



**BEFORE THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
OF THE INCORPORATED COUNTY OF LOS ALAMOS, NEW MEXICO**

Case No. REZ-2025-0020, a request for a Minor Zone Map Amendment to rezone portions of Fire Station 4 and adjacent Open Space. The subject properties are in the North Community 2 Subdivision, are currently zoned Institutional (INS) and Open Space-Passive Open (OS-PO), and are addressed as 4401 Diamond Drive, and 9999 Range Road, Los Alamos, New Mexico

ORDER ON APPLICATION REZ-2025-0020

NOW COMES, the Planning and Zoning Commission (“Commission”) of the Incorporated County of Los Alamos (“County”) hereby finds and orders as follows:

I. FINDINGS OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission finds as follows:

1. The Los Alamos County Capital Improvements and Facilities Division, agent on behalf of the Incorporated County of Los Alamos, property owner (“Applicant” or “Property Owner”), submitted an application (“Application”) for a Minor Zone Map Amendment to rezone portions of Fire Station 4 and adjacent Open Space. The subject properties are located at 4401 Diamond Drive and 9999 Range Road, (“Property”). *See* Attachment A, PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT by Danyelle Valdez, Planning Manager (hereafter “CDD Staff Report”).
2. The Application was assigned case number REZ-2025-0020. *Id.*
3. A quorum of the Commission was present at the public hearing held on July 9, 2025¹. The public hearing was open to the receipt of evidence and testimony given under oath, of which was

¹ The Video for this hearing is available at [July 9, 2025, Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting \(granicus.com\)](#). All citations to testimony are from this video and is in Hour:Minute:Second format.

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subject to cross-examination in accordance with Section 16-72(f)(5) of the County Development Code².

4. Present for the Applicant was David Grooms of Vega Architecture, 495 West Cedar Ave, Denver, Colorado, on behalf of Property Owner.

5. Present for the County Community Development Department (“CDD”) was CDD Staff Danyelle Valdez (“CDD Staff Valdez”), Planning Manager.

6. Evidence received by the Commission at the public hearing included: 1) CDD Staff Report; 2) Application Packet; 3) Public Notices; and 4) Presentations, Questioning, and Testimony from Applicant, its witness, and CDD Staff Valdez.

7. The Property’s legal descriptions are NC2 G for 4401 Diamond Drive and NC2 H for 9999 Range Road and are located within the North Community 2 Subdivision and are currently zoned Institutional (INS) and Open Space-Passive Open (OS-PO) pursuant to the County’s adopted Zoning Map. *See* CDD Staff Report, Attachment A, Page 1.

8. The Applicant proposes to rezone approximately 18,735 square feet of 9999 Range Road from Open Space-Passive Open (OS-PO) to Institutional (INS). The Minor Zone Map Amendment is processed concurrently with an administratively approved Summary Plat. The Summary Plat reconfigured the boundary lines between Tract G (4401 Diamond Drive) and Tract H (9999 Range Road). Together the Minor Zone Map Amendment and Summary Plat create a consistently zoned parcel sized configured to accommodate the replacement of Fire Station 4. With the rezoned area, 4401 Diamond Drive will increase from 78,746 square feet to 97,481 square feet. This proposal implements County Council Resolution 2025-10, adopted June 24, 2025, following a unanimous Planning and Zoning recommendation on May 14, 2025, to expand the

² Available at [Municode Chapter 16](#).

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Comprehensive Plan's INS designation for the Property to ensure the entire fire station property is zoned INS and provides adequate area for facility operations. *See* CDD Staff Report, Attachment A, Pages 2-3; *see also* Testimony of CDD Staff Valdez at 00:12:51.

9. As provided in the CDD Staff Report, a pre-application meeting was held on February 11, 2025, with the Applicant and the Interdepartmental Review Committee ("IDRC") to review schematic plans for the replacement Fire Station No. 4. IDRC reconvened on April 11, 2025, to confirm the schematic design and application scope; no concerns were noted. The County Engineer determined that a traffic impact study was not necessary and offered no additional comments. The Department of Public Utilities reported no capacity constraints and provided preliminary guidelines for extending service to the new building. All reviewing IDRC departments expressed support for the project to proceed. *See* CDD Staff Report, Attachment A, Page 4.

10. Applicant conducted a Neighborhood Meeting, pursuant to Section 16-72(b)(2), on March 6, 2025. *See* CDD Staff Report, Attachment A, page 4; *see also* Testimony of CDD Staff Valdez at 00:15:37.

11. As provided by the evidence and testimony, notice of the public hearing was published in accordance with Section 16-72(c) of the County Development Code; notice was published in the *Los Alamos Daily Post* on June 18, 2025; notice of the proposed action and public hearing was mailed via U.S. Mail to the owners of real property within three hundred (300) feet of the Property on June 20, 2025; and the notice was posted at the Property on June 20, 2025. *See* CDD Staff Report, Attachment A, Page 4; *see also* Testimony of CDD Staff Valdez at 00:16:29.

12. As this Application is for Minor Zone Map Amendment, as required pursuant to Section 16-69(b)(6) of the County Development Code, the Commission finds the applicable review criteria

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for determining whether to approve, approve with conditions, or to deny the Application is found in Section 16-74(h)(3) of the County Development Code.

13. The Commission, having received testimony and evidence of the Applicant and CDD Staff Valdez during the public hearing, finds that the Applicant has met its burden and has demonstrated that the request for a Minor Zone Map Amendment has met the requirements of Section 16-74(h)(3) of the County Development Code. The Commission, in support of this finding, provides the following:

a. As to criterion (a) of Section 16-74(h)(3) of the County Development Code, the Commission finds that it was demonstrated by the testimony and evidence provided by Applicant and CDD Staff Valdez that the proposed Zone Map Amendment is consistent with the health, safety, and welfare of the County as shown by conformance with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and other adopted County plans or policies. The amendment advances the health, safety and welfare of the County by facilitating the replacement of Fire Station No.4 with a modern, code-compliant facility that addresses current operational and safety deficiencies. The amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan goal of Quality Governance, which promotes the maintenance of essential public services and efficient infrastructure investment. Redevelopment of the existing fire station property, rather than expansion into undeveloped areas, constitutes efficient land use, reduces infrastructure redundancy, and supports long-term sustainability objectives. The selected property preserves established emergency response coverage, as confirmed by response time analysis. The amendment further aligns with the 2025 County Council Strategic Leadership Plan and Strategic priorities including Operational Excellence through co-location of public safety functions and uninterrupted service during phased construction enhances operational efficiency and reliability, and Environmental Stewardship as

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the replacement facility will include energy-efficient systems designed to reduce emissions and environmental impact. *See* Testimony of Applicant at 00:22:03, Testimony of CDD Staff Valdez at 00:17:17; *see also* CDD Staff Report, Attachment A, Page 5.

b. As to review criterion (b) of Section 16-74(h)(3) of the County Development Code, the Commission finds that it was demonstrated by the testimony and evidence provided by the Applicant and CDD Staff Valdez that the existing zone district designation is shown to be inappropriate for one or more of the following reasons: 1) it was established in error; 2) changed conditions warrant the rezoning; or 3) a different zone is more advantageous to the community as articulated by conformance with each applicable goal and policy of the Comprehensive Plan, including the future land use map. Changed conditions and a shift in community needs warrant the proposed rezoning. To maintain emergency service operations during construction, the project requires a boundary adjustment via a concurrent Summary Plat, which incorporates additional County-owned land into the development Property. The existing OS-PO zoning designation does not accommodate public safety facilities, thereby making it incompatible with the approved use. Rezoning approximately 18,735 square feet from OS-PO to INS will result in a single, consistently zoned parcel appropriate for civic infrastructure and compliant with Section 16-7(d) of the County Development Code. Additionally, the INS zoning district is more advantageous to the community, as it enables construction of a modernized, robust public safety facility without requiring expansion into undeveloped areas. This approach supports multiple Comprehensive Plan goals, including Quality Governance, Land Use and Growth Management, and Environmental Sustainability. *See* Testimony of Applicant at 00:22:15, Testimony of CDD Staff Valdez at 00:17:36; *see also* CDD Staff Report, Attachment A, Pages 5-6.

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c. As to review criterion (c) of Section 16-74(h)(3) of the County Development Code, the Commission finds that it was demonstrated by the testimony and evidence provided by the Applicant and CDD Staff Valdez that the proposed zoning will not designate a zone district different from surrounding zone districts to one small area, i.e. create a spot zone, unless one or more of the following criteria are met: 1) granting such zoning accomplishes the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan; 2) unique characteristics specific to the site exist; or [sic] 3) the zoning serves as an appropriate transition between land uses of higher and lower intensity; 4) the County's existing and proposed infrastructure and public improvements including, but not limited to utilities, streets, sidewalks, or trails have adequate capacity to serve the development made possible by the Zone Map Amendment. The proposed zoning expands the existing INS zoning to reflect the full extent of the newly configured Property, as proposed through the summary plat. The zoning remains consistent with the historical and ongoing use of the Property as a fire station. The Minor Zone Map Amendment does not constitute spot zoning nor introduce a new zoning district to the area. The existing infrastructure and public improvements have adequate capacity to serve the expansion of the INS zone of the Property. Approval will allow for improved public amenities such as trail access and fire fighter's health, public safety and general welfare of the community through Fire Station No. 4's replacement building. Review with the County Engineer and Department of Public Utilities during pre-application meeting has assured that this Zone Map Amendment will maintain access to existing public utilities and there are no adverse impacts. *See* Testimony of CDD Staff Valdez at 00:18:29; *see also* CDD Staff Report, Pages 6-7.

d. As to review criterion (d) of Section 16-74(h)(3) of the County Development Code, the Commission finds that it was demonstrated by the testimony and evidence provided by CDD Staff Valdez and Applicant that the establishment, maintenance, or operation of uses made possible

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by the Zone Map Amendment will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of persons residing or working adjacent to or within the proximity of the subject property. The existing fire station building was developed by the Atomic Energy Commission and later conveyed to the County by the Department of Energy in 1998. The existing fire station currently operates in providing essential operations beneficial to public health, safety, and welfare. The rezone request will allow the County to construct a new fire station allowing modern amenities to continue this effort to serve Los Alamos County residents and businesses. Various studies conducted at the existing fire station property indicate that response times are within targets and utilizing this location is suitable for a new fire station. The new fire station, made possible by this Zone Map Amendment, will further improve firefighter response efficiencies and their own and the public's health, safety, and welfare through the design of the new fire station. The continued operation of the fire station within the expanded Institutional zone is consistent with existing land use on-site and does not introduce a new or intensified use that would generate adverse effects on adjacent properties. The Property is bordered by municipal and utility infrastructure, public open space, and roadways, which provide adequate physical separation from residential uses and mitigate potential impacts related to noise, lighting, or traffic. The facility's purpose to serve the public through emergency response is inherently aligned with protecting community health and safety. The amendment allows for improved facilities but does not alter the use in a way that creates new off-site effects. *See* Testimony of CDD Staff Valdez at 00:18:55; *see also* CDD Staff Report, Attachment A, Page 7.

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II. ORDER

The Commission, pursuant to Section 16-72(f)(5)(c)(3), by unanimous vote, hereby finds that the Applicant has sufficiently demonstrated that the request for a Minor Zone Map Amendment to rezone approximately 18,735 square feet from OS-PO to INS, expanding the Institutional area, meets all requirements, and after full hearing and consideration, **hereby Approves Application REZ-2025-0020.**

APPROVED on this date: 8/5/2025



Rachel Adler,
Acting Chair, Planning & Zoning Commission for
the Incorporated County of Los Alamos