

**#1005238 COORS CORRIDOR PLAN**

**October 2, 2014**

COMMENTS RECEIVED

AFTER PRINTING OF STAFF REPORT & WITHIN 48 HOURS OF HEARING

## **ALBAN HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**

September 29, 2014

TO: City of Albuquerque Environmental Planning Commission

FROM: Alban Hills Neighborhood Association

RE: **Project Number: 1005238, Case #:14EPC-40032, 14EPC-40033**

The Alban Hills Neighborhood Association respectfully requests your consideration of our comments with respect to the 2014 Coors Corridor Plan. We concur with the Taylor Ranch Neighborhood Association that the 1984 Coors Corridor Plan contains the necessary vision and provisions to protect the bosque and river environment and the views of the entire landscape, not just the mountains. While we agree that there may need to be clarification regarding definitions of “hardship” for exceptions, our assessment is that **the 1984 Coors Corridor Plan** with those clarifications **should be retained**.

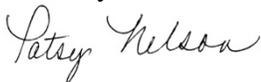
We appreciate that City staff have spent many hours preparing the updated 2014 Plan. We have concerns that the County staff have not been involved in any of these updates. The Coors Corridor Plan impacts areas of the County as well as the City and it should have input and approval by both governing bodies.

I quote from the 1984 Coors Corridor Plan:

*“The quality of the environment is measured in terms of the texture of manmade development in natural terrain, the pattern and quality of public buildings and space, the quality of design in the public sector, and the commitment to urban amenity and architectural quality in the private sector. The automobile has left an imprint not uncommon to western cities. But the mountains, the volcanic cones, the vistas, the green cover of the valley, the arroyos and the pronounced horizon line have an impact on the City equal to that of the automobile. These visual qualities must be maintained. Recent growth has begun to dispute the importance of ecological features; highways, retail centers, schools, and residential developments have dictated growth patterns. Citizens of Albuquerque have not been made aware of the shape of the future city that comes from large speculative development. It is obvious that Albuquerque’s assets may now be in serious jeopardy, but is not too late to act. A renewed appreciation of the environment, combined with a commitment to preserve and protect, is now necessary.” - David A. Crane - Quality in Environment – An urban design study for the City of Albuquerque - February 1970*

Preservation and protection of the environment supports - does not detract from - economic development. Please do not minimize the importance of these protections which are appropriately provided for in the 1984 Coors Corridor Plan

Sincerely,



Patsy Nelson  
President, Alban Hills Neighborhood Association  
3301 La Rambla St. NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87120  
505-228-5087  
patsyncnelson@msn.com

Date: September 30, 2014

To: Mr. Peter D. Nicholls, Chair-EPC

From: Pat Gallagher

Re: **Coors Corridor Plan modifications**

Thank you for hearing this important citywide issue.

This is a critique of the red-line document that was put on the city website October 29. There are significant changes from the previous drafts and the 1984 plan. The changes are technical and drastically expand the number and kinds of exemptions allowed. Below I address the specific initiatives that have been inserted into the draft. Also addressed are the likely results of these changes.

### **Short Building Loophole**

The most drastic exemption is the short building loophole. This allows buildings anywhere to obscure the mountain as long as their heights are less than 16' for residential and 20' for commercial. This will result in a string of 19' buildings lining the east edge of Coors. This will erase all views of the mountains from the roadway.

The short building loophole is most serious because it appears to be intended to build up the properties immediately adjacent to Coors. Trigonometrically, the 35' setback is not enough to offset a 19' building at or near Coors grade. The mountain and all other natural features will be gone. The row of buildings will then allow unrestricted heights behind them. Once you've ruined the view it will not matter.

The short building loophole doesn't just make a few properties buildable, it turns Coors into one more nature-less consumer strip.

### **View Frames**

There are numerous technical errors on every page from 103 to 114 in the document. In many cases the writing does not match the graphics, and the graphics are inconsistent to each other in nomenclature. Many of the errors are from simply using the wrong term to describe features in the graphics. There is a different kind of error that needs to be addressed: Intentional distortion of the wording to modify the meaning of the regulation. This has occurred with the phrase View Frame. In the 1984 plan View Frame has a clear and important meaning in the description of massing. Sight lines and view frames form the basis for a rigorous view analysis using 3D computer aided design techniques. In the process of creating this new draft, all the relevant uses of the phrase View Frame have been changed to View Area. There are big loopholes in this sleight of hand.

All massing calculations have been done using the View Frame because it is the simplest, accurate context to quantify. The massing percentages in the 1984 plan were based on the area of the View Frame. The draft goes to laborious pains to repeat often this change in wording, as if to make it stick. It doesn't, because it creates confusion, loopholes and difficult analyses. One obvious loophole is that an

extremely massive (non-compliant) building could be built at one end of a lot, and with the changed wording, it complies. This change will defeat the purpose of the massing regulation. As well, it gives an unfair advantage to larger landowners.

View Area is the incorrect term to use in the context of view analysis. Rigorous consistent calculations turn into a circus of exemptions. View frame should be reinstated or this section should revert to the 1984 plan.

### **The Loophole Chart**

Now comes the chart on page 112. If you suspected up to this point that the 1984 plan had been gutted, page 112 will convince you. The chart uses Yes and No in a manner not explained. What they mean is exempt or non-exempt. This is a chart of loopholes, some explained nowhere else in the document. It says properties north of Paseo will be exempt from any massing restrictions and properties along Coors will be allowed to block the mountain.

### **Ridgeline**

The draft shows buildings that penetrate the ridgeline (figure D-5 or D-8). The text has replaced ridgeline with "top of view area." This little change will also end view preservation. Once buildings are allowed to obscure the ridgeline, views of the Sandias from Coors will be gone.

### **Conclusion**

The newest attempt at gutting the view regulations in the Coors Corridor Plan should be rejected in its entirety. Clearly, the result of these proposed changes will be the end of our beloved views from Coors. If there are as many problems with the entire document, then the 1984 Coors Corridor Plan should continue as the governing regulation. Also, the process used to create this proposal needs to be reviewed. At numerous meetings we were invited to listen and give our input but it was substantially ignored. With each round of meetings and drafts, new un-discussed items were added each time. None of these items favored the citizens. This latest iteration that came to us yesterday (9-28-14) has many new changes that need to be reviewed, studied, and analyzed before the EPC hearing in two days. This response had to be assembled in less than 24 hours to make the EPC deadline for comments. Is that how the process is supposed to work?

Finally, it would be appreciated if we could conclude that the planning staff works for the citizens, that our volunteer work to help fix their drafts is not ignored, and that the Environmental Planning Commission keeps the development community in check.

Thank you for conducting this forum.

**From:** George Olson  
**To:** George Peknik  
**Cc:** Toffaleti, Carol G.  
**Subject:** Re: The Harm that the Coors Corridor Plan would do to us  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 30, 2014 10:29:04 AM

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And undressed Winterhaven flooding issue that continues to wash roadway automotive waste and damage the community and private property.  
George Olson

On Sep 30, 2014 9:51 AM, "George Peknik" <[peknik@gmail.com](mailto:peknik@gmail.com)> wrote:  
Hello Ms.Toffaleti,

My wife and I are residents of Bosque Montano subdivision. The back of our house faces Montano, and we are two houses from Winter Haven.

Like our neighbors and those in the communities to the north, we are strongly opposed to two parts of the Coors Corridor Plan. We feel strongly that although the whole project would greatly benefit the West side commuters get to the East side more rapidly, there are **five major reasons** why converting Winter Haven from a "connector" street to a "connector" street **and** rebuilding the Montano/Coors intersection as a 'single point urban interchange' (SPUI), would do us to the northeast of that intersection a great deal of harm, especially those of us who:

- **enjoy walking and/or bicycling** (like me);
- **have kids or grand kids who live at home or visit** (like me);
- **often need to drive across the Montano bridge** (like me);
- **love where we live because of the peace and quiet** (like me)

**Harm 1. Increase traffic**, especially on Winter Haven. **Nearly all commuting motorists who now use Winter Haven to 'cut the corner' speed with impunity and without any concern for the safety of others.** While allowing many West side motorists to get to their destinations sooner, The Coors Corridor Plan, surely would create problems for all of us who access Winter Haven in order to go anywhere, as well as reduce the safety of us near Winter Haven.

**Harm 2. More accidents in our area.** According to [citydata.com](http://citydata.com), there have been more than 20 fatal accidents in the area of Coors and Montano in the last ten years, and: **"Vehicles must be able to cross the pavement in six different ways, a SPUI generally has a very large area of uncontrolled pavement in the middle of the intersection. This can be unsafe particularly if drivers are unfamiliar with the interchange type. Drivers making a left turn may become confused as oncoming turning traffic passes them on the right side."**

**Harm 3. Increase noise** See No.1.

**Harm 4. Worsen our access to Coors and Montano** Already our access to these two streets is difficult especially when we want to go east on Montano.

Can you imagine how more difficult that would at a smaller version of the "**Big Eye Stack Interchange**," as well as to go east on Montano or north or south on Coors?

**5. Decrease our accessibility to other parts of the city to pedestrians and bicyclists** See No.3, and my research about SPUIs indicates that "**Pedestrians are usually not able to get through the intersection with one green light. It can take up to four cycles to walk through the entire length of a SPUI.**"

**6. Decrease our home values** See Nos.1-5.

I sincerely request that I am allowed a few minutes to communicate these concerns to the EPC staff on Thursday.

[Do no harm](#),

Sincerely,

George Peknik

3612 Calle Oveja Ct. NW

**From:** [George Peknik](#)  
**To:** [Toffaleti, Carol G.](#)  
**Subject:** The Harm that the Coors Corridor Plan would do to us  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 30, 2014 9:51:35 AM

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Hello Ms.Toffaleti,

My wife and I are residents of Bosque Montano subdivision. The back of our house faces Montano, and we are two houses from Winter Haven.

Like our neighbors and those in the communities to the north, we are strongly opposed to two parts of the Coors Corridor Plan. We feel strongly that although the whole project would greatly benefit the West side commuters get to the East side more rapidly, there are **five major reasons** why converting Winter Haven from a "connector" street to a "connector" street **and** rebuilding the Montano/Coors intersection as a 'single point urban interchange' (SPUI), would do us to the northeast of that intersection a great deal of harm, especially those of us who:

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[Do no harm,](#)

Sincerely,

George Peknik

3612 Calle Oveja Ct. NW

**From:** [Jolene Wolfley](#)  
**To:** [Toffaleti, Carol G.](#)  
**Cc:** [Rene Horvath](#)  
**Subject:** For 10/2 EPC Hearing  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 30, 2014 1:48:33 PM

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Environmental Planning Commission  
Planning Staff

Taylor Ranch Neighborhood Association is concerned that the staff is recommending the EPC take action on the Coors Corridor Plan at the October 2nd hearing.

The timing of the October version does not give adequate time for the public or the EPC to engage in meaningful discussion or review of the October draft prior to the hearing.

I was able to finally access the Plan on the City's website this morning 9/30. The hearing is 10/2. The 48-hour rule is almost in effect.

Some new areas of concern in the October version are: (based on a cursory review)

1. The role of the CCP and the City and NMDOT is explored in the October version, but I do not think there is clarity about these roles and the future roles. This clarity is a fundamental to the purpose of the CCP and the recommendations for major road changes.

State or City ownership seems to hinge largely on maintenance issues/funding....while the major purpose of the CCP relates to development, community, road design and usage.

Is the City likely to regain the responsibility for Coors in the future?

We are uncomfortable with the notion that NMDOT currently has some preemptive role to determine the physical fabric of our community.

2. The deviations section remains confusing. The allowances for deviations are not fully vetted for unintended consequences. (p. 24)

3. The view regulations (standard package and alternatives) are growing increasingly complicated. So many regulations/alternatives have been developed when their are only a small number of vacant properties. I asked at the September meeting with staff/developers if we could first work to understand what the owners think the limitations of their vacant properties are in regard to complying with the 1984 CCP. Then we could try to address them rather than writing a plan to try to meet every eventuality. (p. 112-114)

4. View windows (north of PdNorte) have many unintended consequences when the alternatives (p. 112-114) are also allowed. View windows require some coordination amongst property owners.

5. A few parts of the plan say "pending," e.g. park and ride (p. 95). When will the detail be

given?

Thanks for your consideration.

Jolene Wolfley

**From:** [Steven Watson](#)  
**To:** [Toffaletti, Carol G.](#)  
**Cc:** [George Peknik](#); [Sharon Sharef](#)  
**Subject:** Coors Corridor Plan  
**Date:** Monday, September 29, 2014 10:08:27 PM

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Dear Carol,

As long time resident of Bosque Montano ( on Winterhaven) I and my family are opposed to the SPUI and to making Winterhaven a connector street. We have already seen cars speeding way above the posted 30mph and have nearly been run over just trying to cross to Albertsons. The increased noise level for an elevated Coors/Montano SPUI would also affect our quality of living in a negative way.

I am out of town so I will not be able to attend the meeting on Oct 3rd so I am submitting my comments to you today

Much Appreciation,  
Steven A Watson  
3605 Yippee Calle Ct,  
ABQ, 87120