



***Environmental
Planning
Commission***

*Agenda Number: 03
Project Number: 1004928
Case #'s: 06EPC 00767
September 11, 2008*

Staff Report

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| <i>Agent</i> | Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency |
| <i>Applicant</i> | City of Albuquerque, Planning Dept. |
| <i>Request(s)</i> | Sector Plan Approval |
| <i>Legal Description</i> | Properties along 4 th Street between |
| <i>Location</i> | Mountain Road and Solar Road, NW |
| <i>Size</i> | Approximately 4 1/3 miles |
| <i>Existing Zoning</i> | Mixture of zones |
| <i>Proposed Zoning</i> | Modified FBC Overlay |

Staff Recommendation

Approval of 06EPC 00767 based upon the explanation below, Summary of Analysis

Staff Planner

Richard Asenap, Senior Staff Planner

Summary of Analysis

The EPC has deferred the North Fourth Street Corridor Plan to allow for more public and agency review. The Plan has been modified considerably since its introduction in August of 2006. The current version is the result of neighborhood association, merchant and other individual's input.

This version of the Plan proposes three modified Form Based Code overlay zone categories along the Corridor from Mountain Road to the City Limits along north 4th Street. The zones would be implemented through "trigger" events. Design standards, parking regulations, signage and other requirements would also be implemented with the usage of the new zoning categories. The goal of the Plan is to increase residential and commercial density in a more urban environment conducive to pedestrian and vehicular safety and convenience.

Additionally, the Plan calls for an engineering study of the entire North Fourth Street. The study would define where bump outs, medians, landscaping and other street improvements can be made before final Right of Way (ROW) construction could begin. Public and agency involvement in the scope and study parameters would ensure additional concerns are addressed.

Background, History and Context

Since the Plan's introduction, several merchants and some neighborhood associations have expressed an opinion that more involvement was necessary to gain acceptance of the Plan's goals. As a result, the City's mediation services were utilized and a negotiation team was created to assist in the Plan's modification. The result is the "White Paper" which lists agreed upon points and those points requiring additional discussion and consensus. During the past 8 months, the negotiation team comprised of merchants and neighborhood leaders met weekly to draft the current version of the Plan. On August 19, 2008 the Plan was presented to the public at an open house at the Los Griegos Family and Community Center in the North Valley. Comments received are attached.

Drafts of the Plan have been made available electronically on-line and hard copies made available at the Planning Department and at several locations in the North Valley. Interested parties have been advised to make their comments available to the EPC staff. Several City agencies have also been sent copies for comment.

Proposed Zoning

Three new zoning districts are proposed. The plan will require zone map and text changes to enable neighborhood scale residential and commercial offerings which are more pedestrian and vehicular compatible. Each new zoning district would have a new zoning overlay. In each new zone overlay district, the owner would have the ability to retain existing land uses and existing zoning within certain parameters. Alternatively, at the option of the owner, new zoning contained in the zoning overlay could be invoked. Using the zoning would trigger design requirements that the owner would have to meet, but the new zoning would allow mixed uses and higher densities. This approach would allow property owners to adopt the new land uses and zoning as market conditions change and it is more favorable to redevelop the property.

The new zoning categories are:

North Fourth Transit Oriented Development (NFTOD) District.

The NFTOD is designed for the major transit areas of the corridor. Two NFTOD areas are designated within the corridor boundary. Generally, the first District covers parcels on either side of 4th Street beginning at Mountain Road NW to Phoenix Avenue NW. East/West traffic intersections of I-40 and Menaul NW are contained within the District. The second District covers parcels generally either side of 4th Street beginning at Berry Road NW to north of Montano NW. The second District extends along Montano to the Rail Road tracks. The intent of the NFTOD in these areas are to support and take advantage of higher traffic and greater transit investments in relatively large areas by providing community-serving retail and higher density housing.

North Fourth Mixed Use Development (NFMXD) District

The NFMXD is designed as a pedestrian scale, principally commercial development area that is integral to a mixed use neighborhood. Two NFMXD areas are designated within the corridor boundary. Generally, the first District covers parcels on either side of 4th Street beginning at Phoenix Avenue NW to Natalie Avenue NW. The second District begins generally north of Montano NW along 4th Street to the City Limits near Camino Espanol NW. The purpose of establishing these District boundaries is to encourage commercial and mixed uses that serve residential neighborhoods and can be used to redevelop existing shopping areas and centers.

North Fourth Infill Development (NFID) District

The NFID serves as a buffer and provides a standard to encourage the context-sensitive development of empty lots or the redevelopment of sites in substantially built up areas. It offers relief from rigid zoning, while ensuring that new development respects its surroundings and achieves compact pedestrian friendly environments. The Districts are found in four areas with the corridor boundaries. The first is generally either side of Candelaria Road NW from 4th Street to 7th Street NW. The second District is generally east of the Harwood Lateral from Delamar Avenue NW to Sanchez Road NW. The third District is west of the Gallegos Lateral generally from Hendrix NW to Sanchez Road NW. The fourth District is generally along Pauline Street NW from Gene NW to Guadalupe Trail NW. The district boundaries were chosen because of their proximity to major intersections and significance to neighborhood leaders.

More detailed specific boundary delineation may be found in the zone map contained in the plan.

The overlay zone standards and requirements for their implementation are, also, detailed in the Regulatory Plan III. Attention should be paid to the application of the Overlay Zone and the conditions for invoking their standards. The plan details four conditions that require the application of the overlay zone, they are:

1. Construction of a replacement building after voluntary demolition of existing buildings.
2. Construction of new buildings on a vacant parcel.
3. Commencement of a new use that is permissible under the Overlay Zone but was not permissible on that parcel before the plan's adoption.
4. Change to new Conditional Use under existing zoning that was not being employed on that parcel before the plan's adoption.

Further, conditions and standards for determining when an overlay zone is not required are detailed in the plan. Uses that are permissive or approved conditional uses before adoption of the plan may remain, with the exception of certain "noxious uses" found in III-17.

Transportation and Street Design

The Plan acknowledges that North Fourth Street is classified as a Major Transit Corridor and as such must be viewed in context with a larger, city-wide interaction of transportation needs. The Plan recommends that before any major redesign of the street, that an engineering study of the entire length of the corridor should be undertaken. The study should review existing policies, standards and rationale for changes to lane capacity, transit and other transportation requirements in relation to future land uses proposed in the plan. Comments received from City agencies suggest minimum standards should be addressed in the plan, before the engineering study. Transportation Development did not comment.

In addition, to the street redesign templates contained in the original plan; the engineering study should better define where street trees, street furniture, medians and other improvements could be placed along the corridor. The plan does not specify exactly where these improvements would occur, but rather offers design principles, parameters and standards to guide the scope of the study. The plan also suggests that a process of planning and construction should involve local stakeholders in the corridor in its implementation.

Conclusions

The most recent version of the North Fourth Street Corridor Plan relies heavily on a modified or hybrid Form Based Code for mixed use development. By instituting an overlay zone approach, the result is a reasonable approach to ultimately redeveloping the entire length of Fourth Street into a more urban scale transit corridor as market conditions change. By deferring the street improvement until after an engineering study is conducted, the plan does not require street and transportation review at this time.

City staff requested comments Transit, Code Enforcement, Family and Community Services and did not receive comments before submittal.

The involvement of merchants, neighborhood associations and other interested parties have resulted in a Plan which may require some minor modification, but overall comments have indicated community support has been positive. The Plan should receive a favorable recommendation to the City Council for approval.

***Richard Asenap
Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency***

Attachments

