resources (Policy 3.99).

31 B. Adequate access and transportation choices for all users
32 within Volcano Mesa are supported by multi-modal cross sections (Policies
33 3.111 and 3.112).

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1 6. The amendment to reorganize and consolidate blasting
2 regulations within the SU-2/VHET (Volcano Heights Escarpment Transition)
3 zone helps ensure appropriate construction mitigation near the Escarpment,
4 as set out in Policy 11 in the Rank 3 Northwest Mesa Escarpment Plan
5 (NWMEP).

6 Section 2. The City Council makes the following findings, which are
7 supported by and further elucidated in the complete record, as to compliance
8 with R-270-1980 with respect to the amendments affecting zoning standards
9 for residential garages:

10 1. With respect to Policy (A), the proposed zoning regulations
11 contribute to the general welfare of the neighborhood, community, and the
12 city because they contribute to a safer public right-of-way, enhance the public
13 realm, and help ensure a high-quality built environment.

14 2. With respect to Policy (B), the proposed zoning regulations
15 contribute to the stabilization of the area by setting standards for all
16 residential garages to ensure high-quality design. The standards are intended
17 to create a high-quality built environment compatible with and complementary
18 to the natural beauty of the Petroglyph National Monument, which surrounds
19 Volcano Mesa on three sides and protects a unique volcanic landscape in
20 perpetuity.

21 3. With respect to Policy (C), the proposed zoning standards are
22 consistent with and implement elements of the Rank 1 Comprehensive Plan,
23 Rank 2 West Side Strategic Plan, and Rank 3 Northwest Mesa Escarpment
24 Plan, as demonstrated below.

25 A. Rank 1 Comprehensive Plan:

26 (1) II.B.1. Open Space Goal and Policy b: Standards for
27 residential garages will help ensure that development adjacent to the
28 proposed Open Space network is compatible with open space purposes. The
29 standards are intended to ensure a high-quality built environment
30 commensurate with the beauty of the Petroglyph National Monument, which
31 surrounds the planning area on three sides. The standards reduce the
32 dominance of auto-oriented elements of residential lots and balance the
33 competing needs of pedestrians, residents, and drivers.

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1 (2) II.B.5 Developing and Established Urban Goal and
2 Policy d: Residential garage standards help ensure that the location,
3 intensity, and design of new development respects the natural environmental
4 conditions, scenic resources, and social, cultural, and recreational values and
5 opportunities connected to the Petroglyph National Monument.

6 (3) II.B.5 Developing and Established Urban Goal and
7 Policy f: Residential garage standards help ensure that houses are oriented
8 toward pedestrian walkways and share access with people other than drivers.
9 The proposed standards ensure facades that balance the orientation for
10 vehicle access via garages with the orientation for pedestrian access via
11 sidewalks and the public realm.

12 (4) II.B.5 Developing and Established Urban Goal and
13 Policy I: Residential garage standards encourage quality design in new
14 development and design that is appropriate to the Plan area.

15 (5) II.B.5 Developing and Established Urban Goal and
16 Policy m: Residential garage standards are an important part of the site
17 design that improves the quality of the visual environment.

18 (6) II.C.8. Environmental Protection and Heritage
19 Conservation Goal and Policy a: Residential garage standards are proposed
20 in the Plan area to respect the natural and visual environment, particularly the
21 unique Albuquerque feature that includes the volcanic landscape, of which the
22 Petroglyph National Monument is an integral part.

23 (7) II.C.8 Environmental Protection and Heritage
24 Conservation Goal and Policy e: In this highly scenic area, residential garage
25 standards ensure development design that is in harmony with the landscape.

26 (8) II.C.9 Community Identity and Urban Design Goal
27 and Policy b: Residential garage standards consider how best to design the
28 built environment to contribute to and enhance the natural environment,
29 including standards for the placement of entrances and windows, parking
30 areas and relationship to buildings, drive pads and curb cuts, and the massing
31 of buildings.

32 (9) II.D.4 Transportation and Transit Goal and Policy g:
33 Residential garage standards help protect pedestrians in the public realm,

1 minimize opportunities for conflicts with auto access to individual properties,
2 and create pleasant non-motorized travel conditions.

3 (10) II.D.5 Housing Policy b: Residential garage
4 standards help promote quality in new housing design.

5 B. Rank 2 West Side Strategic Plan:

6 (1) Policy 3.99: The residential garage standards
7 establish design standards for developments in Volcano Mesa, which abuts
8 the Petroglyph National Monument, in order to recognize and respect the
9 sensitive ecological, historical and cultural importance of the area by ensuring
10 that development is compatible and contributes to a high-quality built
11 environment.

12 C. Rank 3 Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan:

13 (1) Environment and Open Space Goal 12.1.4:
14 Residential garage standards help minimize the visual impact of development
15 adjacent to the Escarpment and form a pleasant transition from the developed
16 to the natural area.

17 (2) Transportation Goals 12.3.1 and 12.3.3: Residential
18 garage standards are intended to contribute to pedestrian-friendly
19 thoroughfares that promote walking and help pedestrians feel safe and
20 comfortable.

21 (3) Land Use and Urban Design Goal 12.4.1: Residential
22 garage standards are intended to help create safe, comfortable, and visually
23 attractive settings to support the community's long-term economic, cultural,
24 and social viability.

25 (4) Land Use and Urban Design Goal 12.4.2: These
26 standards are part of a strategy to promote walking and create a walkable
27 district within Volcano Heights. Walkable neighborhoods have proven social
28 and economic benefits resulting from better access to basic needs and
29 amenities, safer and more active streets, and improved health through
30 physical activity, particularly for segments of the population without
31 automobile access, including youth and seniors.

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1 (5) Land Use and Urban Design Goal 12.4.3: Residential
2 garage standards are intended to ensure high-quality design for individual
3 buildings, which contributes to a sense of place and permanence.

4 (6) Land Use and Design Policy 13.4.3: These standards
5 are intended to contribute to a high-quality built environment, with particular
6 emphasis on providing visual interest at the scale of the pedestrian in order to
7 create a walkable district for residents, employees, and visitors.

8 4. With respect to Policy (D), existing zoning standards are
9 inappropriate and inadequate because the proposed revisions to the existing
10 residential garage standards are more advantageous to the community, as
11 articulated by the preponderance of applicable goals and polices in the
12 Comprehensive Plan and WSSP cited in Section C above.

13 A. There is a public need for the proposed standards, as
14 they help ensure a high-quality built environment that is more compatible with
15 the sensitive and unique volcanic landscape of which this Plan area is a part
16 and the permanent open space protected in perpetuity as the Petroglyph
17 National Monument. The residential standards also improve the safety and
18 continuity of the pedestrian realm in front of these residential properties.

19 B. The location of this Plan area, with its relationship to the
20 abutting Petroglyph National Monument, makes these residential standards
21 important and appropriate to meet the public need for high-quality built
22 environments and safe and continuous pedestrian realms.

23 5. With respect to Policy (E), these zoning standards affect one
24 permissive use for properties between 48 and 70 feet wide. Residential
25 garages for three or more cars would be prohibited for properties less than 70
26 feet wide; the existing standards specify a minimum of 48 feet to allow a
27 three-car garage. The more restrictive standard is intended to minimize the
28 proportion of the lot delegated for garage façade and ensure the safety and
29 quality of the pedestrian and public realm in front of residential lots. The
30 change is not harmful to adjacent property, neighborhood, or community;
31 rather the standards benefit surrounding property by ensuring a high-quality
32 built environment and safe pedestrian realm.

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1 6. With respect to Policy (F), this zoning standard does not require
2 major and unprogrammed capital expenditures by the city.

3 7. With respect to Policy (G), the cost of land and other economic
4 considerations are not the determining factor for the additional zoning
5 standards.

6 8. With respect to Policy (H), the proposed standards are not
7 intended for properties on major streets and does not affect apartment, office,
8 or commercial land uses.

9 9. With respect to Policy (I), the additional standards do not
10 constitute spot zoning.

11 10. With respect to Policy (J), the additional standards do not
12 constitute strip zoning.

13 Section 3. The City Council makes the following findings, which are
14 supported by and further elucidated in the complete record, as to compliance
15 with R-270-1980 with respect to the amendments affecting zoning standards
16 for the archaeological review of projects two or more acres in size and/or
17 properties on which a potential archaeological resource is discovered during
18 development or land disturbance:

19 1. With respect to Policy (A), the proposed zoning contributes to the
20 general welfare of the neighborhood, community, and the city. The proposed
21 zoning regulation would lower the threshold for archaeological review of site
22 development plans or master development plans and apply the Albuquerque
23 Archaeological Ordinance (City Zoning Code §14-16-3-20) on all properties,
24 regardless of size, in the event that a potential archaeological resource is
25 discovered during development or land disturbance. The proposed zoning
26 regulation would replace the existing regulation requiring a 50-foot setback
27 from any petroglyph or archaeological site. This proposed change removes a
28 potential impediment to development while protecting unique cultural and
29 historical resources, consistent with the goals and policies of the
30 Comprehensive Plan and other applicable plans. The proposed regulation has
31 no adverse effect on public facilities or services, fire and police facilities,
32 drainage facilities, or roadways. Where a petroglyph or other significant
33 archaeological resource is discovered within a proposed facility site or right-

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1 of-way, a Certificate of No Effect or a treatment plan would need to be
2 approved by the City Archaeologist, but no such condition is known at this
3 time.

4 2. With respect to Policy (B), the proposed requirement contributes
5 to the stabilization of the area by helping to preserve archaeological
6 resources and maintain a connection with the unique volcanic landscape and
7 continuous cultural and historical use by native peoples for centuries, while
8 still allowing for development on private property. The City and the federal
9 government protected much of this landscape in perpetuity by creating the
10 Petroglyph National Monument, which surrounds Volcano Mesa on three
11 sides. The Archaeological Ordinance in City Comprehensive Zoning Code
12 §14-16-3-20 defines archaeological resources of at least 75 years old that
13 might be considered significant and protects them from adverse impacts of
14 development. The Archaeological Ordinance is currently applicable for
15 projects five or more acres in size on property with SU-2 zoning requiring site
16 plan approval. The proposed regulation would extend the applicability of this
17 ordinance to projects 2 or more acres in size requiring site plan approval as
18 well as to any property on which a potential archaeological resource were
19 discovered. In the event that a potential archaeological resource were
20 discovered on private property of any size, the proposed requirement is
21 intended to determine its significance and encourage appropriate treatment
22 while still allowing for development on the remaining portion of the property.
23 The requirement is intended to encourage the conservation of petroglyphs
24 and other significant archaeological resources as integral parts of the unique
25 cultural, historical, and geologic landscape that includes the volcanoes,
26 basalt flow, and escarpment.

27 3. With respect to Policy (C), the proposed zoning standard is
28 consistent with and implements elements of the Rank 1 Comprehensive Plan,
29 Rank 2 West Side Strategic Plan, and Rank 3 Northwest Mesa Escarpment
30 Plan, as demonstrated below.

31 A. Rank 1 Comprehensive Plan:

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1 (1) II.B.1. Open Space Goal and Policy a: Adding the
2 proposed general standard will protect and preserve a natural resource and
3 environmental feature and conserve archaeological resources.

4 (2) II.B.1. Open Space Goal and Policy d : The proposed
5 regulation is intended to preserve petroglyphs and other archaeological
6 resources connected to the landscape, geology, and cultural importance of
7 the volcanoes, basalt flow, and escarpment.

8 (3) II.C.6. Archaeological Resources Goal and Policy b:
9 In the event that a significant archaeological resource is discovered, a
10 treatment plan must be prepared and approved by the City Archaeologist, who
11 can assure that the treatment is appropriate to preserve and/or protect
12 significant sites.

13 (4) II.C.9 Community Identity and Urban Design Goal
14 and Policy b: Preservation of petroglyphs and other significant archaeological
15 resources maintains the integrity of the volcanic landscape in a unique area of
16 Albuquerque with distinct and rich local history and cultural traditions dating
17 back to pre-historic use as prayer sites by Pueblo peoples that continues
18 today.

19 **B. Rank 2 West Side Strategic Plan:**

20 (1) Policy 3.103: The proposed regulation protects and
21 ensures conservation of archaeological and cultural resources.

22 (2) Policy 2.104: The proposed regulation requires the
23 appropriate treatment of significant archaeological resources, which may
24 include a buffer or setback from petroglyphs and archaeological sites, which
25 would be consistent with this policy that advocates a 50-foot setback from
26 petroglyphs for development, trails, and recreation areas.

27 (3) Policy 3.107: The proposed regulation would help
28 ensure conservation of rock outcroppings containing petroglyphs.

29 **C. Rank 3 Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan:**

30 (1) Environment and Open Space Goal 12.1.3:
31 Protecting petroglyphs and significant archaeological resources is part of
32 respecting Albuquerque’s culture and history, including Native American
33 traditions, through contextually sensitive development of Volcano Heights.

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1 (2) Environment and Open Space Policy 13.1.3: The
2 proposed regulation provides flexibility that will help incentivize various
3 methods to conserve archaeological resources in Volcano Heights.

4 D. Rank 3 North West Mesa Escarpment Plan (NWMEP):

5 (1) Policy 10: The proposed regulation protects
6 significant archaeological sites.

7 4. With respect to Policy (D), existing zoning standards are
8 inappropriate and inadequate because removing the 50-foot buffer for
9 petroglyphs and replacing it with a standard is more advantageous to the
10 community. The proposed standard is more flexible and can be customized
11 more appropriately for any archaeological resources that are discovered and
12 found to be significant. This flexibility is expected to remove a potential
13 disincentive for compliance and help ensure the protection and preservation
14 of archaeological resources, particularly petroglyphs, as articulated by the
15 preponderance of applicable goals and polices in the Comprehensive Plan,
16 WSSP, and NWMEP cited in Section C. The proposed zoning standard helps
17 conserve unique natural and cultural resources; preserve the connection to a
18 unique natural and cultural landscape – a large portion of which is preserved
19 in perpetuity by the Petroglyph National Monument; and maintain the cultural
20 and historical importance of these petroglyphs for the public and the Pueblo
21 people.

22 A. There is a public need for the proposed standard;
23 petroglyphs and other significant archaeological resources are unique and
24 irreplaceable. They are an integral part of a cultural, historical, and geological
25 landscape that contributes to the richness of Albuquerque and the value of
26 the priceless Petroglyph National Monument. It serves the public interest to
27 preserve these unique resources and help protect the integrity of this unique
28 landscape. Preserving these resources in perpetuity allows for future
29 opportunities for research, experience, and education.

30 B. The threshold for archaeological review should be
31 extended within Volcano Mesa because this area was used heavily over time
32 by Pueblo people for cultural and spiritual rituals connected to the volcanic
33 landscape. The Petroglyph National Monument preserved the most heavily

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1 used and most treasured areas in perpetuity for the public. It is unlikely that
2 most private property nearby will have archaeological resources; however,
3 where archaeological resources are discovered in the area, they will likely be
4 more significant and significant more often than not, compared with
5 archaeological resources found in other areas of the City. This volcanic
6 landscape was used in place-based rituals much like a spiritual pilgrimage;
7 therefore, archaeological resources in the area are likely connected to this
8 historical and cultural tradition.

9 5. With respect to Policy (E), this zoning standard does not affect the
10 permissive uses of the property. Preserving petroglyphs would not be
11 harmful to adjacent property, the neighborhood, or the community; rather,
12 their preservation ensures the continuity of cultural heritage and maintains
13 the integrity of this unique geological landscape.

14 6. With respect to Policy (F), this zoning standard does not require
15 major and unprogrammed capital expenditures by the city.

16 7. With respect to Policy (G), the cost of land and other economic
17 considerations are not the determining factor for the additional zoning
18 standards.

19 8. With respect to Policy (H), the proposed regulation has no relation
20 to the street network and is not intended to change apartment, office, or
21 commercial land uses.

22 9. With respect to Policy (I), the additional standard does not
23 constitute spot zoning.

24 10. With respect to Policy (J), the additional standard does not
25 constitute strip zoning.

26 Section 4. Amendments to the Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan,
27 attached hereto and made a part hereof, are adopted as part of this Rank 3
28 Plan with land use control pursuant to the Comprehensive City Zoning Code
29 and as a regulatory guide to the implementation of the Rank 1
30 Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan and applicable Rank 2
31 and 3 Plans as cited above.

1 Section 5. All development activities within the Volcano Heights Sector
2 Development Plan boundaries shall be guided and regulated by the policies,
3 standards, and regulations of the VHSDP.

4 Section 6. EFFECTIVE DATE. This resolution shall take effect five days
5 after publication by title and general summary.

6 Section 7. SEVERABILITY CLAUSE. If any section paragraph, sentence,
7 clause, word, or phrase of this resolution is for any reason held to be invalid
8 or unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall
9 not affect the validity of the remaining provisions of this resolution. The
10 Council hereby declares that it would have passed this resolution and each
11 section, paragraph, sentence, clause, word or phrase thereof irrespective of
12 any provisions being declared unconstitutional or otherwise invalid.

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