

## Letter to Mayor Keller on Elena Gallegos Expansion

SHHA will send the following letter to Mayor Keller and the ABQ Open Space Division based on the results of the residents' survey on the City's proposed plans for Elena Gallegos.

From: Sandia Heights Homeowners Association  
Roger Hagengruber, President  
To: Tim Keller, Mayor,  
City of Albuquerque & Open Space Staff

Re: Opposition to Elena Gallegos development

Sandia Heights Homeowner's Association (SHHA) recently became aware of the feasibility study and potential development in the Elena Gallegos (EG) open space adjacent to our neighborhood, which would include 4 main aspects: 1) development of a new 5-6000 sq ft "education center," 2) widening of the Simms Park entry road, 3) a new parking lot on the NE side of Tramway and Simms Road in the Pino Arroyo, and 4) maintenance/improvements of the trails and current EG infrastructure. Details are at [https://www.cabq.gov/parksandrecreation/documents/eg\\_os\\_education\\_center\\_feasibility\\_study\\_3-4-2022\\_final\\_draft\\_w\\_appendix.pdf](https://www.cabq.gov/parksandrecreation/documents/eg_os_education_center_feasibility_study_3-4-2022_final_draft_w_appendix.pdf)

We appreciate the email of June 10 from Open Space superintendent Langan-McRoberts stating that the most contentious aspects of the study, the parking lot, a new building, and street widening, will undergo further discussion and study this summer and fall. Until that time, we want to make our position clear.

**We have surveyed our SHHA members and received clear and consistent feedback from over 370 residents, showing over 75% oppose both the proposed building and parking lot development, and 55% of them oppose the widening of Simms Road.** A majority (~75%) of our residents do support improvements to the existing trails and infrastructure, if done appropriately within the current EG usage (e.g., no night use, with trash and crime prevention). We shared preliminary results with CABQ Open Space staff in early May, and have toured the proposed sites with them to make sure we understand the consultant's recommendations. We do not take our position lightly, and support education and open access for the public to explore nature on City lands. However, we do not feel a building or new, greatly expanded parking lots are necessary or appropriate for this area. Our residents are upset, angry, and very concerned that the three areas in debate are being considered. It will destroy the very thing it purports to value—open space! Other than the trail/infrastructure maintenance, we believe this project will increase crime, fire risk, noise, and damage to the natural setting, along with other deleterious effects, including to the wildlife in the area.

If the desire is truly to appreciate open space and nature, and to adhere to the original deed stipulations agreed upon when the area was sold to the City by the Albuquerque Academy, **we encourage the City to leave the area as it is, with only necessary maintenance and update to the existing natural habitat and trails.** A new structure is not necessary to enjoy the outdoors or for education, and a Tramway/Simms Road parking lot will only create an eye-sore that will undoubtedly be misused. We look forward to working with the City in any constructive and positive fashion to improve use of the area, but will oppose any development of a building, parking lot, or widening of Simms Road that negatively affects our residents.

Please contact our offices at 505-797-1193 or email [shha@sandiahomeowners.org](mailto:shha@sandiahomeowners.org) if you have any questions or wish to discuss this further. Thank you for your consideration.

Roger Hagengruber  
President SHHA