

# Frequently Asked Questions about Sector Development Plans

*This document is intended to provide you with some basic background on the purpose and elements of a Sector Development Plan. We hope the information contained herein is useful to you and helps to prepare you for the meeting on December 7, 2010.*

## 1. What is a Sector Development Plan?

A Sector Development Plan typically covers an area with common characteristics, such as a neighborhood or corridor, and is the most detailed of City plans. A Sector Plan provides policy and regulatory guidance for development to ensure outcomes that are more predictable for the community and affected stakeholders, and supportive of the community's goals for the area. Sector Development Plans include site-specific land use and zoning regulations, design guidelines, transportation and streetscape recommendations, and capital project priorities. Sector Plans have the ability to streamline the review and permitting process by setting detailed development parameters.

The Albuquerque Code of Ordinances defines a Sector Development Plan as follows:

### **§ 14-16-1-5 DEFINITIONS.**

**SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN.** *A plan, at a scale of 1 inch to 200 feet, or 1 inch to 400 feet, which covers a large area satisfactory to the Planning Commission, and specifies standards for the area's and sub-area's character, allowed uses, structure height, and dwellings per acre; the plan may specify lot coverage, floor area ratio, major landscaping features, building massing, flood water management, parking, signs, provisions for maximum feasible solar access, provisions for transportation, and other such features. Such plan constitutes a detailed part of the master plan and must be essentially consistent with the more general elements of the master plan, the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan.*

## 2. What are the typical elements of a Sector Development Plan?

- Historic Context, Area Character and Conditions
- Goals and Objectives
- Regulations
  - Zoning and Land Use/Implementation, Review & Approval Process
  - Transportation
- Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Projects
- Other Community-Identified Projects

### 3. How might a Sector Development Plan change the zoning in a neighborhood?

The primary change that a Sector Development Plan makes, and the one that is usually of most interest to property owners, is to zoning. Zoning within a Sector Plan is tailored to meet the unique and specific needs of a particular sector and is oftentimes more flexible and provides more entitlements and development opportunities than does conventional zoning (see table below for comparison of straight/conventional zoning and SU-2 Sector Plan zoning).

The Albuquerque Code of Ordinances defines SU-2 zoning as follows:

#### **§ 14-16-2-23 SU-2 SPECIAL NEIGHBORHOOD ZONE.**

*This zone allows a mixture of uses controlled by a Sector Development Plan which specifies new development and redevelopment which is appropriate to a given neighborhood, when other zones are inadequate to address special needs.*

*(A) Permissive Uses and Control. Any use specified by a duly adopted Sector Development Plan for a given location is permitted. Specifications contained in the Sector Development Plan shall control. However, if a matter controlled in the RC zone is not mentioned in the plan, then the provisions of the RC zone shall be applicable.*

...

*(C) Appropriateness. The SU-2 zone is appropriate to map where it is applied to an entire neighborhood or a major segment of a neighborhood, which area meets at least one of the following criteria:*

*(1) The area is developed such that the requirements of other available zones do not promote the conservation of special neighborhood characteristics which the city desires to preserve;*

*(2) The area has developed or should develop with a pattern of mixed land uses, which will need careful control and coordination of development at a sub-area scale in order to insure a desirable inter-mixture of uses;*

*(3) There are factors which substantially impair or arrest the sound growth and economic health and well-being of the area, or the area constitutes an economic or social burden and is a menace to the public health, safety, or welfare in its present condition and use, and as regulated by zoning; or*

*(4) The area is particularly appropriate for development, on a pilot basis or otherwise, for residential construction under special regulations designed to make housing more affordable; the City Council shall make a specific finding if the SU-2 zoning is based upon this criterion. Such a Sector Development Plan may authorize variances to the requirements of the Subdivision Regulations and § 6-5-7-*

1 et seq., Sidewalks, as they relate to the Sector Plan area. This division (4) shall terminate and be repealed effective January 1, 1993; variances granted under the terms of this division (4) shall remain in force for the duration provided in the specific variance.

...

(’74 Code, § 7-14-31) (Ord. 80-1975; Am. Ord. 45-1977; Am. Ord. 7-1981; Am. Ord. 78-1986; Am. Ord. 14-1989; Am. Ord. 23-2007; Am. Ord. 7-2008)

**COMPARISON OF “STRAIGHT” OR “CONVENTIONAL” ZONING VS.  
SU-2 SPECIAL NEIGHBORHOOD ZONE**

	<u>“Straight” or “Conventional” Zoning</u>	<u>SU-2 Special Neighborhood Zone</u>
Allows a Mixture of Uses	No	Yes
Controlled by a Sector Dev. Plan	Maybe	Yes
Appropriate to a Given Area	Maybe	Yes
Address Special Area Needs	No	Yes
Protect Special Characteristics	No	Yes
Coordination of Development	No	Yes

**4. What is the typical process and timeline for developing a Sector Plan?**

A typical sector planning process takes 12 to 18 months. Public participation takes place throughout the process, so that the vision, goals and objectives of the community are reflected in and implemented by the Plan. A typical timeline follows:

- Months 1-4: Public meetings soliciting feedback on community concerns, vision and goals
- Months 4-5: Drafting of initial options for zoning, transportation and CIP projects
- Months 5-6: Presenting options to the community, soliciting community feedback
- Months 6-9: Drafting of initial plan
- Months 9-10: Presenting first draft of sector plan, soliciting community feedback
- Months 10-12: Preparing second draft of sector plan
- Months 12-13: Presenting second draft to community, soliciting community feedback

- Months 13-14 Preparing final draft for submittal to the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC)
- Months 14-18 Public review and approval process: EPC, Land Use Planning & Zoning Committee and City Council, with continued opportunities for public comment and plan modification

## 5. How does a Sector Plan relate to other City plans?

In the hierarchy of city plans, a Sector Development Plan is considered a “Rank Three” plan. City ordinances lay out the rank importance of city plans thusly:

### **§ 14-13-2-2 RANK IMPORTANCE OF CITY PLANS.**

*Adopted city plans for urban development and conservation are of varying rank importance. Lower ranking plans should be consistent with higher ranking plans, and when this is indisputably not the case, the conflicting provision of the lower ranking plan is null and void. Plans should identify how they relate to relevant, higher ranking plans. The highest ranks of city plans are as follows in this section and in § 14-13-2-4:*

**(A) Rank One Plan.** *The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan is the basic long range city policy for the development and conservation of the entire metropolitan area.*

#### **(B) Rank Two Plans.**

(1) *Facility Plans are specialized in subject matter; they normally cover only one type of natural resource utility or public facility, such as water or parks. Such plans cover the entire metropolitan area or city, or at least a major part thereof. These plans specify important development standards general site locations, and multi-year programs of facility capital improvements.*

(2) *Area Plans each cover diverse, major geographic parts of the metropolitan area, typically 15 or more square miles, and specify important development standards. Sites of key land use, utility, and public facility development are usually indicated.*

#### **(C) Rank Three Plans.**

(1) *Sector Development Plans cover an area with common characteristics, typically one square mile or more but occasionally considerably smaller; such an area may be called a neighborhood. These plans, which are defined by the Zoning Code, create special zoning regulations for the area covered, and may also specify other fairly detailed development parameters.*

(2) *Neighborhood Development Plans are similar in scope to sector development plans except these plans do not set special zoning regulations. They may, however, propose rezoning.*

*(’74 Code, § 7-4-2) (Ord. 45-1982; Am. Ord. 48-1987)*