City of Albuquerque

Timothy M. Keller, Mayor

Greater Albuquerque Active Transportation Committee (GAATC) & Greater Albuquerque Recreational Trails Committee (GARTC) Task Force

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Zoom meetings will be recorded for note-taking purposes.

GAATC & GARTC Task Force Members
Adrian Carver, Chair
Alex Applegate, GAATC
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Dustin Berg, GARTC
Melinda Montoya, GAATC
Mariah Tallent, GARTC
Nancy Tankersley, GARTC

Meeting Agenda
November 16, 2026 | 5 – 7 pm

- **Call to order** (Quorum is 4 members present)
- **Introductions**
  - Task Force Members
  - Staff
  - Visitors
- **Review and approve November 16, 2026, meeting agenda**
- **Review and approve September 22, 2026, meeting minutes**
- **Public comment**
- **Discussion & Action.** Review and edit draft recommendations. Take action to finalize recommendations.
- **Adjourn**. No motion needed to adjourn.

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Public Comment Notice

The GAATC & GARTC Task Force will accept public comments related to the Task Force duties. Each participant will have up to two (2) minutes to provide public comment. Please note that the time limit may be reduced at the discretion of the Chair. To provide public comment during the public comment agenda item, please use the virtual "Raise Hand" feature and wait to be recognized before speaking. Alternatively, written comments related to the GAATC & GARTC Task Force duties may be submitted via email by 4:30 p.m. on November 16, 2026. These comments will be read aloud during the meeting. Please send written comments to GAATC@cabq.gov.

Posted at City Hall and Online

GAATC/GARTC Task Force: Draft Findings and Recommendation

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Recommendation at a Glance

GAATC and GARTC should **not merge**. Each should be strengthened in the department that builds and maintains its facilities.

1. **Elevate trail users to the Metropolitan Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (MPRAB).** Add four voting seats reserved for equestrians, hikers and runners, off-road cyclists, and older adults or people with disabilities who use trails. Give the Board explicit duties for recreational trails and a standing Trails Subcommittee. Then retire GARTC, whose work moves to the larger board.
2. **Bring projects to both bodies early.** Require presentation on projects during the planning phase, or at or before 30% design, route intergovernmental review through the City's official response, and require GAATC and the Parks Board to report to each other twice a year.
3. **Build representative membership** by geography and user type, with active recruitment for diversity of race, gender, age and ability.

Taskforce Responsibilities

O-26-28 directed the Task Force to review the governing documents of GAATC and GARTC and to analyze five things: **membership, responsibilities, legal authorities, effectiveness and structure**. It then asked for a recommendation to the Administration and City Council on whether the two committees should merge, due by **December 18, 2026**.

The findings below follow those five elements in order, followed by the options the Task Force weighed. Each finding ends with what it means for the recommendation.

Finding 1: Membership

Trail users have a committee, but not where the decisions about trails are actually made.

Trail users are organized by user type, which is their strength. But they sit on a committee that comments on trail plans, while the Parks Board, which advises on the whole park system and its money, has no seat reserved for them.

Table 1 – Current Membership.

	GAATC	GARTC	Parks Board (MPRAB)
Seats	9	8 voting, plus non-voting organizational members	11
How seats are assigned	4 geographic quadrants + older adults, youth, people with disabilities, pedestrians and transit users, bicyclists	By trail user group: equestrians, runners, off-road cyclists, hikers, active elderly, East and West at-large	One per council district + 2 at large; city residents only
Gaps	Rationale for the quadrants is unclear	Several seats vacant; organizational members rarely attend	Chronic vacancies: 4 to 7 of 11 seats filled, 2022–24

Neither committee addresses gender or racial diversity. Transportation planners treat women as an "indicator species": streets and trails women find safe tend to serve everyone.

City rules bar anyone from serving on two boards at once, so a shared liaison member is not possible.

Recommendation: Secure trail users' voices by establishing seats on the Parks Board.

Finding 2: Responsibilities

GARTC's work overlaps far more with the Parks Board than with GAATC. GAATC's most urgent work, keeping people alive on city streets, has no other home.

Body	What it advises on
GAATC (§ 2-6-15)	On-street walking, biking and rolling; Vision Zero; Complete Streets; transportation and capital programs; also advises Bernalillo County, MRCOG and NMDOT
GARTC (§ 2-6-17)	Off-street recreational trail plans, standards, safety, maintenance and right-of-way
Parks Board (§ 10-1-2-4)	Park system policy, the Master Plan, facilities and financing; may review park project designs

Trails and parks share a home. GARTC and the Parks Board report to the same department and director, and many parks sit along the same river and arroyo corridors as the trails.

Trails and streets do not. DMD manages on-street facilities only; Parks & Rec manages off-street trails. The real overlap between GAATC and GARTC is narrow: the points where streets meet trails.

The safety need is acute. New Mexico again had the nation's highest pedestrian death rate in 2025, and almost half of those deaths were in the Albuquerque area. Albuquerque has nine of the state's ten most dangerous intersections. Albuquerque’s vulnerable road users need a dedicated advisory voice: the region has among the highest pedestrian death rates in the nation.

GAATC's charter is blurry. Its ordinance uses "on-street multi-use trails," which is not a standard planning term.

Recommendation: put trail duties with the Parks Board, where trails are planned and maintained, and keep GAATC focused on on-street facilities for vulnerable road users and on street-to-trail connections.

Finding 3: Legal Authority

All three bodies are advisory only. An advisory body's power comes entirely from being asked, early, by the people who decide, and today nothing requires anyone to ask.

Neither GAATC nor GARTC can approve projects, spend money or regulate users. The Parks Board is also advisory, but its ordinance lets it review park project designs and requires an annual report to the Mayor and Council on the whole park system.

No City rule requires a project to come before either committee. Projects arrive when staff choose to bring them, often after design decisions are locked.

When GAATC has commented directly to other agencies, it has caused conflict. A letter sent to NMDOT on City letterhead contradicted the City's official position.

Recommendation: require City projects with active transportation or trail elements to present during the planning phase, or at or before 30% design, while changes are still possible. Route requests from NMDOT, Bernalillo County and MRCOG through GAATC so its advice is folded into the City's official response rather than sent separately.

Finding 4: Effectiveness

Both committees meet and do serious work. The problem is not attendance; it is that their advice too often arrives late or not at all.

GAATC is active.
Quorum was poor in 2024, improved in 2025 and was met at every 2026 meeting. The 2025 recommendation to merge relied on the 2024 snapshot.

GARTC is dedicated but thin.
It has generally kept quorum, but several seats are vacant and recruitment has lagged since the pandemic.

Major decisions bypassed both.
The Quick Build program and speed limits on the Bosque trail went forward without coming before either committee.

Staffing is the binding constraint.
DMD has lost one position and carried a vacancy for over six years. Staff from DMD and Parks & Rec once attended each other's meetings; that stopped as positions went unfilled.

Trail users and street users overlap.
BikeABQ members described riding streets to reach recreational trails. Coordination between DMD and Parks & Rec came up as critical in every forum.

Recommendation: effectiveness depends less on merging bodies than on putting each one where its advice reaches decision makers. For trail users, that is the Parks Board, where Parks & Rec directors report every month. For GAATC, that is a required early look at street projects, starting in planning. Twice-yearly reports between GAATC and the Parks Board keep the two connected.

Finding 5: Structure

Advisory bodies work best inside the department that builds and maintains what they advise on. Today Parks & Rec staffs two overlapping boards, while DMD staffs one whose charter has grown blurry.

GAATC is staffed by DMD, which manages on-street facilities only. GARTC and the Parks Board are both staffed by Parks & Rec, under the same director.

A GAATC–GARTC merger would create one body spanning two departments, two kinds of facilities and two sets of expertise. City staff could not recall a board merger in decades.

Trail duties are split three ways in practice: DMD for on-street bikeways, Parks & Rec for off-street trails, and the Open Space Division (advised by the Open Space Advisory Board) for open space trails.

"Park" and "trail" mean different things in City code. The zoning code treats most trails as transportation infrastructure or open space, while City planning policy and national park standards treat trail corridors as linear parks. Any change has to define its terms.

Other cities organize this work in several ways:

City	**Structure**
Raleigh, NC	Bicycle & Pedestrian Commission (12) **and** Parks, Recreation & Greenway Board (15): closest to this proposal
Colorado Springs, CO	Combined Trails, Open Space and Parks board
Boulder, CO	Separate Transportation, Open Space and Parks boards
Fort Collins, CO	9-member Active Modes Advisory Board
Santa Fe, NM	10-member Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Recommendation: don't merge. Align each body with its department: trails with parks at Parks & Rec, streets at DMD.

Finding 6: Options Considered

The Task Force narrowed the field to three options. Option A gives trail users the strongest voice and GAATC a clearer charter; B and C remain available for the Task Force to choose instead.

Option	What it does	Strengths	Concerns raised
A. Trail seats on the Parks Board; update GAATC	Four reserved trail seats on MPRAB; GARTC retired once they are filled; GAATC ordinance updated	Trail users vote on the park system and its money; one Parks & Rec board; less staff time; one presentation reaches both constituencies	Trail voices could feel smaller on a larger board; MPRAB has had vacancies; current members' share of the vote shrinks
B. Merge GAATC and GARTC	One committee for streets and trails	One larger voice to Council; less duplicated staff time	Spans two departments; different expertise and environments; longer agendas
C. Keep both separate, update each ordinance	Two committees, clearer charters	Preserves distinct constituencies; least disruption	Leaves the GARTC–Parks Board overlap and the coordination gap unresolved

Why Option A gives trail users a stronger voice

1. **A vote, not just a comment.** Trail members vote on the Board's recommendations about the park system that trails run through.
2. **A voice on money.** The Parks Board advises on capital priorities and financing; GARTC does not.
3. **A direct line to decision makers.** Parks & Rec directors report to the Board every month.
4. **Protection written into law.** Four seats are guaranteed to trail user types.
5. **Allies.** Eleven district and at-large members hear trail concerns every month.

Where members stood (informal; no vote taken)

- **Keep separate:** several GAATC and GARTC members on September 22, reaffirmed by a GARTC member on October 13, citing distinct purposes and Albuquerque's outdoor identity.
- **Merge or restructure:** one GAATC member favored a larger merged body; another was open to change if representation holds and staff burden falls.

- **Option A:** raised by the Chair on October 13 and discussed by the members present; Parks & Rec staff noted efficiency gains.
- **Common ground:** geographic and user-type diversity matter under any structure, and DMD and Parks & Rec must coordinate.

Concerns the Task Force should weigh

- **Dilution of current Parks Board members.** District seats would fall from 82% to 60% of the vote, and a reliably present trail bloc could outweigh districts with empty seats. Safeguards to consider: fix the Parks Board's long-standing vacancy problem at the same time, limit non-residents to one trail seat, and ask the Parks Board to endorse the change before it reaches Council.
- **Quorum.** A larger Board needs more members present; the proposal sets quorum at a majority of members actually appointed.
- **Open space trails.** Trails in Major Public Open Space are advised on by the Open Space Advisory Board; the proposal requires the Parks Board to coordinate with it.

If the Task Force prefers Option C, most of this report still applies: early project review, committee-to-committee reporting and the GAATC ordinance updates do not depend on retiring GARTC.

Proposed Ordinance Language (Option A)

This language is offered as a starting point for Council Services and City Legal. Bracketed items are choices or citations to confirm, and numbering will be conformed to the Code. The trail seats come first because they must be filled before GARTC is retired, so no trail user is ever without a seat.

Table 2 - Proposed Ordinance Summary

Code section (ROA 1994)	Body	Change
§§ 10-1-2-3 and 10-1-2-4 (Ch. 10, Art. 1)	Metropolitan Parks and Recreation Advisory Board	Adds four trail seats and trail duties
§ 2-6-17 (Ch. 2, Art. 6)	Greater Albuquerque Recreational Trails Committee	Repealed once trail seats are filled; GARTC's bylaws cite an earlier § 14-13-3-8, to be confirmed with Legal
§ 2-6-15 (Ch. 2, Art. 6)	Greater Albuquerque Active Transportation Committee	Definitions updated; early project review and committee coordination added.
§ 2-6-1	Public Boards, Commissions and Committees Ordinance	Not amended; two exceptions written into the specific sections, as § 2-6-1-5(A) allows
§ 14-13-3-7	Open Space Advisory Board	Not amended; referenced for coordination

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AN ORDINANCE amending §§ 10-1-2-3 and 10-1-2-4 ROA 1994 to add recreational trail user members and duties to the Metropolitan Parks and Recreation Advisory Board; repealing § 2-6-17 ROA 1994 (Greater Albuquerque Recreational Trails Committee); and amending § 2-6-15 ROA 1994 to update the Greater Albuquerque Active Transportation Committee.

Section 1. Amend § 10-1-2-3, Composition of the Board (Metropolitan Parks and Recreation Advisory Board)

(A) Amend the first sentence to read: "The Metropolitan Parks and Recreation Advisory Board shall consist of 15 members: 11 members appointed as provided in this section, and four recreational trail user members appointed under subsection (__)."

(B) Add: "*Recreational trail user members.* The Mayor, with the advice and consent of the Council, shall appoint four members who regularly use recreational trails in the greater Albuquerque area, as follows:

(1) One member representing equestrian trail users;

(2) One member representing hikers, walkers and runners;

(3) One member representing off-road and mountain bicyclists; and

(4) One member representing older adults or people with disabilities who use recreational trails.

These members are exempt from the City residency requirement of this section if they reside in Bernalillo County [or Sandoval County]. In making these appointments, the Mayor shall seek nominations from organizations representing trail users."

(C) Add: "The initial terms of the recreational trail user members shall be staggered so that their terms expire after one, two and three years."

(D) Add: "Notwithstanding § 2-6-1-4(B)(5), a majority of the members currently appointed to the Board, but not fewer than five, shall constitute a quorum."

Section 2. Amend § 10-1-2-4, Duties and Responsibilities (Metropolitan Parks and Recreation Advisory Board)

Add:

"(__) *Definitions.* For purposes of this article, "recreational trail" means an off-street path, paved or unpaved, managed by the Parks and Recreation Department, including trails within parks, linear parks and Major Public Open Space, whose primary purpose is recreation, whether or not it also serves transportation. [Place in § 10-1-2-1 if the article has a definitions section.]

(__) The Board shall advise the Mayor, the Council and the Parks and Recreation Department on the planning, design, safety, maintenance and shared use of recreational trails, and on implementation of the Bikeway and Trail Facilities Plan as it relates to those trails.

(__) For recreational trails within Major Public Open Space, the Board shall coordinate its advice with the Open Space Advisory Board established by § 14-13-3-7.

(__) The Board shall review plans and projects that affect recreational trails and provide comments from the trail user's perspective, and shall encourage the acquisition and protection of trail right-of-way.

(__) The Board shall maintain a standing Trails Subcommittee chaired by a recreational trail user member. Subcommittee meetings shall be open to the public, and the Subcommittee shall invite comment from trail users and trail user organizations.

(__) Each City project that materially affects a recreational trail shall be presented to the Board during the planning or conceptual phase, and no later than 30 percent design or its equivalent where a project does not use that stage, and the Board's comments shall be included in the project record."

(__) The Board and the Greater Albuquerque Active Transportation Committee shall each report to the other at least twice a year on matters affecting connections between streets and recreational trails.

Section 3. Repeal of § 2-6-17 (Greater Albuquerque Recreational Trails Committee)

(A) Section 2-6-17 ROA 1994 is repealed effective [the date on which at least three recreational trail user members of the Metropolitan Parks and Recreation Advisory Board have been appointed, or (date), whichever is later].

(B) Notwithstanding § 2-6-1-3(A)(4), a member of the Greater Albuquerque Recreational Trails Committee may be appointed to the Board and may serve on both bodies until the repeal date.

(C) Matters pending before the Committee on the effective date transfer to the Board.

Section 4. Amend § 2-6-15, Greater Albuquerque Active Transportation Committee

(A) *Definitions.* "Vulnerable road user" means a person walking, bicycling, using a wheelchair or other mobility device, using a scooter or other micromobility device, riding or leading an animal, or otherwise traveling in or along a public street without the protection of an enclosed motor vehicle. "On-street facility" means a sidewalk, bikeway, crossing or other facility for vulnerable road users within a street right-of-way. "Recreational trail" has the meaning given in § 10-1-2-4. Retain the existing definition of "active transportation users."

(B) *Purpose.* " The Committee shall advise the Mayor, the Council and City departments on projects, policies and programs affecting vulnerable road users and active transportation users, including implementation of the Vision Zero Action Plan and Complete Streets policy, and on connections between the street network and the recreational trail network." Replace "on-street multi-use trails" with "on-street facilities" wherever it appears.

(C) *Membership.* Add: "The Mayor shall seek members who reflect the city's diversity of race, gender, age, disability and neighborhood." [Add: "Notwithstanding § 2-6-1-4(B)(5), a majority of the members currently appointed, but not fewer than four, shall constitute a quorum."]

(D) *Non-voting liaisons.* "The Department of Municipal Development, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Planning Department and the Albuquerque Police Department shall each designate a non-voting staff liaison to the Committee."

(E) *Project review.* "Each City project that adds, removes or materially alters facilities for vulnerable road users shall be presented to the Committee during the planning or conceptual phase, and no later than 30 percent design or its equivalent where a project does not use that stage, and the Committee's comments shall be included in the project record."

(F) *Intergovernmental review.* "When the City is asked to comment on a project or plan of the New Mexico Department of Transportation, Bernalillo County or the Mid-Region Council of Governments that affects vulnerable road users, the responsible department shall, where time allows, seek the Committee's input and incorporate it into the City's response. The Committee shall not submit comments to other agencies on behalf of the City."

(G) *Coordination.* "The Committee and the Metropolitan Parks and Recreation Advisory Board shall each report to the other at least twice a year on matters affecting connections between streets and recreational trails."

Section 5. Recommended Companion Resolution

"The Council directs the Planning Department to prepare, within [six] months, an amendment to the Integrated Development Ordinance and Development Process Manual requiring confirmation at Development Review Board sign-off that qualifying projects were presented to the Greater Albuquerque Active Transportation Committee or the Metropolitan Parks and Recreation Advisory Board as required by §§ 2-6-15 and 10-1-2-4."