



**21ST CENTURY
TRANSPORTATION
TASK FORCE**

FINAL REPORT

OCTOBER 2008

Members

Isaac Benton, District 3 City Councilor, Co-Chair
Mike Skaggs, Co-Chair
Claude Luisada, District 1
Claude Morelli, District 2
Moises Gonzalez, District 3
Jeffrey Peterson, District 4
Antonio Sandoval, District 5
Charles Ivy, District 6
Terry Keene, District 7
Gary Bodman, District 8
Nevin Harwick, District 9
Clovis Acosta, University of New Mexico
Chris Blewett, Mid-Region Council of Governments
Frank Burcham, City of Albuquerque Energy Conservation Council
Ralph Cipriani, Sandia National Laboratories
Augustine “Gus” Grace, Air Quality Control Board
Dale Lockett, Albuquerque Convention and Visitors Bureau
JW Madison, Rails Inc.
Joanne McEntire, 1000 Friends of New Mexico
Bob Murphy, Albuquerque Economic Development/Economic Forum
Alex Romero, Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce
Martin Sandoval, Albuquerque Public Schools
Albert “Bert” Thomas, National Association of Industrial and Office Properties
Brent Wilson, Kirtland Air Force Base
Joel Wooldridge, American Planning Association – NM Chapter

City Staff

Ed Adams, Chief Administrative Officer
Donna Baca, City Council Services
John Castillo, Director, Dept. of Municipal Development
Andrew de Garmo, Transit Dept.
Richard Dineen, Director, Planning Dept.
Patrick Montoya, Planning Dept.
Greg Payne, Director, Transit Dept./ABQ Ride
Tony Pedroncelli, Office of the Mayor
Keith Perry, Transit Dept.
Michael Riordan, Deputy Director, Dept. of Municipal Development
Kara Shair-Rosenfield, City Council Services
Michael Smith, Human Resources
Jon Zaman, City Council Services

Other Resources

Tony Sylvester, Mid-Region Council of Governments
Jamie Welles, City of Albuquerque Indicators Progress Commission

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PART I

INTRODUCTION:

HISTORY, VISION, MISSION, & VALUES OF THE TASK FORCE

HISTORY OF THE TASK FORCE

In order to understand the inception of the 21st Century Transportation Task Force, it is necessary to briefly review the history of the City's ¼ Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax and the proposal to continue the tax that was presented by the Administration to the City Council in 2006.

HISTORY OF THE ¼ CENT TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE TAX

In January 1999, Mayor Jim Baca submitted an Ordinance to the City Council, asking for the imposition of an excise tax equal to one-fourth of one percent of gross receipts to be used for transportation infrastructure improvement and mandating an election for voter approval of the tax. In his memo to Council President Vincent E. Griego, Mayor Baca explained the purpose of the tax as he envisioned it:

“The one-quarter of 1 percent municipal gross receipt tax, which I call the Quarter Cent Transportation Tax, is an aggressive and bold step forward to create a truly multi-modal transportation system in our city. This tax will allow the accelerated maintenance and upgrading of current deficiencies in our existing road system. It is critical that we protect the investment the city and taxpayers have made to date in our built community. If we fail to address these deficiencies we only compound the problem and degrade our quality of life. At the same time we will be creating a high quality, interconnected transit, bike and trails system to serve us effectively in the 21st Century. While upgrading our streets and roads for today's use, we must be mindful of the future and invest in our transit system as well. We must enhance our transit system to make it consistent, reliable, and provide a greater level of service during the evening hours and on week-ends. The goal is to create an integrated system that will improve air quality, reduce congestion, and maximize the ability of all of our citizens to move about our community in a safe, efficient and cost effective way...”

The Ordinance was eventually approved by the City Council on a 6-3 vote, and Albuquerque voters approved the imposition of the tax in 1999.

§ 4-3-7-5 DEDICATION.

(A) Revenue from the Transportation Infrastructure Tax will be used to fund the improvement of transportation systems for the benefit of the city. The tax shall be dedicated to the following purposes in the specified percentages of the tax revenues:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| (1) Road Rehabilitations | Not less than 32% |
| (2) Road Deficiencies | Not more than 32% |
| (3) Road Maintenance | 12% |
| (4) Trails and Bikeways | 4% |
| (5) Transit | 20% |

The revenues dedicated to roads shall be used for the developed parts of the city for existing infrastructures including interstate highways.

(B) For the purposes of this dedication, the following definitions shall apply:

DEFICIENCY. Projects required to correct inadequate service, in other words, to bring system capacity to adopted level of service standards or enhance aesthetics. Of the amount available, no more than 25% of the total may be expended to enhance aesthetics on interstate highways for the next three fiscal years beginning with FY06.

Following the end of the three year period, no funds shall be expended to enhance aesthetics on interstate highways. Deficiency expenditures add system capacity.

REHABILITATION. Projects required to extend the service life of an existing facility, to improve its operation, or to restore original performance or capacity or enhance aesthetics. Of the amount available, no more than 25% of the total may be expended to enhance aesthetics on interstate highways for the next three fiscal years beginning with FY06. Following the end of the three year period, no funds shall be expended to enhance aesthetics on interstate highways. Rehabilitation expenditures do not add system capacity.

(C) The Expenditures for Road Deficiencies, as covered in the annual plan submitted to the Council, shall be consistent with adopted city policies as contained in Bill No. F/S R-70 (Enactment 91-1998) "Establishing a growth policy framework", encouraging infill development, and other adopted policies regarding urban development.

(D) The funds spent for Rehabilitation and Deficiency shall be net new monies expended for these purposes. In order to establish the current level of spending, an average expenditures in FY/96, FY/97, and FY/98 separately for Rehabilitation and Deficiency shall be calculated.

(Ord. 14-1999; Am. Ord. 31-2006; Am. Ord. 44-2006; Am. Ord. 10-2007)

§ 4-3-7-6 PLANS AND REPORTS.

(A) Sixty days prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, the Mayor shall submit to the Council in the form of a Resolution for approval a listing of each rehabilitation and deficiency project to be initiated in the coming fiscal year and its estimated costs. The Mayor shall submit to the City Council a plan for the expenditures for that fiscal year. At the completion of each fiscal year, the Mayor shall submit to the City Council and to the public an annual report on the expenditures for that fiscal year. The Office of Internal Audit and Investigations shall conduct audits of expenditures of the Transportation Infrastructure Tax to determine whether the expenditures have been made in a manner consistent with the provisions of the dedication of the Tax.

(B) Audits shall be conducted according to the following schedule:

(1) The audit for fiscal years 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003, 2004 and 2005 shall be submitted by March 1, 2006;

(2) The audit for fiscal years 2006 and 2007 shall be submitted by November 1, 2008.

(3) The audit for fiscal years 2008, 2009 and 2010 shall be submitted by November 1, 2011.

(Ord. 14-1999; Am. Ord. 67-2005)

§ 4-3-7-7 MANDATORY ELECTION.

The tax imposed pursuant to §§ 4-3-7-1 et seq. shall not be effective until approved by the majority of registered voters voting on the question at a special election to be held on a date set by the Council and pursuant to the provisions of the City Charter and of the Municipal Election Code. The special election shall be conducted by all- mailed ballot in accordance with the Mail Ballot Election Act (Sections 1-23-1 to 1-23-7 NMSA 1978) and the City of Albuquerque Election Ordinances (Chapter 2, Article 4 ROA, 1994).

(Ord. 14-1999)

§ 4-3-7-8 EFFECTIVE DATE OF §§ 4-3-7-1 ET SEQ.

The effective date of §§ 4-3-7-1 et seq. shall be January 1, 2000.

(Ord. 14-1999)

§ 4-3-7-9 EFFECTIVE DATE OF TAX.

The effective date of the Municipal Gross Receipts Tax imposed by §§ 4-3-7-1 et seq. shall be January 1, 2000, pending the favorable outcome of a mandatory election to be held pursuant to § 4-3-7-7 above and acceptance of the effective date by the State Taxation and Revenue Department.

(Ord. 14-1999)

§ 4-3-7-10 EXPIRATION OF TAX.

The excise tax imposed by §§ 4-3-7-1 et seq. shall expire ten years after the effective date of this tax.

(Ord. 14-1999)

2006 PROPOSED CONTINUATION OF THE ¼ CENT TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE TAX

In October 2006, Mayor Martin J. Chavez submitted a proposal to the City Council to continue the ¼ Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax through 2020. The proposal contained the following: 1) the accomplishments of the first seven years of the tax, 2) the plan for the final three years of the original tax, and 3) the plan for continuing the program into the next decade.

A major component of the 2006 proposal was the introduction of a plan to design, construct, implement, and operate a modern streetcar line in Albuquerque. According to the proposal, “A streetcar is vital to improving our current mass transit system because it increases ridership and stimulates mixed-use development of under-utilized properties. The scale of a streetcar is ideally fit for Albuquerque because it connects neighborhoods and increases pedestrian connectivity.”

The proposal contained the following recommended annual breakdown of the tax:

- Street Rehabilitation: 24% (\$10,000,000)
- Street Deficiencies: 13% (\$5,000,000)
- Street Maintenance: 8% (\$3,000,000)
- Transit: 19% (\$7,600,000)
- Trails: 3% (\$1,000,000)
- Streetcar Operating: 8% (\$3,000,000)
- Streetcar Capital: +/- 25% (Remaining Balance)

The City Council voted to continue the ¼ Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax on November 16, 2006, by a 6-3 vote (F/S O-06-49). As part of the continuation of the tax, the Council approved the Mayor’s proposed breakdown of the tax, including dedicating a portion of the tax to the construction and operation of the streetcar. The final version of the Ordinance also contained a new section that established regulations for financing the streetcar through a Tax Increment Development District (TIDD) and called for transit-oriented development planning to take place in the corridor where the streetcar would be located.

The following section was added to § 4-3-7-5 of the City’s Code of Ordinances:

(B) *The following regulations are established for the street car system supported by the revenue sources addressed in this part:*

(1) *Financing. A Tax Increment Development District (TIDD) shall be initiated for the corridors proposed in Attachment A [Ord. 44-2006] as they come online, to finance the capital costs, operating costs, and related projects for the street car system including adjacent land uses. The city shall act as the applicant for this TIDD. [Editor’s note: Attachment A to Ord. 44-2006 referenced in this section is available on file in the City Clerk’s office.]*

(2) *Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Planning. A comprehensive system of planning, zoning, design, streetscape, and multi-modal transportation regulations will substantially enhance the ability to achieve the redevelopment and economic development potential of the street car system. Such Transit oriented development includes elements of pedestrian orientation, active public places, Main Street development, large and small TOD centers, mixed-use, mixed-densities, and high quality building materials and design. Such regulations shall be drafted and implemented concurrently with the street car system and with appropriate public involvement. The Executive Branch shall consult with the City Council and the Councillor whose district the street car project passes through, on the management of the planning and regulatory work in the corridor.*

(3) *Allowed uses of TIDD revenues. TIDD revenues for the street car system may be used for the following purposes as authorized by New Mexico Statute:*

- (a) *Transit facilities, equipment, and vehicles.*
- (b) *Streetscape and roadway improvements.*
- (c) *Parking areas including facilities.*
- (d) *Landscaping.*
- (e) *Pedestrian improvements.*
- (f) *Parks.*
- (g) *Public buildings.*
- (h) *Workforce housing.*
- (i) *Professional services.*
- (j) *Other public improvements consistent with the TIDD statute and the intent of this part.*

STREETCAR SYSTEM AS PROPOSED IN 2006

The modern streetcar system as originally proposed consisted of 16 single-track miles at around \$14 million per single-track mile. This included the UNM sports center/Sunport loop which was to have been financed primarily by the State. Its final route as approved by the Council was from Atrisco to San Mateo on Central and from Central to the airport on Yale and University.

The **arguments for** the system included the longevity of the equipment and system vs. buses (8-12 year average life), appeal of the system to riders who now do not use buses, increasing overall transit ridership, energy efficiency and lower operational costs vs. buses, development and other economic stimulus opportunities, including tourism and real estate “transit-oriented” development along the route.

Arguments against the system focused on the total cost of the system vs. potential for significant improvements in the bus system were similar amounts of tax dollars to be spent, the geographic focus of the project in the central city – “there is nothing in it for the average citizen in the heights or west side”, disruption of business during construction, and "ugly" power lines overhead.

TASK FORCE CREATION, REPRESENTATIVES, AND PROCESS

In response to concerns expressed by some city councilors and members of the public about moving forward with the streetcar without additional analysis, specifically with regard to how it would interface with the rest of the city’s transportation system, the Council proposed the creation of the 21st Century Transportation Task Force via City Council Ordinance, O-07-71, which was adopted by a 5-4 vote of the Council on March 19, 2007. O-07-71 also called for a cost-benefit analysis of the modern streetcar system as proposed in 2006, and repealed the extension of the ¼ Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax that the Council had approved in November 2006.

APPOINTED TASK FORCE REPRESENTATIVES

Organization	Member
City Council District 1	Claude Luisada
City Council District 2	Claude Morelli
City Council District 3	Moises Gonzalez
City Council District 4	Jeffrey Peterson
City Council District 5	Antonio Sandoval
City Council District 6	Charles Ivy*
City Council District 7	Terry Keene
City Council District 8	Gary Bodman
City Council District 9	Nevin Harwick
Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce	Alex Romero
National Association of Industrial and Office Properties	Bert Thomas
Kirtland Airforce Base	Brent Wilson
University of New Mexico	Clovis Acosta
Mid-Region Council of Governments	Chris Blewett
Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce	Cynthia Reinhart*
Albuquerque Convention and Visitors' Bureau	Dale Lockett
American Automobile Association - New Mexico Affiliate	Jeannie Chavez*

Albuquerque Alliance for Active Living	Joanne McEntire
American Planning Association - New Mexico Chapter	Joel Wooldridge
Rails, Inc.	JW Madison
Albuquerque Public Schools (Principal, El Dorado High)	Martin Sandoval
Sandia National Laboratories	Ralph Cipriani
Albuquerque Economic Development / Economic Forum	Bob Murphy
Building Trades Council	
Central New Mexico Community College	
Intel Corporation	
CABQ Energy Council	Frank Burcham
CABQ Air Quality Control Board	Augustine "Gus" Grace
CABQ Transit Advisory Board	
Co-Chair / City Councilor	Isaac Benton
Co-Chair	Mike Skaggs*

*Appointed by Mayor Chavez but was unable to complete service on the task force.

The Task Force began meeting in January 2008 and has met twice a month since then. During the first few months of meeting, the Task Force entertained presentations from key City staff on a variety of topics related to the City's transportation system.

General Overview Presentations

- Meeting 1: An Overview of Funding Sources and Programs (Ed Adams, then-COO)
- Meeting 2: Re-Planning the Modern City for Transit (Richard Dineen, Planning Dept. Director)
- Meeting 2: The Planned Growth Strategy and the CIP Ordinance (Council staff)
- Meeting 2: ABQ Ride Planning (Greg Payne, Transit Dept. Director)
- Meeting 11: Street Maintenance and Rehabilitation in the Twenty-first Century (Michael Riordan, DMD Deputy Director)
- Meeting 3: Albuquerque Modern Streetcar as Proposed in 2006 (Michael Riordan, Dept. of Municipal Development Deputy Director)

One of the Task Force's charges was to "Monitor the progress of the cost and benefit analysis...and evaluate its findings and recommendations." As such, the Task Force received four presentations from Leland Consulting Group, who was awarded the contract for the cost-benefit analysis through a competitive bid.

Modern Streetcar Cost-Benefit Analysis Presentations

- Meeting 4: Streetcar Cost-Benefit Analysis – Overview of Study, Baseline Analysis (Leland Consulting Group)
- Meeting 7: Streetcar Cost-Benefit Analysis – Land Use Impacts and Transportation Update (Leland Consulting Group)
- Meeting 9: Streetcar Cost-Benefit Analysis – Funding and Alignment Alternatives (Leland Consulting Group)
- Meeting 13: Streetcar Cost-Benefit Analysis – Final Recommendations (Leland Consulting Group)

In addition to presentations from City staff and Leland Consulting Group, the Task Force heard three presentations made by staff from the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG). As the agency responsible for providing planning services in the areas of transportation, agriculture, workforce development, employment growth, land use, water, and economic development for the Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning Area (which includes Sandoval, Valencia, and Torrance Counties), the MRCOG provided additional information, such as vehicle miles traveled and other data, for the Task Force to consider.

Mid-Region Council of Governments Presentations

- Meeting 3: Overview of the Mid-Region Council of Governments (Chris Blewett, MRCOG)
- Meeting 6: Intelligent Transportation Systems (Nathan Masek, MRCOG)
- Meeting 14: Streetcar from a Regional Perspective (Chris Blewett, MRCOG)

CHARGE TO THE TASK FORCE

As specified in the legislation that created the Task Force, the Task Force was charged with doing the following:

- A. Develop an understanding of the adopted City policies regarding roadways, public transit, and other multi-modal transportation improvements as contained in the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan and in other relevant documents;
- B. Review the history, expenditures, and the needs associated with the current Transportation Infrastructure Tax;
- C. Review current plans for expansion of the roadways, public transit system, and other multi-modal transportation improvements;
- D. Familiarize itself with the Street Car system as proposed;
- E. Familiarize itself with the relationship between land-use regulation, transit and pedestrian/bicycle use;
- F. Monitor the progress of the cost and benefit analysis as described above and evaluate its findings and recommendations.
- G. Generate a report or reports (majority and/or minority if necessary) summarizing the available information and making recommendations with respect to the dedication of the Transportation Infrastructure Tax, the development of a Street Car in the context of roadway, city-wide public transit, and other multi-modal transportation improvements, and the financing of these improvements by September 1, 2008.

VISION, MISSION, VALUES

The Task Force developed and approved by consensus the following Vision Statement, Mission Statement, and Values to guide its work and recommendations:

Vision Statement

“Dramatically reduce the need for travel while increasing transportation opportunities and choices for residents and visitors.”

Mission Statement

“Albuquerque’s 21st Century Transportation Task Force will consider relevant local government goals and policies in recommending a comprehensive course of action and priorities for funding and building balanced, integrated transportation systems in the coming decades.

The Task Force will make recommendations with respect to the continuation and dedication of the Transportation Infrastructure Tax, the development of a modern streetcar in the context of roadway, city-wide public transit, and other multi-modal transportation improvements, and the financing of these improvements.”

Values*

Accessible

Affordable

Convenient

Environmentally Sensitive

Equitable

Land Use Connections

Multi-Modal

Regional

Safe

* This list of the Task Force’s top nine values was arrived at via the following process:

- Facilitator Mike Smith divided the Task Force into five small groups of four members each to work on developing a Vision Statement.
- The Task Force as a whole selected Group 1’s statement to use as a starting point for developing a Vision Statement.
- The Task Force went through the other four Vision Statements and identified key words that they considered to be important concepts that explicate the Vision Statement. Twenty-five words were identified, and the top nine became the Values that, along with the Vision and Mission Statements, helped guide the Task Force’s discussions and against which recommendations were tested.

PART II

RECOMMENDATIONS:

**1. ROADWAY, TRAIL & BIKEWAY, AND
OTHER MULTI-MODAL IMPROVEMENTS**

2. TRANSIT

3. DEVELOPMENT OF A MODERN STREETCAR

**4. FINANCING OTHER THAN ¼ CENT
TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE TAX**

**5. DEDICATION OF THE ¼ CENT
TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE TAX**

1. ROADWAY, TRAIL & BIKEWAY, AND OTHER MULTI-MODAL IMPROVEMENTS

ROADWAYS: MAINTENANCE, REHABILITATION, DEFICIENCIES

General Observation: The City's use of ¼ Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax funds and other transportation funds should be reevaluated in light of the increasing social and economic costs of excessive vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in Albuquerque. An increased emphasis on multi-modal roadways that facilitate walking, bicycling and public transit is appropriate at this time in our history.

MAINTENANCE

Observation: Since the tax enactment in 1999, the City has used Transportation Infrastructure Tax proceeds to improve “very poor”, “poor”, and “fair” roadways into a “good” condition. Current funding for maintenance relies extensively on the Transportation Infrastructure Tax. City road miles have increased from 3,990 lane miles to 4,470 lane miles since 1999. A stable funding level for the maintenance program will be needed to keep our system at adequate levels. Such a level must take into account both the steady increases that have occurred in overall Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) revenue as Albuquerque and its economy have grown, and the increases in roadway miles.

- **Policy Recommendation 1:** Biennially review the percentage of the tax that is set aside for street maintenance, in order to evaluate a possible basis for additional funding that can be put towards other mobility and transit purposes.
- **Policy Recommendation 2:** Reduce the cost of maintenance with an eye toward using the lowest first cost and long-term cost, lowest impact (sustainable, recycled and low-energy input) materials, methods and systems.
- **Policy Recommendation 3:** Include trails and bikeways in the Maintenance program.

REHABILITATION

Observation: Rehabilitation includes reconstruction and modernization of public roadways and rights of way, including sidewalk, curb, gutter, and in some places, street furnishings and/or landscaping.

- **Policy Recommendation 1:** Rehabilitation projects should examine the entire right-of-way to enhance usefulness for all mobility modes, including improvements for automobiles as well as for transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
- **Policy Recommendation 2:** Rehabilitation projects should prioritize the improvement of connections from automobiles and pedestrian travel to other modes of travel, as well as improvement of conditions for pedestrians.

- **Policy Recommendation 3:** Reduce the cost of maintenance with an eye toward using the lowest first cost and long-term cost, lowest impact (sustainable, recycled and other low energy input) materials, methods and systems.
- **Policy Recommendation 4:** Include trails and bikeways in the Rehabilitation program.

DEFICIENCIES

Observation: Optimize roadway capacity by constructing missing links in the roadway network. Deficiency projects should enhance the capacity, safety, and efficiency of all modes of travel within the roadway network.

- **Policy Recommendation 1:** When building new roads and improving existing roadway facilities, include improvements for all transportation modes and mobility options including motor vehicles, transit operations, pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **Policy Recommendation 2:** Future improvements should prioritize connections between the various mobility modes and missing links to the arterial roadway network.
- **Policy Recommendation 3:** Funding to correct deficiencies should prioritize the projects based on 1) the potential public safety and pedestrian safety impacts, 2) the actual numbers of people and breadth of population sectors served – getting “biggest bang” per taxpayer dollar spent, with particular consideration for equitable treatment of all resident populations, and 3) taking maximum advantage of opportunities to leverage State and Federal funds. This requires better coordination with land use planning, zoning and housing policy so that residents are best served by significant public investments in transportation infrastructure.
- **Policy Recommendation 4:** Continue to develop Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) management tools, managed lanes (using existing lanes for different travel directions depending on demand and time of day), queue jump lanes (providing transit priority) and other traffic management strategies that increase the efficiency of existing and newly-constructed roadways. For public transit to compete with the flexibility of the automobile, it requires an advantage at identified "choke points" and this should be given consideration in all deficiency analyses.
- **Policy Recommendation 5:** Include trails and bikeways in the Deficiency evaluation program, with an emphasis on "missing links".

Development Process Manual and City Standards

- **Policy Recommendation 1:** Review the Development Process Manual, City standard specifications and details, and Subdivision Ordinance to improve and support safety, multi-modal travel and connectivity. This may involve updated standards for sidewalks, landscape/streetscape, drivepads, intersection geometry, lane widths, transit stops, and crosswalks that promote bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- **Policy Recommendation 2:** Develop and codify street standards that create roadway environments that effectively reduce motor vehicle speeds. This should initially focus on residential streets.

* * *

TRAILS & BIKEWAYS

Observation: Trails and bikeways increase the quality of life for Albuquerque residents as well as promote our city as a community that is friendly to tourism and energy efficiency. They serve both recreational and commuting purposes. While the city has an excellent system, improvements in connectivity (at major obstacles such as interstate and river crossings) could make it truly world-class. The trails system has deferred maintenance issues that need to be addressed.

- **Policy Recommendation 1:** Future projects should prioritize construction of trails and bikeways that are currently key missing links in the network. Emphasis should be on improving access to transit routes and major destinations.
- **Policy Recommendation 2:** Include trails and bikeways in the Maintenance, Rehabilitation, and Deficiencies programs.

* * *

OTHER MULTI-MODAL IMPROVEMENTS

(Pedestrian facilities, easements, and rights-of-way other than roadways)

Observation: Many residential subdivisions and commercial/industrial developments have been intentionally developed with cul-de-sac streets which prevent cut-through traffic; however, that creates dead ends for pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobiles. This restricts mobility. In some cases, existing public easements and rights-of-way could facilitate connections and in other places pedestrian and bike easements may have to be purchased from property owners.

- **Policy Recommendation 1:** Investigate all dead-end street systems and cul-de-sac streets for the possible addition of pedestrian/bike connections and removal of obstacles that reduce connectivity. Create a fund for the purchase of easements.

SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

Observation: Many of the older subdivisions and commercial/industrial developments have sidewalk and pedestrian facilities which do not meet current Development Process Manual standards. In addition, the current Sidewalk Ordinance does not address maintenance, rehabilitation, and improvements to mitigate deficiencies. With a shift in modal choice for transportation occurring, there is a stronger need for continuous and well-built sidewalks and pedestrian facilities.

- **Policy Recommendation 1:** Identify and inventory sidewalk and pedestrian facilities that are substandard and/or do not exist and are needed.
- **Policy Recommendation 2:** Review Sidewalk Ordinance and modify it as needed to address existing deficiencies and allow the City the ability to create a continuous sidewalk network for pedestrian traffic.
- **Policy Recommendation 3:** Investigate other funding sources to build needed sidewalks.

2. CITY-WIDE PUBLIC TRANSIT

These observations and recommendations include not only use of the ¼ Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax, but of other transit funding sources. They also address the effect of land use on transit feasibility.

DEDICATION OF THE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE TAX

Observation: Current transit funding relies on the ¼ Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax. If transit is viewed as a public service intended to play a significant role in the future multi-modal transportation system, while simultaneously serving other public purposes, it requires greater funding stability and amounts than those offered by the current Transportation Infrastructure Tax.

- **Policy Recommendation 1:** Ensure that Transportation Infrastructure Tax revenue, at a minimum, remains even on an inflation-adjusted basis for *ABQ Ride*.
- **Policy Recommendation 2:** Increase *ABQ Ride*'s share of Transportation Infrastructure Tax revenue from the existing 20%. Reallocate annual additional roadway maintenance funds and all Transportation Infrastructure Tax revenue growth to transit for infrastructure and route expansion.

MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

Observation: *ABQ Ride* will play an increasingly pivotal role in the community's overall future transportation system. *ABQ Ride*, or some form of community-wide public transportation system, must be considered the "backbone" of public transportation to serve community-wide and regional customers. In performing this function, *ABQ Ride* service should be well integrated and connected to other modes of public transportation, including the pedestrian and biking networks. A well-funded, responsive public transportation system can and should effectively and efficiently serve citizen and community goals.

- **Policy Recommendation 1:** Provide mobility options to compete with automobile use.
- **Policy Recommendation 2:** Provide access for low-income, elderly, youth and disabled populations, recognizing that national/local demographic trends portend much higher elderly populations in the future. Elderly populations would be more able to "age in place" if they are afforded mobility options. Young people would be less dependent on driving by adults or buying a car to meet their mobility needs.
- **Policy Recommendation 3:** Advance the cause of lowering greenhouse emissions, reducing the community's carbon footprint, and assisting the region in maintaining federally mandated air quality standards by reducing per capita vehicle miles traveled.
- **Policy Recommendation 4:** Provide adequate mobility capacity in increasingly congested corridors by reducing headways, improving Intelligent Transportation Systems, and introducing managed lanes and queue jumpers to facilitate public transit.

ORGANIZATION: TRANSIT & INSTITUTIONAL

Observation: If *ABQ Ride* is not a robust, healthy operation, any other public transportation modes or services connecting to it will not be well served or effective.

- **Policy Recommendation 1:** Manage *ABQ Ride* like a business by employing Total Quality Management and moving toward a truly customer-focused transit operation with increased transparency and information sharing.
- **Policy Recommendation 2:** Consider changing *ABQ Ride* to a separate “authority” with its own autonomous Board of Directors and taxing authority.
- **Policy Recommendation 3:** Establish more aggressive transit ridership growth targets and support target achievement by employing decision-making based on specific goals and performance standards.
- **Policy Recommendation 4:** Perform benchmarking and employ successful methods and campaigns used among the best transit systems of comparable size.
- **Policy Recommendation 5:** Expand *ABQ Ride* staff commensurate with transit growth targets.

TRANSIT SERVICE DESIGN

Observation: Improving transit service design and transit facilities will increase the overall usability, attractiveness and appeal of the transit system, thereby leading to increased ridership.

- **Policy Recommendation 1:** Improve the image and appeal of riding transit by being responsive to customer feedback in terms of safety, services and amenities.
- **Policy Recommendation 2:** Provide clean, well-maintained vehicles.
- **Policy Recommendation 3:** Install bus shelters at every bus stop. Develop criteria, starting with ridership, for prioritizing shelter locations.
- **Policy Recommendation 4:** Promote the use of clean, low polluting, low energy use vehicles and sustainable practices in all aspects of transit administration and operations.
- **Policy Recommendation 5:** Implement a mix of transit services to respond to differing transit markets based upon 1) needed capacities, 2) transit technologies/ vehicles/energy inputs and 3) convenience/frequency/hours of operations, all connected through a series of transit facilities.
 - Inter-regional service conveniently connecting to areas outside the metro area.
 - Rapid service within the metro area particularly serving major employment centers.
 - Local circulator service within each sector or community connecting to transit centers, neighborhood services and shopping, rapid and local transit service.
- **Policy Recommendation 6:** Consider other aspects of community and neighborhood planning that could benefit from neighborhood transit service such as enhancing neighborhood identity and social interactions, and hiring of senior citizens and those interested in part-time employment to operate the local transit system. Further discussion of the need for population density to support transit is needed, particularly in redeveloping transit corridors.

- **Policy Recommendation 2:** Secure additional funding sources to improve/expand existing transit service commensurate with the expected role transit must play in the community's transportation future and achievement of sustainability goals.
- **Policy Recommendation 3:** If any portion of the Transportation Infrastructure Tax that is dedicated to Transit is not spent in a given year, it should be placed in a dedicated trust fund for future-year use.
- **Policy Recommendation 4:** Seek partnership funding, such as alternative energy companies that can/may/want to sponsor transit-related projects.

PUBLIC AWARENESS & OUTREACH

Observation: Many populations that could benefit from transit and mobility options are not aware of them or how to use them. Elderly populations would be more able to “age in place” and young people get to jobs and school if they are afforded mobility options including more walkable streets, transit and bicycle facilities.

- **Policy Recommendation 1:** Provide the public with information regarding the broad mobility, economic and health benefits of transit service.
- **Policy Recommendation 2:** Model a public awareness campaign after that of water conservation in terms of breadth, aggressiveness and its enduring nature.
- **Policy Recommendation 3:** Develop an education program to teach residents how to use transit. Develop programs specifically for youth and elderly groups that may be presented at schools and senior centers. Develop public service advertisements for the community at large. Focus on where to find and how to read schedules, fares, and bicycle-transit connectivity.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF A MODERN STREETCAR

MAJORITY POSITION – We support further analysis and future development of a Modern Streetcar on Central Avenue in Albuquerque. If a majority of streetcar funding is secured through other sources (e.g., Tax Increment Development Districts, Public Improvement Districts, private sponsorships, etc.), we also support the use of a small percentage of the ¼ Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax to construct and operate a modern streetcar.

Observation: Albuquerque is a forward-thinking city that wants to provide support for neighborhood-serving local businesses and enhance the tourism and convention economies. The addition of modern streetcar to Albuquerque’s transit service will expand opportunities for residents to utilize public transportation, increase overall ridership, provide and strengthen connections to other modes, and spur redevelopment along the Central Avenue corridor. The alignment from 4th St. to San Mateo Blvd. provides access to the greatest number of major destinations and has the most potential to be a successful starter line in Albuquerque. The streetcar is both a transportation investment and an economic development tool. As such, financing of the streetcar should draw from different sources to reflect its dual purpose.

It is critically important to make some transportation investments that have the demonstrated capability to increase adjacent land capacities. A key to addressing some of Albuquerque’s longer term transportation problems is creating more work and living environments for a portion of the urban core that have the land use capacity and appropriate uses to increase non-automobile trips and reduce automobile trip lengths. The streetcar is both a transportation facility and an economic stimulus tool, and it serves a very real transportation purpose. The recommended streetcar alignment is accessible within ½ mile to 1 out of every 8 jobs in the region and 1 out of every 20 persons. Central Avenue is the right corridor for the streetcar.

The Alternatives Analysis for the Rapid Transit Project plan was started in the 1990s as the Middle Rio Grande Connections Study. The “Transit” portion of this study resulted in the systems plan (see Figure 2 below). This systems plan was utilized as the starting point for the Alternatives Analysis. The Alternatives Analysis provided the basis for the streetcar recommendation. Note that the systems plan also anticipated the New Mexico Rail Runner Express. It would be nice if this entire plan could be built out tomorrow, but that is not possible, no more possible than building out the Roadway Plan tomorrow. The streetcar is one piece of this system.

Most of our roadway improvements do not result in any sustainable operational improvement but this is rarely used as any kind of an argument against these types of investments. While fixed route bus service may always be the major staple of the public transit system, there have to be some parts of this system that offer a different level of service and experience. Besides the “curb appeal” which is an important part of attracting new users, this same appeal is also a primary basis for private investment in the corridor, something fixed route bus service cannot achieve.

With regard to alternatives to the proposed modern streetcar, there is no doubt this discussion could continue for a long time. Most rail new starts take an average of 10 years to implement after initial feasibility studies are complete. Much of this time is spent second guessing the preferred alternative and speculating about a disturbingly large array of alternative investments.

During this 10 years, the capital costs continue to rise, and the loss in opportunity costs becomes significant (locational decisions, private investment, etc.). Almost every rail New Start in the last 15 years (once implemented after years of criticism and study) has resulted in the demand for additional rail investments.

Because rail is the most efficient and economical transportation in the long run, we believe that funding for the streetcar system should derive, in part, from the Transportation Infrastructure Tax. Urban revitalization and community identity and image are added benefits that reinforce our recommendation.

Substantial capital investment in relatively inefficient means of transportation that are inherently more dependent on fossil fuels (both for operation and maintenance) is unacceptable. Buses, although an integral part of the system, use more fuel, produce more pollution and btu's, and need to be replaced more often than fixed-guideway transit. The most pressing need of the city is to begin the hard work of creating a 21st century transportation system, a new paradigm that will allow the city to progress rather than wallow.

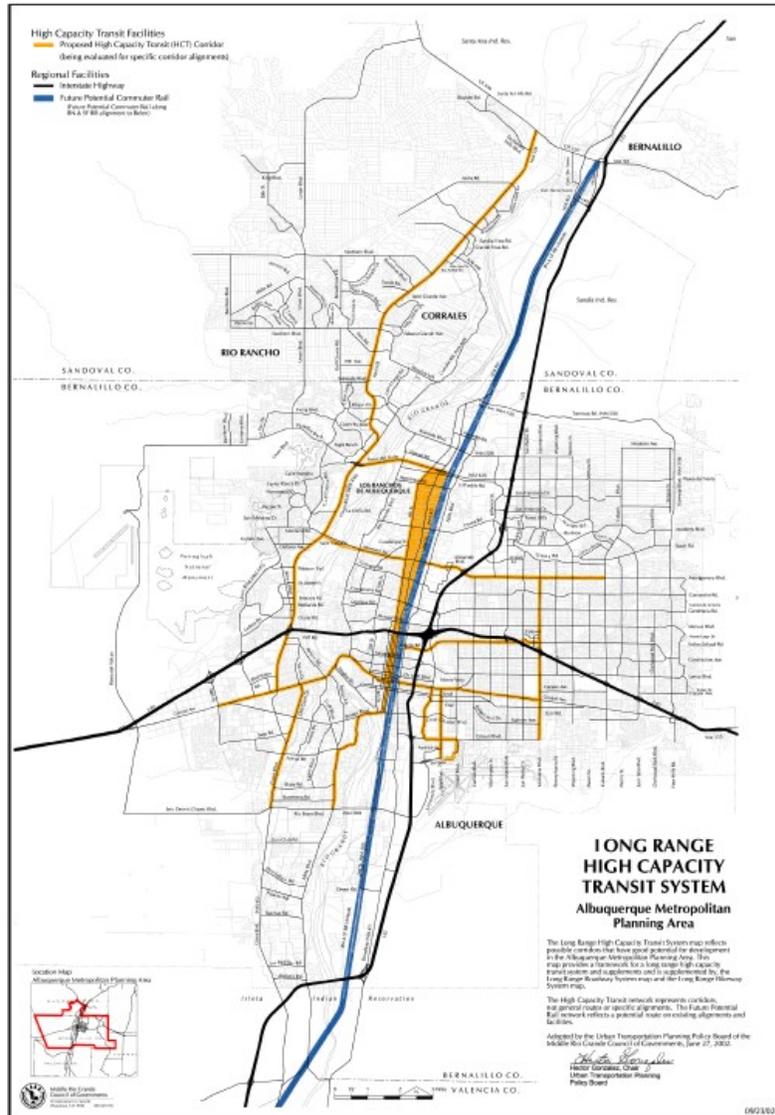
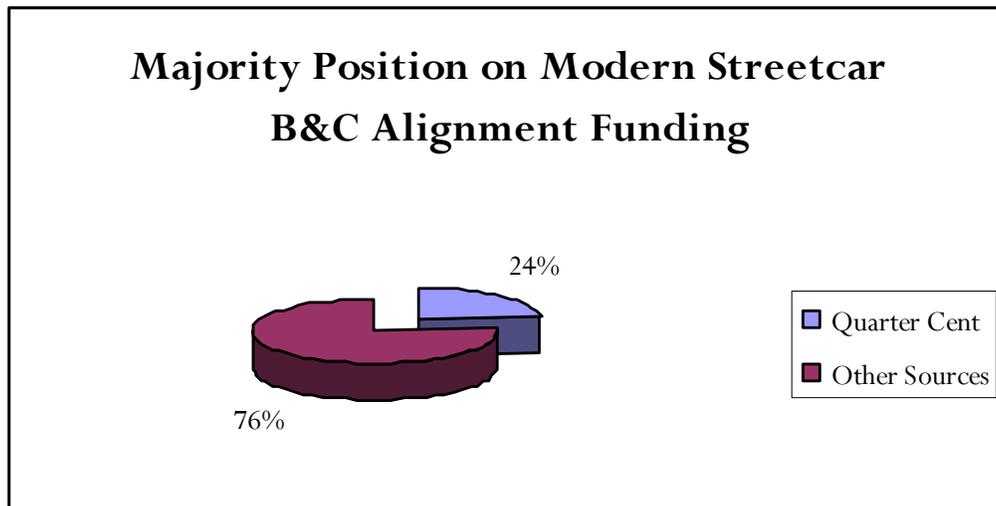


Figure 2: Long Range High Capacity Transit System, Middle Rio Grande Connections Study, 1999

- **Policy Recommendation 1:** Secure funding sources other than Transportation Infrastructure Tax to support the construction and operation of a Modern Streetcar on Central Avenue. These could include any combination of a Tax Increment Development District or Districts, a Public Improvement District, private sponsorships, institutional contributions, State or Federal funding, and funds from the City’s General Obligation Bond.
- **Policy Recommendation 2:** Conditional upon securing other funding sources as described in Recommendation 1, dedicate up to 14% of the Transportation Infrastructure Tax to construct and operate the recommended B&C alignment.¹
- **Policy Recommendation 3:** In the event that other funding sources are not secured within three years, these funds should remain as part of Transit’s allocation of the tax.
- **Policy Recommendation 4:** The proposed streetcar should be accorded a high priority as a transportation project. State monies for a line connecting the airport should be pursued.



¹ Leland Consulting Group and Fehr & Peers, Albuquerque Streetcar Evaluation: Summary Report, 1 Aug. 2008.

MINORITY POSITION – We do not support the use of any ¼ Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax revenue to fund the construction and operation of a Modern Streetcar.

Observations:

The City of Albuquerque needs to increase public transit as it moves into the 21st Century if it is to provide sustainable transportation to serve the community. The recent spike in energy costs points out the long-term economic and environmental folly of predominant single-occupant vehicle travel. The alternative to the convenience and flexibility of the automobile is an efficient transit system that provides similar time efficiency and flexibility in reaching destinations within the urban area.

While we recognize that the streetcar concept has great potential as a tool for encouraging urban revitalization and strengthening community identity and image, we do not believe that funding for the system should derive from Transportation Infrastructure Tax revenues. The substantial capital investment required by the streetcar does not appear to be feasible given both the more pressing need to sustain and improve our bus system and the current funding environment for transportation in our city and region.

Any form of fixed-guideway transit investment would perform better after Rapid Ride routes and local transit collector systems are improved and expanded. For the same level of funds required by the streetcar, ABQ Ride could greatly expand its supply of rolling stock and provide service throughout the community along several new Rapid Ride routes and a reorganized, connecting system of local bus routes.

One question must first be answered: “What is the primary purpose of the proposed streetcar?” Is it to be a transportation facility or an economic stimulus tool? The answer should be fully developed before funding is considered because the overall system may have to be much larger than is currently being considered. Part of that answer should come from the development community, garnering their support before moving forward with an ‘if you build it, they will come’ philosophy. It is assumed that the development community will likely embrace the concept; however, they will also likely require financial incentives to make the commitment. It seems that it would be prudent that these incentives be discussed prior to embarking upon streetcar development if the primary purpose is to use it for economic stimulus.

Should there be a systematic transit plan developed prior to implementation of a streetcar system so that it fits within a systematic framework? An *Alternatives Analysis Report for the Rapid Transit Project* was prepared in May 2003 which discusses systematic planning; however, that was prior to the Rail Runner development and streetcar discussion. The region now has rail, and portions are served by express and local bus service. A streetcar system must be complementary to the existing system, but should it replace sections of bus routes without replacing the entire route? It is reasonable to construct such a major transit facility in phases, and should more phases be identified at this time? Should logical long-term system termini be identified for a complete system? Updated system planning should occur prior to implementation of a streetcar component.

The Leland Consulting Group Report does not address vehicle crashes. A modern streetcar operates within the same right-of-way as passenger vehicle traffic, thus operations will be affected by mixed flow traffic and crashes. A fixed wheel system does not afford flexibility when encountering a traffic accident. The more serious the crash, the longer the delay. There were 1354 crashes, a rate of 1.24 per day, from 2002-2004 on the proposed streetcar corridor (from Atrisco Rd. to San Mateo Blvd.) confirming that this is not a minor concern. This included 474 injury or fatal crashes. Between the hours of 6:00 am and 9:00 pm there were 1117 crashes for an

average of 1.02/day. It is estimated that the average time to clear crashes ranges between 60 and 75 minutes. If the streetcar operates with a 10-minute headway, a single crash could stop on average 5 or 6 consecutive streetcars. Is it possible that after a few of these delays, riders would abandon efforts to utilize the streetcar? Bus service provides greater flexibility because it can be detoured around crashes, especially crashes involving injuries. If a streetcar operated within its own right-of-way (for example within the median, not in mixed-flow), this would be a less significant issue.

Has consideration been given to the visual impacts resulting from a streetcar? The system will likely be operated using overhead power, which will require roadside supports and overhead wires lining the street. In addition, the system will likely require a number of substations to provide the power, and have the locations of these substations been considered? Of particular concern is the “hum” that frequently is associated with power substations.

Any transit project of this size and cost should probably be handled under the jurisdiction of the Regional Transit District. The streetcar project, as currently proposed, has a route length which is too short to add much value to the overall transit system or to justify its project cost. Funding this project through the Transportation Infrastructure Tax would have long-range negative effects on both the transit system and the maintenance and extension of the street network, both of which this tax is supposed to be partially funding.

Streetcar systems appear to be receiving minimal Federal funding. This project needs to undergo a rigorous analysis. However, a Light Rail Transit Line that extends from 98th Street on the west to Tramway on the east would function as the backbone of a greatly improved transit system. A rail line such as this need not necessarily require the use of heavier rail and vehicles. Placing stations further apart should automatically qualify it for Federal funding as a Light Rail Line.

This Light Rail Line could use the median of I-40 as a right-of-way for substantial portions of the entire stretch. Branches of this line could serve the base, the airport, Mesa del Sol, and other high traffic areas.

The project as presently outlined is not viable. But an expanded rail project might be the catalyst that would spur development while reducing automobile traffic and improving the overall environment. Such a project should justify the higher overall cost.

- **Policy Recommendation 1:** The proposed street car should not be accorded a high priority as a transportation project. If the streetcar proposal is pursued, funding should come from new funding sources, not the Transportation Infrastructure Tax.
- **Policy Recommendation 2:** Though it was not part of the scope of work of Leland Consulting Group’s cost-benefit analysis, the City should study and consider other transit alternatives, including additional limited access bus routes (Rapid Ride) and express buses. Bus rapid transit, in exclusive right-of-way, could also be considered. The operations costs appear to be 31% less for transit (\$137.92/hour for streetcar, \$105.49/hour for bus). Capital costs are less because buses use existing streets, though they must be designed for bus loading.
- **Policy Recommendation 3:** Continue to study proposed streetcar alignments. For example, to better serve downtown if an initial line is constructed between downtown and San Mateo, it may be more functional to run the westbound line up 2nd St to Lomas Blvd to 6th St to Central Ave or Gold Ave to meet the eastbound line. This would provide circulation through the downtown core, better serving the area. This could also be extended in the future using Lomas Blvd for westbound travel between 2nd St and Central

Ave, rejoining the two travel directions at the Central Ave/Lomas Blvd intersection. Future routes could include downtown circulation as well as east-west travel.

- **Policy Recommendation 4:** Consider extending the streetcar line farther east. The boarding/alighting graph in the Leland Report indicates that the majority of westbound boardings for Route #66 occur east of San Pedro Blvd while alightings are high at San Mateo, UNM, downtown and west of the Rio Grande.² This indicates that many transfers will be required at San Mateo to the streetcar from the Route #66. Should a first phase of a streetcar line look at a route from the Alvarado Center to Juan Tabo Blvd or Tramway Blvd to capture the entire eastside route rather than place the line in the middle of the route? Would this help revitalize all of east Central Ave rather than just the portion that is already experiencing revitalization? Also, extension to at least San Pedro Blvd/Louisiana Blvd would provide access to Expo New Mexico, allowing patrons to utilize the rail runner park and ride lots for a rail connection to the annual fair, potentially reducing traffic congestion during that month-long event.
- **Policy Recommendation 5:** If Albuquerque is going to invest in rail transportation, consider whether modern streetcar is the appropriate technology for Albuquerque and determine if a light-rail system would better serve the community. The mixed-flow aspect of the streetcar limits its travel speeds and reduces it to the status of a ‘nicer’ bus. A light rail system might better serve the community at large because it could be more time competitive with the automobile, including walk or bike time on each end of a trip. A streetcar has the capability of moderate light-rail speeds, but needs exclusive right-of-way to safely achieve those speeds. It would be possible to have a streetcar that traveled both in mixed-flow and exclusive rights-of-way; and if that is a long term goal, it seems that the conceptual planning of a system should occur prior to initiating the present streetcar line proposal.

² Leland Consulting Group and Fehr & Peers, Albuquerque Streetcar Evaluation: Summary Report, 1 Aug. 2008: Figure 11, page 22.

4. FINANCING OPTIONS, OTHER THAN THE ¼ CENT TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE TAX

Policy Recommendations for Financing Options other than the ¼ Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax

- **City:**
 - General Obligation Bond (Capital): 2011 Bond – Increase Transit percentage.
 - 2009 percentages were set as follows via R-07-12:
 - a) Streets – 28%
 - b) Bike facilities – 5% of Streets’ 28%
 - c) Transit – 5%
 - General Fund (Operating) – Adjust amounts to move to Transit Dept. and to Transit/Multi-modal planning in coordination with Department of Municipal Development, Planning Department, and Council Services.
- **Federal:** Prioritize funding requests for transit in Transportation Improvement Program
- **State:** Set priorities for State requests in coordination with Metropolitan Transportation Board and Rio Metro, with an emphasis on connections to and roadway improvements for ABQ Ride, managed lanes, and Intelligent Transportation Systems.

5. DEDICATION OF THE ¼ CENT TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE TAX

The Task Force, by consensus, recommends that the ¼ Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax be continued.

Justifications:

- It is clear that with Albuquerque's geographic and population growth, our challenging future transportation needs will not be met without maintaining this funding source.
- Streets must be maintained and improved for multi-modal use, and their capacity increased using various methods.
- Trails, bikeways and pedestrian connections must be improved and expanded to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled and allow mobility choices.
- Public transit ridership and demand for new service is up significantly with the increased cost of fuel. Better service will require more funds for equipment and operations. With fewer federal dollars available, public transit must be funded locally, which will help leverage both Federal and State appropriations to the local system.

What follows is the Task Force's recommendation about how the tax should be dedicated in the future. Specific percentages were arrived at by weighing the needs of and demand for each of the tax's five programs: Road Rehabilitation, Road Maintenance, Road Deficiencies, Trails & Bikeways, and Transit. The Task Force also considered information, such as the availability of other funding sources for each program, before deciding on these percentages. For example, the Task Force was informed by the Department of Municipal Development that funds from the City's General Obligation Bond are more likely to be used for road deficiencies than road rehabilitation, which is why the Task Force is recommending a lower percentage of the Transportation Infrastructure Tax for the deficiencies program.

The Task Force recommends that its specific Policy Recommendations be adopted to direct the use of funds from the Transportation Infrastructure Tax for particular purposes. Policy Recommendations made in Sections II.1 and II.2 of this report are intended to provide guidance for the City Council as it considers extension and future dedication of the tax. This is particularly important with regard to the Roadway Deficiencies percentage and policy recommendations.

As with all aspects of this report, the Task Force voted on the recommended percentage allocations, and the final vote received the support of all but three members of the Task Force. The three members who did not vote in support of this proposed distribution of the tax wanted a higher percentage, closer to 50% rather than 36%, to be dedicated to Transit. Some members who supported the recommendation below also felt that a higher percentage (50%) should be dedicated to Transit, but they were concerned that the higher percentage would be politically difficult to accomplish.

The Task Force also recommends that the dedication section of the Transportation Infrastructure Tax include language that prohibits supplanting, which is the replacement of existing sources of funding with new sources of funding. The language should prohibit reduction in the City's General

Fund support for Transit based simply on the availability of additional Transportation Infrastructure Tax revenue.

Recommended Future Dedication of the ¼ Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax:

Program	Current Percentage	Recommended Future Percentage
Road Rehabilitation	Not less than 32%	31%
Road Maintenance	12%	10%
Road Deficiencies	Not more than 32%	15%
Trails & Bikeways	4%	8%
Transit	20%	36%*

* Should the City decide to accept the Majority Position recommendation of the Task Force and pursue the development of a Modern Streetcar, and should other funding sources comprising 76% of the total cost to build the recommended B&C Alignment be secured, then up to 14% of the Transit portion of the Transportation Infrastructure Tax could be used to fund the construction and operation of the Modern Streetcar. This would leave at least 22% of the Transportation Infrastructure Tax for Transit, which is still an increase over the original amount dedicated to Transit. The Minority Position would keep the entire 36% dedicated to transit modes other than the Modern Streetcar.

