



**Environmental
Planning
Commission**

**Agenda Number: 2
Project Number: 1007100
Case #'s: 08EPC-40023
April 09, 2009**

Third Supplemental Staff Report

Agent Planning Department
Applicant City of Albuquerque
Request Recommendation of approval of the Great Streets Facility Plan, a Rank 2 Plan
Location Citywide
Zoning Not Affected

Staff Recommendation

That a recommendation of APPROVAL of 08EPC-40023, the Great Streets Facility Plan be forwarded to the City Council.

***Staff Planner
Manjeet Tangri, Urban Design Planner***

Summary of Analysis

This is the third supplemental staff report and should be read in conjunction with the original staff reports of May 08, 2008, supplemental report of December 11, 2008 and public records.

The EPC deferred the Great Streets Facility Plan (GSFP) at the January 22, 2009 public hearing (which was continued from December 11, 2008 hearing) to March 05, 2009. The staff requested deferral for another 30 days to April 09, 2009, in order to incorporate conditions of approval in the January 22 staff report, reorganize the plan and address EPC and public comments. Please note the following changes in the revised Facility Plan:

- The Facility Plan standards and guidelines are advisory and not mandatory; therefore “shall” language was changed to “should” and “may”.
- Chapter I better explains the applicability of the proposed standards and guidelines and the relationship among ranked plans. This chapter also offers a solution to conflicts between ranked plans.
- Chapter III now includes policies associated with each Great Street principle to offer better guidance in future decision making.
- A new Chapter IV consolidates information from the previous regarding the three physical realms and four Great Street types to emphasize the importance of the three realms.
- The old Chapter IV was separated into two new chapters, Chapters V and VI. Chapter V contains the Standards and Guidelines and Chapter VI contains Prototypical Design Options. Except for changing standards and guidelines from mandatory to advisory, the original substance of Chapters V and VI have remained intact; only minor edits have been made.
- The Facility Plan applicability, the relationship among ranked plans, roles and responsibilities of public and private sectors and the EPC’s role in the selection process have been added in the substantially revised Chapter VII. The Selection Committee membership, the selection criteria table and amendments to plans, ordinances and regulations have also been revised.

Staff recommends that an Approval recommendation be forwarded to the City Council for the adoption of the Great Streets Facility Plan.

Agency comments were used in the preparation of this report including review of the revised Facility Plan

REQUEST

This is the third supplemental staff report and should be read in conjunction with the original staff report of May 08, 2008, the supplemental staff reports of December 11, 2008 and January 22, 2009 and public records.

This is a request for approval recommendation to be forwarded to the City Council for the adoption of the Great Streets Facility Plan (GSFP).

BACKGROUND

The Great Streets Facility Plan (GSFP), prepared with considerable public input, was submitted to EPC in May 2008. In response to comments received from the EPC and the public, the Draft Plan was first revised and resubmitted to EPC in December 2008. The April 2009 draft is the second revision. The April draft has reorganized some information, added chapters to emphasize important concepts, and substantially revised the Facility Plan Implementation chapter. The details of the changes are described in the staff analysis.

COMMENTS RECEIVED SINCE THE JANUARY 22, 2009 EPC HEARING AND STAFF RESPONSES

A summary of comments received from the EPC Commissioners and the public, including NAIOP, since the May 08, 2008 hearing are in regular text. Staff responses are in **bold text**.

1. Provide language that addresses potential conflicts between the Rank 2 Great Streets Facility Plan and Rank 3 plans. Would prefer that the Rank 3 plans take precedence.

By ordinance, the lower ranking City adopted plans should be consistent with the higher-ranking plans. They should identify how they relate to relevant higher-ranking plans. Page VII-1 addresses conflicts between this plan and Rank 3 plans as follows:

“If the Rank 2 Great Streets Facility Plan advisory standards conflict with the mandatory/ regulatory provisions of an existing Rank 3 Plan, then the Rank 3 Plan regulatory provisions shall prevail. However, if the advisory standards of the Great Streets Facility Plan conflicts with the advisory standards of a Rank 3 Plan, then the advisory standards of the Great Streets Facility Plan shall prevail.”

2. The standards and guidelines should be advisory and not mandatory. Be clear about the difference between “standard” and “guideline” and provide definitions for them.

In the April 2009 Draft, the Standards and Guidelines are made advisory by taking out the word “shall” and replacing it with “should” or “may”. This change is made throughout the Plan where standards and guidelines are discussed and particularly in Chapter V on

Standards and Guidelines for Great Streets segments. The definitions of a standard and a guideline are added in the 'Glossary of Terms' in the Appendix.

3. Clarify that instead of all new streets, only segments of new streets that are within or abutting Activity Centers and that are transit corridors should follow the standards and guidelines in the Facility Plan.

The new text added in GSFP Chapter I page 1, Chapter V page 1 and VII page 1 clarifies the applicability of the Facility Plan, as follows:

The Facility Plan is applicable to the following segments of streets:

- a. **Segment of existing streets that are selected, ranked and designated Great Streets;**
 - b. **New Street segments that are within or abutting Activity Centers and where the street is planned as a transit corridor; and**
 - c. **Segments of streets that are within or abutting Activity Centers, and that have already been approved and set aside for construction and reconstruction.**
4. Selection Criteria Table: consider including points for community support.
Community support is essential to the selection of a Great Street segment and has been added to the Selection Criteria Table on page VII-4 of the Plan.
 5. Are the design guidelines in the Private Realm similar to design standards in the Zoning Code or Comprehensive Plan? Will new development be required to comply with the design guidelines?
The design guidelines in the Private Realm are based on the design guidelines for Activity Centers found in the Comprehensive Plan (II-B-7-Policy a) and in the West Side Strategic Plan (Policies 1.5, 1.9, 1.12 & 1.14). The Zoning Code does not contain design standards specific to Activity Centers, however the City Council is considering design regulations for Activity Centers as part of the Form-Based Zones that would be included in the Zoning Code.
 6. Delete the Private Realm guidelines – wait until City Council accepts standards for activity centers through Form Based Zoning.

The design standards for buildings in the Form Based Zoning Ordinance would only apply if and when a Form Based Zone is applied for voluntarily. There would be situations where a street segment has a Great Street designation but the properties along do not have Form Based Zone(s). Therefore, the property owners along the Great Street segment will not follow Form Based Zone requirements.

The role of the Private Realm is integral to a Great Street environment. The property owner will have no guidance in the absence of Private Realm guidelines in the Facility Plan.

7. Add definitions of Established Urban Area and Developing (New) Urban Area in the glossary of terms in the Appendix.

Definitions for the Established Urban Area and Developing urban Area from the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan have been added in the Appendix Glossary of Terms on page A-13.

8. What is the purpose of Table 1, Comprehensive Plan Transportation and Transit on page II-3?

The GSFP design standards and guidelines are based on the policy objectives found in Table 11 of the Transportation and Transit Section of the Comprehensive Plan. Table 1 on page II-3 was a reference to Table 11. As a reference, Table 11 has been placed in the Appendix on page A-10, for reference only.

9. Page II-6 recommends amending the City Zoning Code to insert Private Realm guidelines as Regulations. The guidelines only apply to land adjacent to designated Great Street segments. Revisit this recommendation.

The guidelines for the Private Realm are advisory. Therefore, the amendment to the Zoning Code is not necessary. Reference to the Comprehensive Zoning Code amendment has been taken out from the Synopsis of Recommended Amendments from Chapter II page II-4.

10. Don't include Points and Range (highest to lowest) in the Selection Criteria Table.

The Range of Points has been removed from the Table; however, the Table still includes Total Points for each criterion in order to rank the requests. Other revisions to the Table include the following:

- a. **Streets abutting Activity Centers and streets designated as Transit Corridors automatically qualify for Great Street designation**
- b. **The Ranking Criteria includes 'Community Support' with a maximum of 15 points assigned**

11. Delete time frames in the Project Construction Process, Chapter VII, page VII-8.

The time frames have not been taken out. The range of time frame gives a context to the user of this document. It guides all the stakeholders and particularly the City staff in

keeping the project on track. The Department of Municipal Development highly recommends keeping them in the Plan.

12. Take the term “exception” out since the standards are not regulatory.

The term “exception” has been deleted from the Facility Plan since the standards are no longer mandatory.

13. Strengthen the Facility Plan Implementation Chapter by including applicability of the Facility Plan standards and guidelines, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the public and private sectors, including the EPC in the implementation process and refining the Great Streets Selection Process including the Criteria Table.

- a. **The Facility Plan Implementation Chapter VII has been revised to include applicability of the GSFP (see response to comment 1 above).**
- b. **The roles and responsibilities of the public and private sectors in constructing Great Streets was added on page VII-6 and is described as follows:**
 - **The Private Sector will be responsible for constructing new street segments within or abutting a designated Activity Center or along a Transit Corridor and will follow the standards and guidelines of this Plan.**
 - **The City will be responsible for reconstructing an existing street segment that is designated a Great Street. The City will acquire additional right-of-way if and when necessary and compensate the property owner. However, if a property is being developed while the City is constructing a Great Street segment, the developer will be financially responsible for those improvements in the public right-of-way that were negotiated with the City as part of the approval process. The design by these improvements will comply with the Facility Plan standards and guidelines. (Please note that “Established Urban Area” and “Developed Urban Area” has been interchangeably used. It will be fixed in the draft to the City Council)**
- c. **The revised GSFP establishes the role of EPC in the Great Streets Segment Selection Process on page VII-5. The Section Committee will review the list of requests for the Great Street segments designation. Using the Great Street Segment Selection Criteria Table, the Selection Committee will qualify the requested segments. The Committee will then rank the qualified segments using the ranking criteria before forwarding them to the EPC. After holding a public hearing, the EPC will send three top segment recommendations to the City Council within 90 days of the date the list is submitted to the EPC. The EPC will hold a public hearing and forward recommendations that include the final top three ranked segments to the City Council within 90 days of the date the list was submitted to the EPC.**

- d. The Facility Plan continues to recommend incorporating the GSFP implementation into the Decade Plan for Capital Improvements/ G.O. Bond process. However the revised plan recommends the three top ranked segments designations approved by the City Council and the Mayor and included in the CIP/G.O. Bond process. In addition, the Plan recommends that the City designate by ordinance a minimum of \$2.0 million every G.O. Bond cycle to implement the GSFP. This is a very important recommendation to the success of developing Great Street segments in the City.**
14. Respond to NAIOP concern about potential costs to constructing Great Streets segments and requirements to follow design standards and guidelines.
- a. The new streets are built by the private sector according to the DPM standards. The 17-foot wide GSFP Pedestrian Realm standards within an Activity Center are comparable to the DPM standards of 16-foot (10-foot for sidewalk width and 6-foot sidewalk setback from the back of the curb) along an arterial street and 15 feet along a collector street. Planting of trees is required along all commercially zoned properties. Therefore, the cost to construct Great Streets segments is not significant. The Great Streets Facility Plan offers an incentive to count on-street parking in front of the property towards required parking.**
- b. The guidelines for the Private Realm are advisory and are encouraged to be followed and are not required.**

Agency Comments on April 2009 Draft

The Planning Staff has worked very closely with the staff of Department of Municipal Development, Transportation Division, ABQ Ride (Transit) and the City Forester from Parks and Recreation Department.

No formal written comments have been received.

Other Public Comments on April 2009 Draft

No comments have been received

Conclusions:

The Mayor, Albuquerque Independent Business Alliance, many non-profits and citizens support the Great Streets Facility Plan for its economic, social, health, aesthetic and environmental benefits.

The interrelationship of the three physical realms of a Great Street is very important to the successful implementation of this Plan. The Great Streets Facility Plan design standards and guidelines, based

on Comprehensive Plan policies and some existing street design and building regulations in the DPM and the Comprehensive Zoning Code are consolidated in one place. The Facility Plan adds standards and guidelines for elements that are not addressed and refines Comprehensive Plan Table 11 Policy a. Corridor Policies and design objectives.

During slow economic times is the perfect time to undertake planning. The City will be ready when development starts to pick up speed.

The Federal and local stimulus packages to build infrastructure provides the opportunity to build our streets right the first time. Recommending approval of this Plan will be an opportunity to implement changes in a cost effective and timely manner.

Great Street segment design will provide a more balanced response to the needs of all street users such as pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit riders, and motorists. The implementation of GSPF will contribute to public safety, social vibrancy, economic vitality and the sense of place of the Activity Centers and Transit Corridors.

This is a request to the Environmental Planning Commission for a recommendation of Approval to the City Council to adopt the Great Streets Facility Plan.

FINDINGS - 08EPC-40023, Great Streets Facility Plan, January 22, 2009

1. This is a request for adoption of the Great Streets Facility Plan (Facility Plan).
2. The Facility Plan is a Rank 2 plan that provides a framework for the planning, design and construction of segments of existing and new streets to become “Great Streets” and requires coordination among various public and private agencies and the public.
3. The public planning process for the Facility Plan included nine citywide public meetings, several meetings with a Technical Advisory Committee comprised of representatives of public agencies, non-profits and business groups, and presentations to other interested groups. The public comments received during the planning process are included in the Facility Plan Appendix pages A-2 to A-9.
4. In 2006, the Planning Department contracted with consultants, HDR, Inc. to develop the Facility Plan which furthers the Comprehensive Plan’s goals and policies pertaining to Transportation Corridors and Activity Centers, Developed Landscape, Community Identity and Urban Design and Economic Development and the Planned Growth Strategy.
5. City Charter:
 - a. The development of the Great Streets Facility Plan design concepts, standards and guidelines exercises authority given to the City Council by Article I of the City Charter.
 - b. The proposed Facility Plan intends to further the public interest by promoting and maintaining aesthetic and humane urban environment through the appropriate use of land (Article IX).
6. The Great Streets Facility Plan, through street design and inter-relationship of streets and adjacent land uses and buildings, furthers the Comprehensive Plan’s **Transportation and Transit goal** (II.D.4) to 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/paratransit as alternatives to automobile travel, while providing sufficient roadway capacity to meet mobility and access needs.
7. The Great Streets Facility Plan is in compliance with the following **Transportation and Transit policies** (II.D.4) of the Comprehensive Plan:
 - Policy a. The Facility Plan incorporates and refines many of the design objectives found in Table 11. The Facility Plan standards and guidelines support objectives for street

design, transit service and development form consistent with Transportation Corridors and Activity Centers as shown on the Comprehensive Plan's Activity Centers and Corridors map on page II-4 of the Facility Plan.

Policy d. The Facility Plan implements Policy d by consolidating driveways or moving them to side streets along a Great Street segment to facilitate efficient pedestrian, transit and vehicular movement.

Policy g. The Facility Plan design concepts, standards and guidelines for the Roadway Realms, Pedestrian Realm and Private Realm support better integration of pedestrian opportunities into developments to enhance social and economic activities along streets.

Policy o. The Facility Plan will assist in decreasing peak hour demand on the circulation system by providing street design such as wide, shaded and protected sidewalks, bike lanes, trees, transit shelter and other street furniture to encourage walking, bicycling and taking transit.

Policy p. The Facility Plan includes design standards and guidelines for the Roadway Realm and Pedestrian Realm to provide efficient, safe access and transfer capabilities between various modes of transportation.

Policy q. The Facility Plan recommendations support transportation investments that support overall mobility needs and choice among modes through street designs and their inter-relationship with adjacent land uses.

8. The multi-modal street designs, standards and guidelines of the Great Streets Facility Plan will encourage concentrations of moderate and high density mixed use and social and economic activities to reduce sprawl, auto travel needs, and service costs per the Comprehensive Plan's **Activity Centers** goal (II.B.7). Under this goal, the Facility Plan also supports the following policy:

Policy a: The Great Streets Facility Plan will help shape the built environment in a sustainable development pattern by promoting transit and pedestrian access both to and within the Activity Center.

9. The Great Streets Facility Plan furthers the goal and policies of the **Air Quality** portion of the Environmental Protection and Heritage Conservation section of the Comprehensive Plan (II.C.1).

Policy b: The Facility Plan encourages a balanced land use/transportation system that promotes the efficient placement of housing, employment and services, thus reducing automobile travel's adverse effects on air quality.

Policy c: The Facility Plan calls for the employment of traffic engineering techniques that are intended to achieve smooth traffic flow at steady, moderate speeds.

Policy d: The Facility Plan promotes a balanced transportation system that encourages mass transit use and alternative means of transportation while providing sufficient roadway capacity to meet mobility and access needs.

Policy e: The Facility Plan promotes multi-modal options in the public right-of-way to help reduce motor vehicle emissions.

10. The Great Streets Facility Plan furthers the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan's **Developed Landscape** goal (II.C.8) to maintain and improve the quality of the natural and developed landscape. It also supports the following policies:

Policy b: The Great Streets Facility Plan provides design standards and guidelines for the public right-of-way to improve the visual quality of the natural and developed landscape.

Policy c: The Great Streets Facility Plan provides standards and guidelines for the location and design of incidental structures such as street furniture, light poles and overhead utility wires to minimize visual intrusion and mobility impediments to pedestrians.

Policy d: The Great Streets Facility Plan provides street design standards and guidelines to create a pleasing visual environment. The landscaping and tree planting standards and guidelines in the Facility Plan protect vistas of the mountains and Volcanic Escarpment.

11. The Great Streets Facility Plan furthers the Comprehensive Plan's **Community Identity and Urban Design** goal (II.C.9) to preserve and enhance the natural and built characteristics that identify Albuquerque and its sub-areas. The Facility Plan also complies with the following policies:

Policy b: The Facility Plan encourages further planning and communication among key stakeholders within each community to identify streets that qualify as "Great Streets". As part of these future-planning efforts, stakeholders will evaluate the relationship and effect upon the natural environment, the built environment, and local history.

Policy e: The Facility Plan provides design standards and guidelines for Major Transit and Enhanced Transit Corridors, Arterials and Collector Streets to reinforce each community's unique identity. The design standards and guidelines are intended to minimize water use, screen parking areas, enhance building facades, and create a safe and convenient walking environment.

12. The Great Streets Facility Plan furthers the **Service Provision** goal of the Community Resource Management section of the Comprehensive Plan (II.D.1) to develop and manage the City's public right-of-way in an efficient manner. In addition, the Facility Plan is in compliance with Policy b of this section by incorporating the Facility Plan implementation into the City's Decade Plan/G. O. Bonds program.

13. The Great Streets Facility Plan furthers the Comprehensive Plan's **Economic Development** goal (II.D.6) to achieve steady and diversified economic development balanced with other important social, environmental and cultural goals by designing streets that are multi-modal, have a sense of place and are safe, visually attractive social places.

14. The Great Streets Facility Plan supports and furthers the Infrastructure and Growth Plan of the **Planned Growth Strategy Ordinance**, §14-13-2-3 (B) as follows:
 - (2) (a) The Facility Plan promotes efficient growth where infrastructure and facilities already exist by giving higher priority to existing Activity Centers, Transit Corridors and public facilities in selecting Great Street segments.

 - (2) (f) The Facility Plan foster community in older and newer neighborhoods by providing design standards and guidelines for Roadway Realm and Pedestrian Realm to attract development in high pedestrian areas such as existing and new Activity Centers and Transit Corridors.

 - (2) (g) When a Great Street is developed, it will encourage infill and redevelopment to help revitalize the older parts of the city.

 - (2) (h) The Facility Plan supports "Centers and Corridors" to help create a more effective and efficient transit system.

15. The Great Streets Facility Plan supports and furthers the **Planned Growth Strategy Ordinance** §14-13-2-3 (C) (1) Capital Improvement Program by integrating the Great Street segments implementation into the City G.O. Bond Decade Plan.

16. The Great Street Facility Plan furthers the **Planned Growth Strategy Resolution** (F/S R-02-111) (A) POLICY GUIDANCE FOR FUTURE PLANNED GROWTH STRATEGY LEGISLATION Section 3, (B) (2) Zoning Code and Related Revisions and Design Standards by recommending revisions to the Comprehensive Zoning Code and the Development Process Manual based on standards and guidelines for the three realms of a street in the Facility Plan.

17. The Facility Plan meets the intent of the Comprehensive City **Zoning Code** as follows: 1) to help control congestion in the street and public ways; 2) to enhance the appearance of the landscape; 3) to encourage the most appropriate use of land, and 4) to conserve and stabilize the value of property. Wider and shaded sidewalks, on-street parking and street design that facilitate transportation mode choices will help support private development along the Great Street segments.

18. The Facility Plan is consistent with the **2030 Metropolitan Transportation Plan** (MTP) and with the 2008-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Albuquerque

Metropolitan Planning Area. Consistency with the MTP and the TIP is necessary in order to qualify for federal funds to implement the Facility Plan.

19. The Facility Plan recommends construction of one or two 'Great Streets' segments as pilot projects that will help define the cost of construction and coordination among various agencies. A segment of Central Avenue from Girard to San Mateo east of the river, North 4th Street and new street segment within or abutting an Activity Center or along a Transit Corridor in Developing Urban Areas on the West side are possibilities for pilot projects.
20. In the April 2009 GSFP Draft, the Planning Department staff has addressed EPC, NAIOP and other public concerns raised since the first EPC hearing on May 08, 2008. The Planning Department staff has worked very closely with the City's Department of Municipal Development, Transportation Division, ABQ Ride (Transit Department), City Forest in the revision of this draft.
21. No public comments have been received regarding the April 2009 draft.

RECOMMENDATION

That a recommendation of Approval be forwarded to the City Council for the adoption of the Great Streets Facility Plan (Rank 2), 08EPC 40023, based on the preceding Findings:

Manjeet Tangri, Project Manager
Urban Design Planner

cc:

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Attachments

Email Letter from Susan DeFrancesco, Research Assistant Professor, UNM School of Medicine
Emails from Silvio DellAngel, President - EANA
Email from Roger Mickelson