



Mayor Martin J. Chávez

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Office of the Mayor

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

May 10, 2007

TO: Debbie O'Malley, President, City Council

FROM: Martin J. Chávez, Mayor

SUBJECT: 06EPC-01320 / Project #1005135 – The Environmental Planning Commission recommends approval of the Barelás Sector Development Plan. The Plan area includes all properties within a geographical area whose boundaries are generally described as Coal Avenue, Commercial Street, Avenida Cesar Chavez/Bridge Street, Albuquerque Riverside Drain, and Alcalde Place (K-13,14; L-13,14).
Ed Boles, Staff Planner

Introduction

The Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) recommends approval of the September 2006 draft of the Barelás Sector Development Plan, hereafter “draft Plan”. The draft Plan is to replace the 1993 Barelás Sector Development Plan, hereafter “1993 Plan.” Initiated by a request from the Barelás Neighborhood Association, the draft Plan covers an area of about 383 acres, an increase of 28 acres over the 1993 Plan’s 355 acres. The draft Plan area is bounded on the north by Coal Avenue, east by Commercial Street, south by Avenida Cesar Chavez/Bridge Street, and west by the Albuquerque Riverside Drain and Alcalde Place. It abuts the Downtown 2010 Plan area and the South Broadway Neighborhoods Sector Development Plan area.

Council Resolution 05-246 authorized a community based update of the Barelás Sector Development Plan and appropriated funds for its preparation. The scope of services specified in R-05-246 included inventorying areas of transition from commercial and institutional to residential use, pedestrian improvements, streetscapes, traffic calming, public safety, transit issues, community education, economic development, housing diversity and affordable housing, human services, historic preservation, community identity and the built environment, code enforcement, zoning, design standards and guidelines. Sites Southwest LLC was assigned the project and began work in late 2005.

EPC Process

The EPC heard the draft Plan three times – on October 26 and December 14, 2006 and January 11, 2007. From the first hearing, proposed zone map amendments were the main issues discussed by the EPC and in public testimony. In particular, a proposed mixed-use zone, SU-2 Rail Yard Zone, for the rail yard and locomotive shops property, was contended. By December 14, it was clear that the proposed SU-2 Rail Yard Zone was unlikely to get EPC's recommendation, and thus it was replaced on January 11 with the SU-2/M-2/R-3 Zone, which the EPC had a hand in defining.

The SU-2 RY was a mix of IP Industrial Park, C-2 Community Commercial, and R-3 Residential uses, a mix based on redevelopment proposals made in recent years by Renaissance Development/Old Locomotive Shops LLC, majority owner of the locomotive shops property. Even so, Renaissance Development, the Urban Council of Albuquerque, and the BNSF Railroad, all owners of the affected land, objected to the SU-2/Rail Yard Zone as written in the draft Plan. They contended that changing zoning away from Heavy Manufacturing was inappropriate and put known and future redevelopment prospects at risk. Other Barelás interests testified that Heavy Manufacturing uses hold good potential for job creation and should be allowed. Still other Barelás and residents of the South Broadway and San Jose neighborhoods testified that along with job creation, the off-site effects of heavy manufacturing must be taken into account in zoning and planning decisions.

Regarding South Broadway and San Jose neighborhoods, an amendment of their joint sector development plan accompanied the draft Barelás Plan at the October 26 EPC hearing. That companion amendment was to create consistent policy and regulations for that part of the rail yard property, now M-2 Heavy Manufacturing Zone, between the 1993 Barelás Plan area and the South Broadway Neighborhoods Sector Development Plan area. Several EPC members spoke against the twin-amendment approach, as did others, so the Planning Department withdrew the South Broadway Neighborhoods Plan amendment and concentrated on the draft Barelás Plan.

The EPC's recommended approach to the South Broadway and San Jose interests is twofold. First - insert in the draft Barelás Plan specific requirements to include those nearby neighborhoods in notification and decision-making on railyard redevelopment (EPC condition of approval number 7). And, second -- map the SU-2 Special Neighborhood Zone within the draft Barelás Plan area, expanding the draft Plan area onto the land now zoned M-2 Heavy Manufacturing. This M-2 land lies between the 1993 Barelás Plan area and South Broadway Neighborhoods Sector Development Plan area (EPC condition of approval number 3). This adds 28 acres more rail yard land to the 1993 Barelás Plan area and brings the total draft Barelás Plan area to 383 acres. The true gain, however, is the SU-2 zoning and its special requirements to benefit affected neighborhoods.

As for the rail yard, BNSF right-of-way, and shops property, EPC recommends an SU-2/M-2/R-3 Zone with master plan approval required for sites of 20 and more acres and site development plan approval for sites of lesser area. EPC discussion of this unusual mix of manufacturing and residential uses reflected members' thinking that the master plan and site plan approval requirements

are sufficient to avoid potential conflicts between uses.

The other zone map amendments in the draft Plan will improve the transition between land uses near downtown. Two mixed use zones include an SU-2 Neighborhood Commercial Residential Zone and SU-2 Mixed Warehouse District Zone. Neither has been contended by affected property owners or others. In fact, one owner group requested a larger SU-2 Mixed Warehouse District Zone than first proposed, so their land (currently SU-2 Residential Garden Zone) would be poised for more appropriate development near the rail yard. This request was honored and a better zoning pattern is the result.

The EPC finds that this application justifies the sector development plan map amendments in keeping with R-270-1980. All three criteria are satisfied. Section 1.D.(1) is satisfied due to an apparent error in the current zone map, which named the SU-2/HM Zone for Heavy Manufacturing but made it correspond to the M-1 Light Manufacturing Zone. Section 1.D.(2) is satisfied due to changed community conditions in the area such as the adoption of Centers and Corridors amendments of the Comprehensive Plan, including the designation of a Major Transit Corridor (4th Street) through Barelás, a Community Activity Center at the south end of the Sector Plan area, and a Major Activity Center just to the north in downtown. Section 1.D.(3) is satisfied due, among other changes in zoning, to the re-zoning of the M-2 Heavy Manufacturing Zone to SU-2/M-2/R-3, a special neighborhood zone with master development plan and site development plan approval requirements.

Public Participation

The draft Barelás Plan was produced with the help of several stakeholder groups and many individuals. An open-membership Steering Committee met ten times with the Sites Southwest planning team and selected City staff and stakeholders. Organizations represented on the Steering Committee included the Barelás Neighborhood Association, Barelás Community Development Corporation, Albuquerque Rescue Mission, Archdiocese of Santa Fe, National Hispanic Cultural Center of New Mexico, and Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce. Three public meetings were held to gather public preferences and opinion, review draft policy, and receive the draft Plan. The Planning Department and Sites Southwest publicized and communicated with owners and stakeholders by mailings, flyers, posters, e-mail, and a project website. Standard mail also was used as needed to keep people informed.

Conclusion

The draft Barelás Sector Development Plan is the community based update called for in 2005. It furthers many Comprehensive Plan goals and policies. It identifies capital spending priorities and many "program enhancements" that may require no expenditures. The EPC recommends that the City Council approve the September 2006 draft of the Barelás Sector Development Plan with nine conditions of approval. The Planning Department supports the EPC's recommendation.

Recommended:

Bruce J. Perlman, Ph.D
Chief Administrative Officer

Recommended:

Richard Dineen, Director
Planning Department

x:share/Council/Master - . . /2007/06EPC-01320 . .

Approved as to Legal Form:

Robert M. White
City Attorney

Recommended:

Ed Adams
Chief Operations Division

