



Planning and Land Use Department Planning Commission Staff Report

Case No: 2025-10706
Hearing Date: July 17, 2025
Applicant: City of Santa Fe Midtown Redevelopment Agency.
Agent: Lisa Gavioli, NV5, Inc
Request: Master Plan Amendment
Location: 1600 St. Michaels Drive
Case Mgr.: Joel Cruz-Haber
Zoning: C-2 PUD (General Commercial)
Overlay: Midtown LINC Overlay District
Pre-app Mtg: N/A
ENN Mtg: June 3, 2025
Proposal: The applicant proposes amendments to the master site plan's development standards regulating plan and sub-zone designation that align with its core vision, intent goals, and objectives, and further policy directives for the areas as stated in the Midtown Community Development Plan, the Midtown LINC overlay district, and the General Plan.



Case #2025-10706. Midtown Master Plan Amendment. , 1600 St. Michaels Dr. NV5, Inc, Agent for Daniel Hernandez, Director of the Midtown Redevelopment Agency, Applicant, request a master plan amendment to the Midtown Master Plan on 64.22 +/- acres. The property is zoned C-2 PUD (General Commercial Planned Unit Development) and within the Midtown Local Innovation Corridor (LINC) overlay district. (Joel Cruz-Haber, Case Manager, jacruzhaber@santafenm.gov, 955-6689).

I. RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Commission should recommend that the Governing Body **APPROVE** Case **2025-10706** "Midtown Master Plan Amendment."

One motion will be required, in the following order, for this case:

- Recommend the Governing Body approve or deny the Master Plan Amendment for Case #2025-10706;

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The proposed Midtown Master Plan Amendment (the “Amendment”) provides a revised framework for redevelopment of the Midtown Master Plan area to meet the expressed desires of the public, stakeholders, and the Midtown Redevelopment Agency (“MRA”)(Attachment B). The MRA is the City’s agent who is responsible for implementing the master plan to achieve the City’s redevelopment goals of social equity, economic prosperity, and cultural and historic preservation , while responsibly managing our natural resources.

The Midtown Master Plan (the “Plan”) sets design guidelines with a form-based, context-sensitive approach. The Plan also allows the MRA to respond to specific site conditions and evolving market demands during implementation to achieve the desired outcomes of the Plan. The Plan addresses pedestrian/bicycle/vehicle connectivity, open space and parks, infrastructure improvements and associated phasing.

This Amendment is focused on the following items which are discussed in more detail in Section VI:

1. Allowing uses that are consistent with the underlying C-2 (General Commercial) zoning district,
2. Revisions to landscaping standards to allow for new trees,
3. Establishing new design standards for signage and art installations,
4. Changing certain sub-zones to promote the highest and best uses on Tract-O, which is owned by the State of New Mexico,
5. Removing step-back requirements at façade zones and inserting design standards that encourage the use of step-backs, fenestration, and other forms of façade articulation to provide additional design options.



Figure 1: Midtown’s Four Elements of Sustainable Development

III. BACKGROUND

The Midtown Master Plan area (the “Property”) comprises the former Santa Fe University of Art and Design campus and adjacent city-owned properties. The Property is located at 1600 St. Michael’s Drive, which is defined by Cerrillos Road, St. Michael’s Drive, Llano Street, Siringo Road, and Camino Carlos Rey. The Property served as an institutional anchor for Santa Fe, starting in 1943 with the Bruns Army Hospital which employed more than 1,000 Santa Feans along with 500 military men and 100 military nurses (Figure 2). After Bruns Army Hospital was decommissioned, half of the Property was turned over to the Brothers of the Christian Schools, which established St. Michael’s College which was later renamed to the College of Santa Fe. Other portions of the original Army campus were turned over to local, state, and federal agencies. When the College of Santa Fe ceased operation in 2009, the City, with a commitment to preserve the civic and educational uses, purchased the Property and leased it to a private, for-profit university, the Santa Fe University of Art and Design (SFUAD).

Following the closure of the SFUAD in 2018, the City of Santa Fe passed Resolution 2018-54 (Attachment A) to initiate the Midtown redevelopment process. In the initial concept phase, the community engagement process informed programming, planning, and development approaches for the future reuse of the Property. The community engagement process led to the approval of the Planning Guidelines for the Property in the summer of 2018.

Figure 2:

After an unsuccessful effort to secure a master developer, the Governing Body directed City staff through Resolution 2022-12 (Attachment A) to pursue a General Plan amendment, Rezoning, and Master Plan for Midtown. In 2022 the Midtown Master Plan was unanimously approved by City Council under Resolution 2022-68. (Attachment A) The Midtown Master Plan established regulations regarding land uses, urban designs, open space and circulation, stormwater management, as well as other sustainable design and development practices. In 2023, the City Council unanimously approved the Midtown Development Plan under resolution 2023-5 (Attachment A). The Midtown Development Plan provides policy requirements and priorities in response to community voices regarding equity, environment, economy, and culture which has become the four elements that make up sustainable development within Midtown (Figure 1).



IV. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Apart from the legacy buildings as noted in the Master Plan, many existing buildings not utilized will be demolished and the property will be redeveloped to accommodate for new mixed-use development.

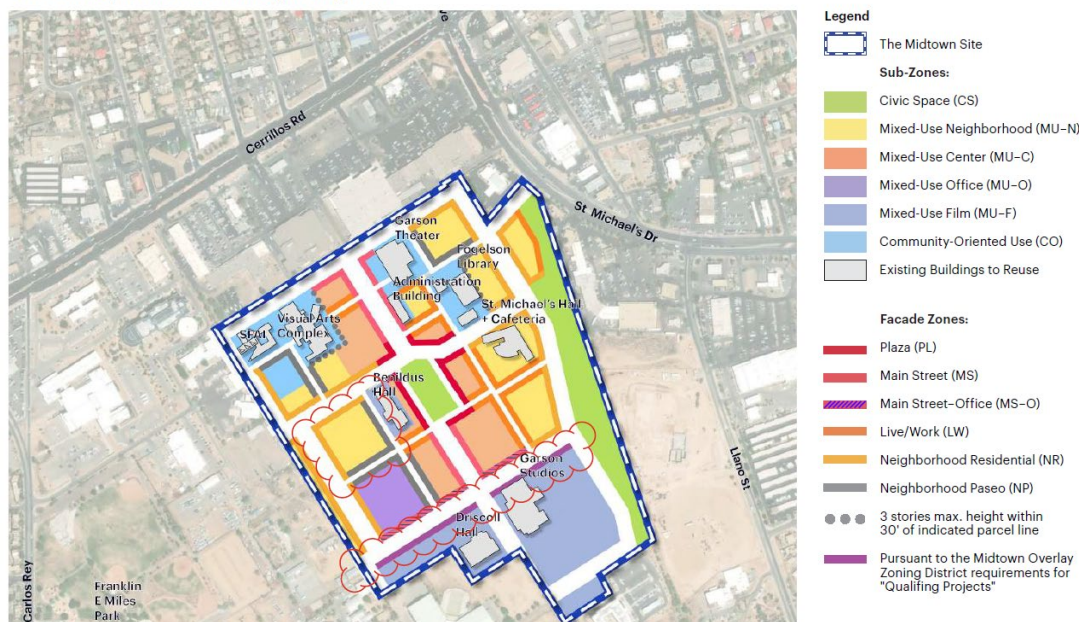
V. PROPOSED MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

The following tables (a-d) describe current Plan standards and the proposed Plan amendments and provide a Plan page and section for reference. Wherever the current columns cell has a dash (-) symbol, this indicates the proposed standard is new.

a. Development Standards Regulating Plan (Figure 3)

Figure 1 Midtown Sub Zones & Façade Zones

5.4.1 Development Standards Regulating Plan



Page	Section	Current	Proposed
114.	5.4	Remove Façade Zone Standards Main Street-Office (MS-O) standards at MU-F northern façade zone	Remove Façade Zone Standards Main Street-Office (MS-O) standards at MU-F northern façade zone.
115.	5.4	Insert footnote stating that the northern façade zone of the MU-F will be pursuant to the Midtown Overlay Zoning District requirements for "Qualifying Projects".	Insert footnote stating that the northern façade zone of the MU-F will be pursuant to the Midtown Overlay Zoning District requirements for "Qualifying Projects".
		Tract O is currently designated subzone	Change Tract O (including Benildus) subzone to

115.	5.4	MU-N.	MU-C.
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b. Sub-Zone Standards

Page	Section	Current	Proposed
117-121.	5.5	Permitted Use Table specifies permitted, prohibited, and conditional uses for each subzone in the Midtown Site	Remove Permitted Use Table; state more clearly which uses are prohibited as set forth through the Midtown Community Engagement process prior to the adoption of the Master Plan in 2022.
117-121.	5.5	-	Replace table with a list of prohibited uses and conditional uses.
117-121.	5.5	-	Add Language "Subzones are the recommended and preferred use for the parcels"

c. Façade Zone Standards

Page	Section	Current	Proposed
127-129.	5.6	Step-backs required above the third story, as defined in note 2 under "Height" and referenced as E in the illustration.	Remove step-back requirement for all buildings at façade zone to provide for more design options and interest along Midtown streetscapes.
131-135.	5.6	"Building Height in Façade Zone" specified as "3 stories max" and called out as A in illustration.	Change "Building Height in Façade Zone" to "5 stories max" to match the height that is allowed elsewhere.
125.	5.6	-	Insert language that encourages the use of step-backs, fenestration, and other forms of façade articulation.

d. Design Standards, General to All

Page	Section	Current	Proposed
154.	5.8	No mention of landscape standards presently.	Insert language that requires landscape design to follow SFCC 14-5.5(D)(9) for the Midtown Local Innovation Corridor (LINC), with a note that the caliper for new trees on the Midtown Site is 2" at time of planting. New Street Trees shall have a 4" caliper.
154.	5.8	No mention of signage or temporary art installation standards presently.	Add signage and temporary art language adapted from the Railyard Master Plan Insert general statement that signage located in the Midtown Site

is governed by SFCC 14-5.5(D)8 in addition to the requirements found in Section 14-8.10.

Insert: Building Signage. Signage and font shall be similar or the same as found on existing buildings throughout the Midtown Site, which form the basis for future Midtown standards (see the Fogelson Library and Garson Performance Theater, as reference). Signs are to be painted on the building skin or on thin panels mounted closely to the building.

Page	Section		
154.	5.8	-	<p>Pin and channel lettering and numbers are to be mounted closely to the building. Pole mounted signs are not permitted. Hanging signs are permitted under canopies or portales. Sign logos and text may be internally illuminated if lamp is not visible, and light does not glare or impede vision.</p> <p>Insert: Site Directional and Wayfinding Signs. Signs are to be fabricated in metal and finished in durable high quality metal paint finish or natural metal finishes. Wayfinding signs shall be used at street edges and bus stops. Sign colors shall be consistent with the Midtown color palette (see Midtown color palette). Sign forms shall be simple and minimalistic. Signs shall be constructed of metal, color shall be black, plus 1 or 2 accent colors using the Midtown color palette. Sign logos and text may be internally illuminated if lamp is not visible, and light does not glare or impede vision. Wall signs associated with film studio stages within the Midtown LINC Overlay District and whose sign faces parallel to a wall or garage attached to a film studio stage shall be painted and shall not exceed 380 sq ft.</p>

Page	Section		
154.	5.8	-	<p>Insert: Murals and Art Installations. Publicly visible murals and art installations are permissible with approvals from the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency. The relocation of existing sculpture and installation of new art in public and publicly visible spaces are encouraged and must consider structural stability, weather, circulation, and safety. Murals on public property shall be pursuant to the MRA Public Arts Murals Agreement.</p>

The Master Plan can be amended, subject to meeting the approval criteria in SFCC Section 14-3.9(D)(1):

Criterion A [14-3.9(D)(1)(a)]: <i>The Master Plan is consistent with the General Plan</i>	Criterion Met:
	YES
Applicant Response:	

The 1999 City of Santa Fe General Plan identified the area surrounding the Midtown Property as the “St. Michael’s Drive Redevelopment Corridor”, signaling a long-term intention to support use intensification and mixed-use development. Since then, the area has been designated as “Transitional Mixed Use” on the City’s Future Land Use Map, reinforcing the vision of creating a dynamic urban environment. This designation encourages redevelopment that balances higher intensity commercial corridors with adjacent lower-density neighborhoods by promoting a mix of residential, commercial, and community-serving uses.

To further support these goals, the Midtown Local Innovation Corridor (LINC) Overlay District was established in 2016. The overlay aims to catalyze revitalization through the introduction of additional housing options and compatible non-residential development—a step toward fostering a more vibrant and diverse urban core.

In 2017, the Governing Body passed Resolution 2017-78, formally recognizing the historical and strategic importance of the Midtown Property—formerly home to the College of Santa Fe and the Santa Fe University of Art and Design (SFUAD). As both the demographic and geographic center of the city, the Midtown Property was seen as central to implementing the objectives of the LINC Overlay District. The resolution also called for a renewed community vision for the site. City staff were tasked with initiating a “Concept Phase” of planning, including broad community engagement efforts. Known as the Midtown Campus Project, this initiative attracted approximately 3,000 participants and culminated in a set of community-informed planning guidelines.

Following the closure of SFUAD in 2018, the City passed Resolution 2018-54, which formally adopted the planning guidelines developed during the Concept Phase. The resolution also directed staff to begin the “Planning Phase,” initiating a consultant-led process to develop a comprehensive land use strategy for the site, grounded in continued community engagement.

These efforts resulted in the creation of two foundational planning documents: the Midtown Master Plan and the Midtown Community Development Plan, approved by the Governing Body in 2022 and 2023, respectively. Together, these documents articulate a clear framework for a mixed-use, high-activity redevelopment district that reflects community priorities and long-standing city policy.

With its strategic location near major transportation corridors, business districts, and neighborhood-serving amenities, the Midtown Property is envisioned as a hub for residential living, arts and culture, and economic opportunity. The planned redevelopment reflects the city’s commitment to equitable, sustainable growth, as envisioned in the 1999 General Plan and reaffirmed in successive planning initiatives. The proposed amendments to the Midtown Master Plan are intended to ensure efficient and effective implementation of this shared vision and are in alignment with the General Plan and subsequently adopted resolutions and policies (Attachment A).

In addition to the above, the proposed Amendment to the Midtown Master Plan aligns with following Guiding Policies, found in Chapters 3 (Land Use), 4 (Growth Management), 5 (City Character), and 6 (Transportation) of the 1999 General Plan:

- Guiding Policy 3-G-2: There shall be a mix of uses and housing types in all parts of the city.*
- Guiding Policy 3-G-3: There shall be infill development at densities that support the construction of affordable housing and a designated mix of land uses that provide an adequate balance of service retail and employment opportunities to address residential growth throughout the Urban Area*
- Guiding Policy 4-1-G-2: Concentrate population at greater densities in developing areas with centrally located neighborhood centers to encourage pedestrian scale development, reduce auto dependence, and provide central transit nodes*

- *Guiding Policy 5-1-G-2: Encourage new residential growth in the form of human-scale and vital neighborhoods that provide a mix of services and uses.*
- *Guiding Policy 5-1-G-3: Increase the connectivity between neighborhoods and individual developments*
- *Guiding Policy 5-2-G-4: Provide for uses to meet everyday needs within neighborhoods in the form of pedestrian-oriented neighborhood centers*
- *Guiding Policy 6-1-G-3: Provide for a closely spaced network of narrower streets as opposed to fewer wider streets*
- *Guiding Policy 6-1-G-5: Ensure that new development is more "connected" to its surroundings with an increased number of access points and pedestrian and bicycle connections to a neighborhood network.*

Staff Response:

The General Plan serves as the blueprint for the community's future growth and development and includes actions and implementing policies. The General Plan addresses the following themes In the Land Use Chapter: Affordable Housing, Quality of Life, Transportation Alternatives, Economic Diversity, Sustainable Growth, Character, Urban Form, Community-Oriented Downtown, Community-Oriented Development, and Mixed-Use.

The proposed Master Plan Amendment is consistent with the following Guiding Policies of the General Plan:

- Guiding Policy 3-G-2: There shall be a mix of uses and housing types in all parts of the city.
- Guiding Policy 3-G-3: There shall be infill development at densities that support the construction of affordable housing and a designated mix of land uses that provide an adequate balance of service retail and employment opportunities to address residential growth throughout the Urban Area
- Guiding Policy 4-1-G-2: Concentrate population at greater densities in developing areas with centrally located neighborhood centers to encourage pedestrian scale development, reduce auto dependence, and provide central transit nodes
- Guiding Policy 5-1-G-2: Encourage new residential growth in the form of human-scale and vital neighborhoods that provide a mix of services and uses.
- Guiding Policy 5-1-G-3: Increase the connectivity between neighborhoods and individual developments
- Guiding Policy 5-2-G-4: Provide for uses to meet everyday needs within neighborhoods in the form of pedestrian-oriented neighborhood centers
- Guiding Policy 6-1-G-3: Provide for a closely spaced network of narrower streets as opposed to fewer wider streets

Guiding Policy 6-1-G-5: Ensure that new development is more "connected" to its surroundings with an increased number of access points and pedestrian and bicycle connections to a neighborhood network.

<p>Criterion B [14-3.9(D)(1)(b)]: <i>The Master Plan is consistent with the purpose and intent of the zoning districts that apply to, or will apply to, the master plan area, and with the applicable use regulations and development standards of those districts.</i></p>	<p>Criterion Met:</p> <p>YES</p>
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Applicant Response:

The Midtown Site is located within the C2-PUD zoning district and the Midtown Local Innovation Corridor (LINC) Overlay District. In 2022, the City’s Governing Body adopted Resolution 2022-68, finding that the Midtown Master Plan was consistent with the purpose, intent, and development standards of these underlying zoning designations. The proposed amendments to the Midtown Master Plan continue to align with all applicable zoning requirements. In many cases, the amendments provide greater specificity and clearer references to the regulations and design guidelines set forth in the C2 and Midtown LINC districts, further supporting implementation of the City’s planning and development objectives for the site.

Staff Response:

Staff concurs the proposed amendment to the sub-zone standards will be consistent with the underlying zoning district, C-2 PUD and Midtown LINC overlay district. For example, adding C-2 Permitted Uses, established in SFCC 14-6.1, Table 14-6.1-1 ensures desired land uses are unvarying from the purpose and intent of the zoning district. Currently C-2 uses are permitted only if the Master Plan does not address the proposed use. Furthermore, the proposed amendments are consistent with the purpose and intent of the Midtown LINC overlay district and shall apply to future developments within the overlay such as, prohibited uses and design criteria.

Criterion C [14-3.9(D)(1)(c)]: Development of the Master Plan area will contribute to the coordinated and efficient development to the community.

Criterion Met:

YES

Applicant Response:

The proposed amendments to the Midtown Master Plan are intended to facilitate the effective implementation of the Plan’s core intent: to establish a vibrant, inclusive, and economically sustainable mixed-use district at the heart of Santa Fe. The amendments contribute to this goal in several keyways.

First, the proposed amendments strengthen support for mixed-use development. The amendments refine and clarify the land use framework to more explicitly support a variety of compatible uses throughout the Midtown Site. This flexibility encourages integrated, human-scale development that supports day-to-day activity and long-term community vibrancy.

Importantly, the proposed amendments ensuring multi-unit residential is permitted site-wide, consistent with the City’s goals for increasing housing supply, promoting affordability, and supporting a mix of housing types. This provision ensures that residential development is not limited to certain areas, enabling a more cohesive and balanced community fabric.

Furthermore, by referencing and aligning more closely with the underlying C-2 and Midtown LINC Overlay zoning regulations, the amendments reduce potential conflicts between the Master Plan and the City’s regulatory framework. This alignment makes the Plan more actionable and provides clearer guidance for both public and private development partners.

By prioritizing mixed-use, multi-unit, and pedestrian-oriented development, the amendments help realize the long-term vision of the Midtown area as a dynamic, urban district that contributes to citywide goals for housing, economic development, and cultural enrichment.

Staff Response:

Staff concurs with the applicant's response that the master plan amendments will contribute to the coordinated and efficient development of the community of Midtown. Amending uses that align with the City's list of permitted uses in the C-2 zoning district and better-defined design standards increases the efficiency for development in the community. Furthermore, the additional options will help promote the redevelopment of the Midtown site.

Criterion D [14-3.9(D)(1)(d)]: (d) *The existing and proposed infrastructure, such as the streets system, sewer and water lines, and public facilities, such as fire stations and parks, will be able to accommodate the impacts of the planned development.*

Criterion Met:

YES

Applicant Response:

Along with the Midtown LINC Overlay District and other relevant regulations in SFCC Chapter 14, the proposed amendments to the Midtown Master Plan will accommodate future development and infrastructure needs while also updating existing infrastructure in alignment with the redevelopment vision established by the Midtown Master Plan. The design and engineering of infrastructure upgrades to the Midtown Site are currently underway, and the proposed amendments will not impede or affect the outcome of such design efforts. Furthermore, the application has been revised to align with the Development Review Team's recommendation that new street trees shall have a minimum caliper of 4 inches at the time of planting and shall have a mature height of 25 feet.

Staff Response:

The proposed Master Plan amendment, Midtown LINC Overlay District, and Land Development ordinances established in chapter 14 will accommodate future development projects and their infrastructure needs, simultaneously, renewing existing infrastructure. The proposed amendment to the master plan pertaining to Infrastructure improvements are the caliper of new trees. The City's Landscape Engineer reviewed the proposed amendment and recommended that only new street trees have a caliper of 4" as described in *Project Analysis, section VII.* of this report. Staff concurs with applicant's response to criterion 4.

VI. PROJECT ANALYSIS: MASTER PLAN

Landscaping

The proposed minor modification to the caliper of new trees to be 2" for the entire site has been changed to include a minimum of 4" caliper for new street trees within the Property, following comments from Landscape Engineer, Lawrence Rivera.

"I approve the provided note "Landscape design shall follow SFCC 14-5.5(D)9 for the Midtown Local Innovation Corridor. Note: caliper for new trees on the Midtown Site is 2" at the time of

planting.” With the inclusion: “For all trees within the open space landscape, ponding areas, buffer strips, and parking lots. All street trees are required to be a minimum of 4” caliper at the time of planting as stated in the code above.”

VII. EARLY NEIGHBORHOOD NOTIFICATION

An Early Neighborhood Notification (ENN) meeting was held via Zoom on June 3, 2025. It was attended by approximately 5 people. A presentation was given that explained the proposed amendments to the Master Plan, the various components of the application, and the process moving forward. Questions were answered at the ENN and are provided in attachment (B).

VIII. EXPIRATION

The Master Plan amendment, if approved by the Governing Body, created vested uses and entitlements, are transferrable, and will not expire.

IX. ATTACHMENTS:

EXHIBIT A: Development Review Team Memoranda

1. Initial Review Letter
2. Resolution 2017-78
3. Resolution 2018-54
4. Resolution 2022-12
5. Resolution 2022-68
6. Resolution 2023-05

EXHIBIT B: Applicant Materials

1. Application Report
2. Master Plan Application
3. Legal Lot of Record
4. Vicinity Map (Existing Conditions)
5. Development Standards Proposed and Existing
6. 6-3-25 ENN Notes
7. Master Plan Amendments Delta Page
8. Updated Midtown Master Plan with Clouding
9. Minor Modifications Administrative Amendments
10. Midtown Masterplan Administrative Minor Modification Memo
11. Midtown Master Plan Updated

APPROVED AS TO FORM BY THE PLANNING AND LAND USE DEPARTMENT:

Title	Name	Initials
Department Director	Heather Lamboy	HLL
Assistant Department Director	Maggie Moore	MRM
Planning Manager	Daniel Esquibel	DAE
Case Planner	Joel Cruz-Haber	JCH