

April 13, 2026

Development Facilitation Team
City of Albuquerque
600 2nd St NW, Albuquerque, NM 87102

RE: Encuentro Home Healthcare Training Facility – Deviation Request
909 4th St, Albuquerque, NM
UPC: 101405711013331418
Legal Description: LT B PLAT OF LOTS A & B ATLANTIC & PACIFIC ADDITIONCONT .1598AC

Dear Members of the Development Facilitation Team,

Dekker, acting as agent for Encuentro, respectfully requests a Sketch Plan review to discuss an anticipated Site Plan for 909 4th St SW, UPC #101405711013331418. The parcel is approximately 0.16 acres, zoned Mixed-Use – Low Intensity (MX-L) zone district. The site is currently a gravel parking lot used for overflow parking by Encuentro at 907 4th St SW, north of the subject property.

Background

The existing Encuentro building located at 907 4th St SW (herein referred to as the primary building) is operated as a community center. The proposed development at 909 4th St SW would serve as an extension of Encuentro's existing community center, providing a home healthcare training facility within an approximately 1,000 sq. ft. new construction building. The new building will serve as a simulator for real-life, home healthcare training. The training center will feature educational labs simulated to look and feel like a home, along with outdoor education and gathering areas.

Request

The Applicant requests a deviation from IDO Front Yard Setback maximum requirement for MX-L zones. At 909 4th St SW, the parcel presents several site constraints on the front property line, including:

- An irregularly shaped lot that is narrow in the front lot with a width of 40 FT that widens to the rear to approximately 63 FT, significantly limiting the buildable area along the street frontage.
- Extensive Façade Design requirements for the site per IDO §14-16-5-11(F)(2)(b) for a narrow and small lot with a small street facing building.
- Several existing utility placements in the front yard including, light poles, a fire hydrant, a fire suppression system for 907 4th St, a gas meter, and pipe bollards, which constrains usable frontage and restrict building siting.
- Limited vehicular access due to a narrow curb cut, further constraining site circulation layout options.

Collectively, these constraints make strict adherence to the maximum front yard setback requirement impractical and would limit the ability to achieve a functional building design and high-quality streetscape consistent with the intent of the MX-L zone.

The Exhibit below depicts the existing lot:



The narrow-front-lot width makes it difficult to practically meet the on-site parking requirements while also complying with the Development Process Manual (DPM) standards for maneuvering and layout. To maintain a pedestrian friendly, neighborhood-oriented site, a Shared Parking Agreement was established with the primary building owned by Encuentro at 907 4th Street on the corner of Atlantic Ave and 4th St, along the north property line of the subject property. This approach satisfies parking demand while allowing the site to remain pedestrian-oriented and consistent with neighborhood development patterns, thereby meeting the intent of the regulations without imposing unnecessary hardship.

In addition, the site is constrained by numerous existing utility infrastructure elements along the street frontage. These utilities occupy critical portions of the buildable area and physically limit where the structure can be placed on the site. Because of the lot's narrow frontage and irregular shape, there is insufficient flexibility to shift the building footprint elsewhere on the site without creating conflicts with required access, pedestrian circulation, and functional building layout. As a result, strict compliance with the maximum front yard setback would significantly constrain the placement of the building and reduce the site's ability to accommodate a viable development. The requested deviation allows the building to be positioned in a manner that avoids these existing utility conflicts while maintaining safe access and a functional site design. This constraint is inherent to the property and not self-imposed. Further, maintaining existing utility features is helpful to Encuentro, a non-profit organization that relies heavily on donations, City and State funding. These savings can instead be directed toward community-driven design features such as garden planters, a green house, and ample outdoor seating and gathering space which can be utilized by the primary building, 907 4th St, where Encuentro's civic center is located serving the neighborhood and community.

Lastly, the IDO Façade Design standards of IDO §14-16-5-11(E)(2)(b) require that the façade contain at least three (3) façade features along at least 30% of the length of the façade. The proposed front façade is approximately 29 FT. The proposed building has limited space close to the front yard property line. Acceptable pedestrian site access must be maintained in this already constrained space, to then incorporate three (3) façade features create design challenges when building an aesthetically appealing and desirable building. The intent of the Façade Design standards is largely for multi-story, neighborhood-facing, larger-scale development, in which this lot size and proposed development do not fit that description.

The IDO allows for a 10% deviation for any numerical value, and thus the applicant proposes a 16.5 FT front yard setback. Below are the IDO development standards, regarding front setbacks, that MX-L zoned properties within UC-MS-PT areas must satisfy (this applies to the subject property). The proposed conditions, utilizing the 10% deviation provision, would still satisfy the mandated development standards.

Development Standard	Required	Proposed
Front Setback	Minimum: None Maximum: 15 FT	16.5 FT
Deviation	Permitted	Proposed
Any Numerical Value	10%	15 FT x .10 = 1.5 FT

Per IDO §6-4(N)(3) “The relevant decision-making body identified in Table 6-1-1 may approve a requested deviation that is within the limits listed in Table 6-4-1 if that decision making body determines that all of the following requirements are met”. This deviation request is in compliance with the criteria of the IDO §6-4(N)(3) as described below.

Criterion 6-4(N)(3): Applicant’s site is subject to site constraints not generally shared by surrounding properties or site was platted or developed in an unusual pattern when compared to abutting properties

Applicant Response: *The Site Plan does not share the same constraints as the surrounding properties. The site was platted with a narrow front lot width, and as development in the surrounding area took place, utility services were placed in the front of the lot which further complicated the front lot line, greatly reducing the lot’s usable area. The surrounding parcels to the north, south, and east predominately have more than one side abutting a street, and are largely rectangular in size, allowing greater flexibility in site layout and building placement. These constraints are not generally shared and create a uniquely limited development envelope for the subject site.*

Criterion 6-5(G)(3)(b): Site constraints were not created by actions of property owner or another interested party.

Applicant Response: *The subject property lot size was established prior to the current property ownership or other interested parties. The front yard constraints (irregular size and utility placement) were not created by the Owner.*

Criterion 6-5(G)(3)(c): The request is for a single site and is not part of a pattern of similar requests for adjacent properties or for nearby sites by the same property owner or within the same subdivision, Framework Plan area, or Master Development Plan area.

Applicant Response: *This request is for a single site and is not part of a pattern of similar requirements. The properties surrounding the site have been developed for some time and likely all prior to the IDO enactment. Additionally, the subject property is not within a Framework Plan area, subdivision, or Master Development Plan area.*

Criterion 6-5(G)(3)(d): The approval of the requested deviations will not cause material adverse impacts on surrounding properties.

Applicant Response: *This deviation request to the maximum required front yard setback does not cause material adverse impacts to the surrounding properties. The deviation is minor in scale (1.5 FT) and does not alter the overall building mass, height, or use of the site. The proposed development remains consistent with the intent of the MX-L zone, which is to support neighborhood-scale uses, primarily at intersections of collector streets. Providing the site with a slight 1.5 FT increase in setback will not disrupt the neighborhood-scale feel of the development, the existing streetscape pattern, or pedestrian experience.*

Additionally, the deviation enables a more functional site layout that responds to existing constraints, including utility placement and limited lot width, without introducing negative externalities such as reduced access, safety concerns, or incompatibility with adjacent properties. The project will continue to provide a community-serving use that complements the existing Encuentro facility and contributes positively to the neighborhood. As such, the requested deviation maintains compatibility with surrounding properties and advances the overall intent of the IDO without creating adverse impacts.

Criterion 6-5(G)(3)(e): Requested deviation is not for an Overlay zone standard and will not result in a violation of any Overlay zone standard.

Applicant Response: *The requested deviation is not for an Overlay zone standard.*

Based on the information and responses provided in this letter, we respectfully request approval of this deviation request for the IDO MX-L standard for maximum front yard setbacks. Please feel free to contact me directly at 505.761.9700 or rebeccas@dekkersdesign.org, if additional information or clarification be needed.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Shank, Urban Planner
Dekker, Agent for Encuentro