

PLANNED GROWTH STRATEGY



PART
1

FINDINGS REPORT

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Glossary

mg/L	micrograms per liter
acre	area of land equal to 43,560 square feet; about 209 feet by 209 feet if the area is a square.
AGIS	Albuquerque Geographic Information System; a department in the City of Albuquerque government that produces and updates mapping of land usage, property boundaries, infrastructure systems, etc.
AMAFCA	Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority
basalt	durable, dense rock produced from hardened lava flow.
CPA	Community Planning Area
DASZ	Data Analysis SubZones
detention vs. retention	Detention ponds have an outlet, usually a drainpipe. Retention ponds do not have an outlet. They empty by evaporation and/or infiltration.
dip section	a roadway that crosses an arroyo without a bridge.
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency

GIS	geographic information system
gpcd	gallons per capita per day
GRT	gross receipts tax
hydrology	science that deals with the water cycle; precipitation, evaporation, and runoff.
mgd	million gallons per day
mgd	million gallons per day
MRGCD	Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District; an agency that implements and oversees Rio Grande flood protection between Cochiti Dam and the Bosque del Apache Grant south of Socorro.
MRGCOG	Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments
Near Heights	the part of the Northeast Heights that is closest to the Southeast Heights; located between Central Avenue and I-40.
O&M	operation and maintenance
playa	A natural, dry lake depression that has no outlet (Spanish for “shore” or “beach”).
ROW	right-of-way
V/C	volume-to-capacity

Section 1
**Growth &
Infrastructure**

1.0 Introduction

Early in 1995, staff from the City of Albuquerque began work on the Transportation Evaluation Study. This project, managed by a team of staff from key departments throughout City government, had as its purpose the creation of a plan for integrating transportation and community development.

In 1997, Parsons Brinckerhoff staff and the project’s technical and management committees finished their work. The resulting Final Report (June 1997) began with a presentation of a series of principles that participants proposed should govern future plans. These principles include the following:

- Assuring the orderly and efficient provision of urban services,
- Encouraging compact development without crowding,
- Preserving and enhancing neighborhood characteristics,
- Preserving and enhancing the natural environment,
- Managing circulation and accessibility for all modes of travel,
- Meeting and maintaining federal air quality standards,
- Developing partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions and the private sector,
- Assuring adequate funding for transportation project development, and
- Assuring public involvement in the planning process.

Applying these principles, authors of the report proposed the adoption of a “Future Place Image.” This place image would consist of the orderly provision of urban services within an urban service area that would grow steadily, as needed. Within the urban service area, planners envisioned higher density centers and corridors, supported by a transportation system that offered multiple modes of travel. Lastly, the planners envisioned an institutional framework that supports the implementation of all of the above. The concluding chapter of the Final Report contained a series of strategies to implement their recommendations, organized around each of these key concepts.

In the fall of 1997, Bernalillo County staff participated in the City’s effort to build on the Transportation Evaluation Study. Formally known as the Planned Growth Strategy, work began in the spring of 1998.

The integration of City and County policy makers and staff represents the successful implementation of one of the key concepts of the Transportation Evaluation Study. To further the prospects for additional planning and implementation, the City and the County commissioned the Parsons Brinckerhoff team to undertake technical analyses that would support further action on the plan.

In the summer of 1998, the Parsons Brinckerhoff team submitted to the City and the County a draft Interim Ordinance as their first work product. This ordinance became the basis for the eventual adoption of Council Bill R-70 by the City, the “growth policy framework” (R-91-1998 [section 3-8-6 Albuquerque Code of Resolutions] hereafter referred to as R-70). In this Resolution, City policy makers acknowledged the receipt of the Transportation Evaluation Study and committed themselves to completing the plan of work embodied in the scope of the Planned Growth Strategy Project. This includes the establishment of a policy framework providing overall direction for implementation of future growth policies. The Resolution contains:

- Recommendations for the structuring of capital improvements programs and plans to support the emergence of centers and corridors,
- The development of an impact-fee system based on the actual costs of providing services,
- The timing of road and utility construction to assure orderly growth,
- The encouragement of increased densities and mixed uses in centers and corridors, and
- The consideration of “whether, within the context of an amended comprehensive plan, the concept of urban service areas is, on balance, beneficial to the quality of life in Albuquerque, and if so, the determination of the most appropriate areas for urban services.” On this last point the Resolution states that “such a determination would be based on an accurate and publicly reviewed inventory of available and developable land and planned in conjunction with projections of the resources available for expansion.”

Later in 1998, Albuquerque Shared Vision, a not-for-profit civic organization committed to convening citizens to facilitate community development, held the first of several Forums in which participants articulated their concerns and goals for the Albuquerque region. The most recent of these, held in August of 1999, focused on the role of new planned communities. We acknowledge the debt all community-oriented residents owe to Shared Vision for their leadership in this important issue.



Local panel (left to right) Ned Farquhar, Larry Wells, Councillor Tim Cummins, Commissioner Barbara Seward, and Victor Chavez

This Findings Report, the first major deliverable of the Planned Growth Strategy Project, directly addresses the above requirements of R-70, the Planned Growth Strategy policy framework, and should provide the basis for decisions regarding the orderly provision of urban services called for in that Resolution. In Chapter 2 that follows, we address the question of how much land is available and suitable for development, as well as the issue of how much land is required in order to service the community's orderly growth. We do this through a careful analysis of both the supply and demand for land of all kinds in the County during the 1990s. This analysis is refined in the Planned Growth Strategy, Part 2 which addresses the Preferred Alternative.

In Chapter 3, we describe once again the alternative that emerged from the Transportation Evaluation Study, now called the Downtown Scenario. We further describe two other alternatives developed cooperatively with the City and the County. One, called the Balanced Scenario, retains the concept of compact urban form developed in the Transportation Evaluation Study but balances housing and jobs on both sides of the Rio Grande, rather than emphasizing employment on the east side. The third alternative, the Trend Scenario, represents consensus opinion regarding the likely evolution and growth of the metropolitan area assuming the continuation of current trends. This scenario involves the evolution of less centralized, less compact forms of development. It is by no means a worst-case scenario; it is intended to be a realistic assessment of the continuation of current trends.

These three scenarios are the basis of substantial technical evaluation. For each scenario, we estimate the capital costs associated with the provision of water, wastewater, drainage, street and transit transportation infrastructure. These types of infrastructure are, as a group, responsible for most of the (non-school) capital costs of government in the region. Information in Chapter 4 is designed to furnish policy makers and the general public with estimates of expenditures required to support orderly growth under each of the three scenarios.

In Chapter 5, we summarize the policy context for our ongoing work. We identify other projects, plans, studies, and initiatives that bear on the subject of orderly and efficient growth of the Albuquerque metropolitan area and identify their relationship to this planned growth strategy. In doing so, we remind the reader of the complex web of decisions that influence urban form in the region and the need for strong leadership to assure that the built environment meets citizens' expectations both for quality and efficiency.

In the period between January 1999, when we submitted the draft of this report, and today (December 2000), this report has undergone substantial revision and enhancement, as a result of input from the Planned Growth Strategy (PGS) Advisory Committee, and City and County staff. The cost data contained here reflect a deep understanding of actual conditions in the City and County. In all, the report better suits its original purpose—to inform important decision making about the costs of planned growth in the City and County. The authors thank all the staff and citizens who contributed valuable time to improve this product.

During this same period, work by staff and members of this consultant team has resulted in the development of a recommended Preferred Alternative for future growth, which is a combination of desirable aspects of several of the scenarios evaluated here. The Preferred Alternative is described in a separate report. Further, a specific implementation strategy was developed by Freilich, Leitner, and Carlisle. The Part 2 Report, also deals with fiscal issues related to the implementation strategy. This portion of the report was prepared by Growth Management Associates.

These products, as a group, will enable City and County elected officials to implement the commitments they have made in undertaking the Planned Growth Strategy.

In summary, as part of the larger PGS work effort, this Findings Report has been designed to address the following questions:

- How much land do the County and City need to accommodate orderly growth?
- How much public and private capital do we need to spend?
- How can citizens get the most from the dollars we need to spend to support growth?

With answers to these questions, we hope to further the implementation of the region's desired vision for planned growth.