

**(RE) PLANNING THE MODERN CITY FOR TRANSIT**

**Planning Department Presentation to  
the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transportation Task Force  
January 23, 2008**

**City of Albuquerque  
Planning Department  
Richard Dineen, A.I.A., Director**

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Transportation Task force**  
**Planning Department Presentation on the Comprehensive Plan**  
**January 23, 2008**

**THE NATURE OF CITY PLANS:**

Citywide plans address the “systems” comprising the city, its most significant features, and its most important issues and opportunities. Citywide Plans are instruments to manage change to achieve beneficial outcomes. City and regional plans express our collective choices for the future.

**THE SCOPE OF OUR PLAN:**

The Plan’s geographic scope extends across all of Bernalillo County. It is only applicable to the City and to the County’s unincorporated area, although it recognizes adjacent municipalities and regional influences. The Plan has more emphasis on the City and somewhat less emphasis on the unincorporated County.

The Plan addresses 24 topics (“elements”), one of which is Transportation and Transit.

**TIME AND CHANGE IN THE PLAN:**

The Plan “looks back” over long periods of time (50 year periods) to identify significant changes. Looking forward, the Plan uses the year 2000 as a baseline year to a planning horizon of 2025, with projections of employment, population, and housing. These projections, with assumptions, are identical to those in the Planned Growth Strategy.

**HOW OUR PLAN “RECOGNIZES” THE CITY’S SPATIAL ORGANIZATION AND THE NEED FOR TRANSPORT**

The Plan expresses the city’s future form as generally horizontal with more intense development occurring in either nodes (Activity Centers) or along certain arterial streets (Transportation Corridors)

The spatial organization of the city and the form it takes is directly related to the need for transport. The multi-centered city form reflects the dominance of the auto.

The Plan (and the Planned Growth Strategy) only very indirectly acknowledges the policy option of urban rail transit and does not discuss its general feasibility.

**FORMAT OF OUR PLAN**

The Plan is organized as findings, goals, and policies. The findings factually discuss conditions and trends for 24 topics in the Plan’s scope; each topic (“element”) is structured with a single Goal statement followed by policy statements.

**THE PLAN’S  
TRANSPORTATION GOAL  
AND IT’S 17 POLICIES (Plan  
Pages II-81 to II-91)**

**Goal:** Develop corridors, both streets and adjacent land uses that provide a balanced circulation system through efficient placement of employment and services, and encouragement of bicycling, walking, and use of transit and paratransit as alternatives to automobile travel while providing sufficient roadway capacity to meet mobility and access needs.

**Policy a.** Table 11 presents ideal policy objectives for street design, transit service, and development form...

<b>Transit Service</b>				
<b>Policy Objectives</b>	<b>Express</b>	<b>Major Transit</b>	<b>Enhanced Transit</b>	<b>Arterial</b>
<b>Bus Service Type</b>	Express rush hour service	Local: some express	Some local; mostly express	Local, Some express
<b>Frequencies: Peak Hour</b>	20-30 minutes	5-10 minutes	5-15 minutes local; 15-30 minutes express	15-30 minutes
<b>Frequencies: Off Peak Hour</b>	Express service	10 minutes maximum, except late evening hours	15-30 minutes local; 60 minutes express	20-45 minutes
<b>Target Service Hours</b>	Approximately 6 am to 9 pm	Approximately 5 am to midnight	Approximately 5 am to midnight	Approximately 6 am to 9 pm
<b>Route &amp; Service Commitment</b>	Long term capital commitment	Long term capital commitment	Long term capital commitment	Flexible
<b>Station/Stops (Capital Commitment)</b>	Enhanced bus stops at activity nodes; park-n-ride with enhanced stops; bus bays	Varies; amenity based on adjacent uses	Weather-protect bus stops	Weather-protected bus stops at select locations
<b>High Capacity Service (Communitywide high capacity study)</b>	Not anticipated	Future service possible	Future service possible	Not anticipated

**THE PLAN'S  
TRANSPORTATION GOAL  
AND ITS 17 POLICIES (Plan  
Pages II-81 to II-91) continued**

**Policy b.** The City will structure capital expenditures and land use regulations in support of creating additional housing and jobs within Corridors and will provide ongoing public/private cooperation necessary to create private market conditions that support intensified development of jobs and housing in these corridors.

**Policy c.** To add transit ridership, and where it will not destabilize adjacent neighborhoods, additional dwelling units are encouraged close to transit corridors.

**Policy d.** The frequency of driveways along principal and minor arterial streets will be reduced when possible, toward a spacing frequency of one or two drives per 300 feet of frontage on principal arterials and one or two drives for 200 feet on minor arterials.

**Policy e.** The architecture of bridge structures, landscaping, planting and public art shall be incorporated into Interstate Highway engineering designs in cooperation with the State of New Mexico.

**Policy f.** Transit planning and implementation shall be coordinated among agencies and area jurisdictions, including identification of high capacity, corridors for high occupancy vehicles.

**Policy g.** Pedestrian opportunities shall be promoted and integrated into development to create safe and pleasant non-motorized travel conditions.

**Policy h.** A metropolitan area-wide recreational and commuter bicycle and trail network which emphasizes connections among Activity Centers shall be constructed and promoted.

**Policy i.** Street and highway projects shall include paralleling paths and safe crossings for bicycles, pedestrians and equestrians where appropriate.

**Policy j.** For each mode, potential transportation/emergency response hazards such as grade crossings, obsolete street geometry, and inadequate street lighting shall be minimized.

**Policy k.** In currently developed areas efficiency of existing arterial streets shall be increased in preference to new freeways.

**Policy l.** In newly developing areas, a portion of the street system should focus on arterial roads upon which vehicles encounter fewer stops.

**Policy m.** In rural areas, an all-weather circulation system allowing year-round access to existing and planned development shall be established, with construction standards based on hierarchy of use. Roads should fit the topography of the area traversed as well as the scale of travel needs.

**Policy n.** Important environmental and cultural resources should continue to be considered in roadway planning, design, and construction to minimize the harmful effects and engineering cost of facilities.

**Policy o.** Peak hour demands on the circulation system should be decreased.

**Policy p.** Efficient, safe access and transfer capability shall be provided between all modes of transportation.

**Policy q.** Transportation investments should emphasize overall mobility needs and choice among modes in the region and intra-city movement of people and goods.

## **PLAN AMENDMENTS, PAST AND FUTURE**

The Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1988, has been amended (formally changed) eleven (11) times. Amendments must be adopted by both the City and the County as they have both adopted a common general plan. An amendment can pertain to only one of the adopting jurisdictions.

**1991** Three amendments to several Plan elements. \*

\*One amendment added Master Planning requirements for planned communities if developed in the Reserve Area or the Rural area as defined by the Plan.

**1993** One amendment, addressing a Development Area boundary.

**2001** One amendment, addressing a Development Area boundary.

**2002** Three amendments, addressing the Activity Centers, Transportation and Transit, and Community Identity.

**2003** Three amendments, one addressing both the Cultural Traditions element and the Education element; two amendments addressing the boundaries of specified Development Areas.

The Plan's citywide scope positions it to be the most appropriate place to express, through another future plan amendment, a city commitment to a future capital-intensive transit improvement such as urban rail transit.

Introducing a new transit mode is regionally significant. Public confidence is stronger the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan express the same vision of the scope and quality of transit.

## **OTHER PLANS, REPORTS, AND ORDINANCES RELATED TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

A city ordinance establishes the relationship between the Comprehensive Plan and any other short range plans for more limited purposes which may be adopted. The Planning Ordinance establishes the Comprehensive Plan as superior to two other classes of plans: Facility Plans or Area Plans, and Sector Development Plans. There are now 53 of the latter class of plans. The intent of this ordinance is to achieve consistency among plans.

The Planned Growth Strategy (a two volume report) was adopted by the City in 2001. It supplements, to some extent, the Comprehensive Plan. The Strategy, for analytical purposes, assumed an all bus transit system through 2020 (pages 181-182). (The strategy will be addressed separately at today's meeting.)

The proposed Form-Based Land Use Regulations address building form, appearance, and site arrangement. A Plan amendment expressing expectations in these matters would better align policy and regulation.

Metropolitan Redevelopment Plans must also be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. These plans are to propose actions which remove the causes of slums and blight in an area.