

CHAPTER 2: PLANNING & POLICY FRAMEWORK

A. Bikeways & Trails System Vision, Goals, and Policies

This section defines the vision statement, goals, and policies for the City's bikeways and trails system. Plan objectives and action items/strategies, along with methods to measure success in implementing the Plan, are included in **Chapter 6, Implementation Strategies**. A project management team consisting of members from public agencies and plan development team members adapted the *Bikeways & Trails Facility Plan* and the *Albuquerque Comprehensive On-Street Bicycle Plan* goals and objectives to reflect current issues and concerns about the bikeway and trail system.

1. Vision

The City of Albuquerque envisions a system of bikeways and trails that connect throughout the city to support active transportation and recreation. The city envisions the bikeways and trails network to be an integral part of its system of Parks, Open Space and Trails, which is one of Albuquerque's most valuable assets and is an integral part of attracting economic growth. The bikeways and trails will allow people of all ages and abilities to experience the city using active transportation, such as walking, biking, or skating. The City aims to increase the numbers of shopping, dining, school, and recreational trips made via bikeways and trails in order to improve public health, air quality, congestion management, and quality of life for residents of Albuquerque.

The City will provide access for cyclists, pedestrians, and trail users to all areas of Albuquerque to encourage cycling and walking as a viable transportation options and to provide recreation opportunities, which result in an improved quality of life in the Albuquerque Metropolitan Area.

This Plan will foster the construction and preservation of bikeways and trails, strive for improved safety and improved connectivity; and encourage healthy, outdoor activity. The system will be implemented in partnership with multiple agencies and will be based on consensus and sensitivity to the diverse viewpoints within the community.

With over 620 miles of bikeways, paved trails, and unpaved trails already constructed, the City recognizes that improving the continuity, maintenance, and quality of existing routes should generally take precedence over investment in new routes.

2. Goals & Policies

The goals and policies section provides general guidance for the development of the bikeways & trails system. For more detailed implementation strategies and actions related to these goals, please see **Chapter 6, Implementation Strategies**, and in particular, **Section F, the Implementation Matrix**.

1. Improve cyclist and pedestrian safety.

- a. **Policy:** Develop a legible and predictable trail and bikeway system through planning, design, and implementation of physical improvements.
- b. **Policy:** Provide engineering and multi-disciplinary reviews for new and reconstructed bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- c. **Policy:** Improve the utility of trail and bikeway facilities through programmatic activities, such as facility audits and assessments, education, outreach, and maintenance practices.

- d. **Policy:** Provide a welcoming and comfortable environment for all travelers along roadways and trails.
- e. **Policy:** Balance the need to discourage unauthorized motorized vehicle access on trails with the need to provide the trail users a facility without unnecessary obstructions through application of the best practice guidance for bollard placement in the design guidelines.

2. Develop a continuous, interconnected, and comprehensive system of bikeways and trails.

- a. **Policy:** Develop, construct, and promote an integrated system of bikeways and trails, with facilities distributed City-wide. The metropolitan area-wide recreational and commuter bicycle and trail network should emphasize connections among Comprehensive Plan Activity Centers.
- a. **Policy:** Focus on achieving connectivity of the existing bikeway and trail system when planning and programming trail and bikeway improvements.
- b. **Policy:** Work toward addressing and improving challenging intersections and physical barriers, and consider pedestrian and bicycle movement in the planning stages for new or reconstructed facilities.
- c. **Policy:** Provide access to destinations, such as activity centers, schools, parks, open space, shopping areas, and employment areas, for pedestrians and cyclists as part of a multi-modal approach.
- d. **Policy:** Consider connections between transit and bicycle and pedestrian facilities and reduce barriers where possible.
- e. **Policy:** Reduce implementation costs by including bicycle facilities as appropriate in all new and rehabilitation street projects.
- f. **Policy:** Include parallel paths and safe crossings for bicycles, pedestrians, and equestrians where appropriate in street and highway projects.
- g. **Policy:** Create a multi-purpose network of open areas and trail corridors along arroyos and appropriate ditches. Acquire, regulate, or appropriately manage trail corridors to protect natural features, views, drainage and other functions or to link other areas within the Open Space network.

3. Enhance maintenance of all bikeways and trails, and improve maintenance strategies.

- a. **Policy:** Develop maintenance practices appropriate for each facility type.
- b. **Policy:** Implement priority maintenance as appropriate for each facility type, including trail corridors and bikeways, based on the recommendations in Chapter 6.C, Maintenance and Operations.

4. Increase use of the bikeway and trails network.

- a. **Policy:** Support the development of an integrated bikeways and trails system that serves the interests and needs of transportation and recreation.
- b. **Policy:** Support use of non-motorized infrastructure as part of everyday life for daily activities.

- c. **Policy:** Accommodate all types, ages, and abilities of users in a comfortable manner throughout the system, while recognizing that all modes of travel and/or level of user ability may not necessarily be accommodated on every road or trail.
- d. **Policy:** Support the development of bikeways and trails as in integral part of the City's transportation infrastructure.
- e. **Policy:** Facilitate and encourage commuter cycling and utilitarian trips.
- f. **Policy:** Reduce conflicts between vehicular traffic, cyclists, and trail users.
- g. **Policy:** Reduce conflicts between different types of trail users.
- h. **Policy:** Accommodate the following users in the trail system recognizing that not all can be accommodated on every trail: cyclists (including upright, recumbent, and children), pedestrians (including walkers, runners, people using wheelchairs, people with baby strollers, people walking dogs), skaters, equestrians, and people with disabilities.
- i. **Policy:** Support the development of bikeways and trails as in integral part of the recreation Parks, Open Space, and Trails system (POST), including recreational loops, secondary trails, and neighborhood-scale connecting routes.
- j. **Policy:** Connect the bikeways and trails network with public transit, providing flexibility and choice for travel options and enhancing recreational opportunities.

5. Increase public awareness and education related to bikeways and trails.

- a. **Policy:** Implement a comprehensive program to increase public awareness of bicycling and trail use and to encourage healthy living and active lifestyles through use of the City's trail and bikeway system.
- b. **Policy:** Educate bicyclists, pedestrians, and other trail users on user safety and legal, predictable behavior, including the rights and responsibilities of each mode of travel.
- c. **Policy:** Educate motorists on the rights of pedestrians and cyclists.

6. Recognize and leverage the bikeway and trail network as an integral part of economic development and quality of life in Albuquerque.

- a. **Policy:** Promote bikeway and trail use as a non-polluting, cost-effective, and healthy mode of transportation and recreation.
- b. **Policy:** Promote pedestrian and cycling opportunities and integrate into development to foster pleasant non-motorized travel conditions.
- c. **Policy:** Dedicate a local funding source for construction and maintenance of bikeways and trails. Establish specific budget line items to support the provision of on-street and off-street bicycle systems and programs.
- d. **Policy:** Increase the attractiveness and activity along this system through enhanced streetscape and trail aesthetics, landscaping, and amenities along bikeways and trails where feasible.

- e. **Policy:** Plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain City roads to promote convenient access to all legal users of roads, streets, and highways in a manner that promotes efficient movement of people and goods whether by car, truck, transit, assistive device, foot, or bicycle.
- f. **Policy:** Promote walking and bicycling as legitimate forms of transportation in all planning, design, and programming efforts.

7. Streamline administrative practices and coordination.

- a. **Policy:** Provide adequate staff to implement the *Bikeways & Trails Facility Plan* with appropriate office budgets to promote bicycling and trail use.
- b. **Policy:** Foster ongoing coordination among critical departments within the City to communicate and coordinate activities related to design of bikeways and trails.
- c. **Policy:** Organize and coordinate implementation of this Plan among City Departments and other agencies to produce well-designed facilities and a connected network of bikeways and trails that are safe and enjoyable for the public to use.
- d. **Policy:** Coordinate with Bernalillo County, NMDOT, AMAFCA, MRGCD, and MRCOG and other local jurisdictions as appropriate regarding connectivity, design, implementation, and maintenance.
- e. **Policy:** Develop and maintain databases useful for trail and bikeway planning, inventory, prioritization of improvements, and accident reduction.
- f. **Policy:** Coordinate with APD to develop and implement a traffic law education and enforcement program that teaches pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists about relevant laws for each mode of travel.
- g. **Policy:** Create and support opportunities for public and user input and engagement into the bikeways and trail system. Advisory groups and/or ad hoc committees should support the City's efforts to implement these policies and this Plan.
- h. **Policy:** Regularly accommodate bicycles and pedestrians recognizing that not all facilities may be appropriate on every roadway. Bicycles and pedestrians should be considered in the planning of every road project and by all departments when setting policy and programs.

B. Relationship to Other Plans

This section summarizes relevant documents and policies that regulate and establish a framework for bicycling and walking in Albuquerque. Plans and policies are considered relevant if they directly address bicycle or trail facilities or land-use patterns that directly affect non-motorized transportation. The chapter consists of the following sections:

Existing Bicycle and Trail Plans provides a summary of plans that have led to the current bike and trail facilities, policies, and programs in Albuquerque.

City Plans and Policies summarizes relevant Albuquerque plans and provides specific policies related to biking, walking, and riding in the City.

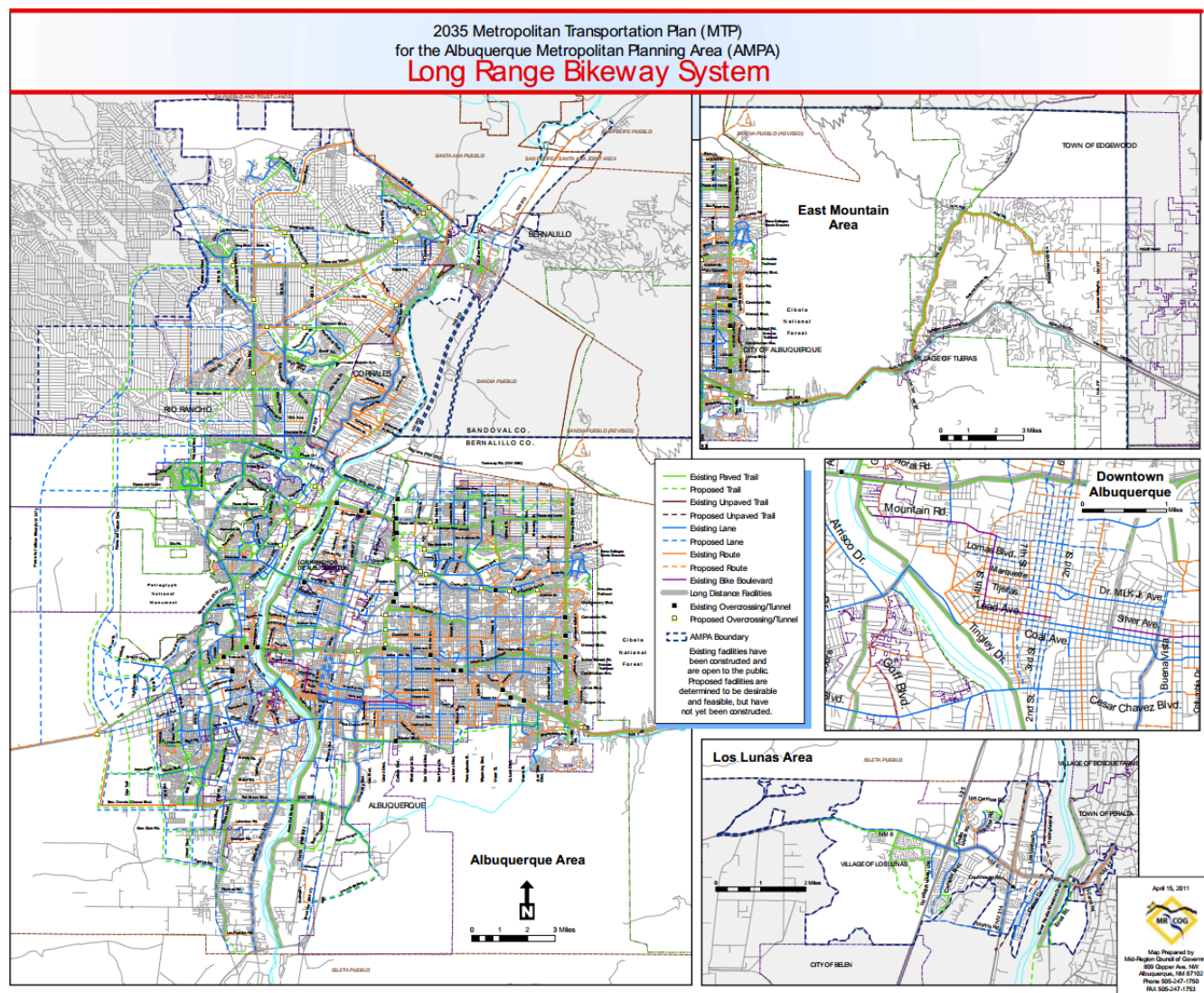
Regional Plans summarizes regional plans relevant to the *Bikeways & Trails Facility Plan*.

1. Existing Bicycle and Trail Plans – City and Regional Plans

Long Range Bikeway System Plan (2007)

The Long Range Bikeway System Plan (LRBSP) maps existing and proposed bike facilities within the Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning Area (AMPA) and is adopted by the Metropolitan Transportation Board through each 5-year Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The LRBSP is the guiding document with respect to planned bikeway location and character. This map combines the on-street and off-street multi-use trails and is included in the annual AMPA Transportation Program. The map is periodically updated by the region in consultation with planners and elected officials from each jurisdiction. **Figure 1** shows the April 2011 map from the 2035 MTP.

Figure 1: MRCOG 2035 Long Range Bikeway System Map



Comprehensive On-Street Bicycle Plan (2000)

The Rank II *Albuquerque Comprehensive On-Street Bicycle Plan*, adopted in 2000, developed recommendations to establish a comprehensive on-street network in order to make cycling a viable transportation option. A comprehensive set of goals, objectives, and action items was developed to be

met by 2020. These objectives are included in this plan in **Chapter 6.A.4, Policies for Bikeway & Trail Development**.

Recommended Facilities. The objective of the on-street networks was to provide an interconnected bikeway network with half-mile spacing connecting major employment/shopping sites, schools, parks, and off-street trails. The proposed network consists of 507 miles of bike routes, lanes and short segments of sidewalk trails. Seventy-two percent (72%) of the recommended bikeways are located on arterial and collector roadways. This high ratio reflects the intent of the on-street bicycle plan to provide direct commuter routes and responds to the desire to integrate non-motorized forms of transportation into our road network. It provides planning-level cost estimates for bikeway corridor projects and recommends a flexible improvement program to implement the proposed network.

Programs and Policies. Encouragement, education, and enforcement programs were recommended in the plan. These include updating and distributing the city bicycle maps, bicycling awareness programs, grade school safety curriculum, media campaigns, and employer incentives for alternative travel. In addition, the plan recommended updating the Albuquerque Comprehensive Zoning Code to include bicycle end-of trip facilities. In 2003, the City attempted to accomplish this goal by updating the General Parking Regulations to increase the amount of required bicycle parking and establish guidelines for end-of-trip facilities (O-02-59). Ultimately, the Mayor vetoed the legislation because of its adverse impact on small businesses and suggested a higher threshold for the building size that would require end-of-trip facilities (EC-520).

Trails & Bikeways Facility Plan (1993)

The City of Albuquerque and the County of Bernalillo jointly adopted the Rank II *Bikeways & Trails Facility Plan* in 1993. This plan established long-range policies for off-street, multi-use trails, and bicycle facilities. The plan identified funding sources (implemented later) and recommended two new positions: a bicycle/pedestrian/trail coordinator in Public Works (now DMD) and a trail coordinator position (Parks).

Recommended Facilities. The *Trails & Bikeway Facility Plan* developed a hierarchy of trail types as well as design standards. Primary trails serve the regional transportation network and also provide secondary recreational benefits. Primary trails were hard surfaced trails that encouraged separation of recreational trail users and commuter cyclists (though rarely accomplished due to right-of-way and budget constraints). Secondary trails provided access to the primary trails and could be either hard- or soft-surfaced trails. Finally, the Plan identified Trail Study Corridors with desirable trail connections but no proposed alignment. The *Trails & Bikeway Facility Plan* incorporated alignments proposed in the Rank II *Facility Plan for Arroyos* and Rank III *Arroyo Corridor Plans*. It also identified the need for an on-street bicycle facility plan (later completed) and a plan for preserving and utilizing the acequia system in the valley for a trail network (not accomplished).

Facility Plan for Arroyos and Arroyo Corridor Plans

In 1986, the City and Bernalillo County jointly adopted the Rank II *Facility Plan for Arroyos* to establish guidelines that “create a multi-purpose network of recreational trails and open space along arroyos.” The plan was also endorsed by the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority (AMAFCA), an agency which is generally supportive of multiple uses of its facilities where compatible with the drainage function. Trail use of AMAFCA property is subservient to its drainage function and is

controlled by revocable licenses approved by the Board of Directors to a public agency able to assume liability and responsibility.

Recommended Facilities. The plan grouped Arroyos in the Metropolitan area into one of three categories – Major Open Space Arroyos, Major Open Space Links, and Urban Recreational Arroyos – and ranked their priority for development. Trail development is specifically outlined for the Arroyos identified as Major Open Space Links and Urban Recreational Arroyos, while Major Open Space Arroyos are intended to remain in natural or semi-natural condition, with limited development of trails.

From a trails standpoint, Albuquerque’s arroyos offer unique opportunities in that they are linear corridors that cross large areas of the city and are generally located away from major roadways with relatively few street crossings. The *Facility Plan for Arroyos* recognizes this opportunity and sets forth policies for providing joint use of the arroyo rights-of-way, combining recreational uses with their primary drainage function. The system envisioned in the *Facility Plan for Arroyos* is intended to address the needs of all types of trail users, including pedestrians, runners, equestrians, individuals with disabilities, and cyclists.

2. Other City Plans & Policies

Comprehensive Plan (2012)

The Rank I *Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan* sets forth goals and policies to guide future land use and development in the city/county. Based on the vision of the community, the plan establishes a long-range plan for growth in a coordinated and coherent urban form to best promote the needs of the city. The plan incorporates goals and policies that support bicycle and trail facilities in all three areas; Land Use, Environmental Protection and Heritage Conservation, and Community Resource Management. These Comprehensive Plan policies were reviewed by the project team, and reflected as appropriate through this Plan. This Plan is consistent with the policy direction set in the Comprehensive Plan.

Area and Sector Development Plans

Rank II area and many Rank III Sector Development Plans also propose various trails, sometimes in a general way, and at other times very specifically. These proposals have all been included in **Figure 11: Proposed and Existing Trails Map**, page 66.

Code of Ordinances (ROA 1994)

Albuquerque has city ordinances related to bicycling and horseback riding that regulate both user behaviors as well as requirements for different facility types. Ordinances related to bikeways and trails are largely addressed in Chapter 8 Traffic Code. Articles 2 (Traffic Regulations) and 3 (Motorcyclists, bicycles and toy vehicles) contain laws pertaining to the ownership of a bicycle, proper riding skills, and bicycle equipment. Article 2 also contains laws related to pedestrian movement, including requirements to cross at right angles to the road, prohibiting crossing at locations other than signed crosswalks, and requiring use of sidewalks, tunnels, and overpasses where provided. Ordinances addressing proper horseback riding are identified in Chapter 8, Article 4: Animals.

Development Process Manual (2008)

The purpose of the Development Process Manual (DPM) is to clarify the development process for City staff, property owners, developers and their agents, especially planners, architects and engineers. The

DPM contains the City's design standards and is intended to successfully carry out the goals and policies of the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan.

All new roads in Albuquerque must be designed to accommodate bicycles. **The DPM establishes pavement width standards for roadways and minimum widths for bicycle facilities.** Arterials require a six-foot minimum bike lane or five-foot paved shoulder bikeway for posted speeds of 35 mph or less; seven-foot bike lane or six-foot paved shoulder bikeway for posted speeds of 40 mph or greater. Collector streets require a minimum six-foot bike lane or four-foot paved shoulder bikeway. All major local roads must have a signed bicycle route without striped lines at minimum or a six-foot wide paved path within a minimum twelve-foot wide Pedestrian Access Route.

Bikeway Location Guidelines and Design Standards are presented in **Chapter 7, Design Manual**. American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 2012* (the "Bike Guide") serves as the principal resource for the location and design of on-street and multi-use trail facilities. DPM standards have not been updated to reflect the most recent version of the "Bike Guide." The DPM provides specific design guidelines for on-street facilities including: bicycle lanes, paved shoulder bikeways, bicycle routes, wide curb lanes, and bicycle boulevards. It also outlines special provisions for bike lanes including design recommendations for dual right-turn lanes, free right turn lanes, crossing conflicts, and bikeway grades.

City of Albuquerque Decade Plan: Capital Improvement Program (2009)

The City of Albuquerque Decade Plan documents the capital improvement projects for the City over a ten year period. Funding for the Capital Improvement Program comes from the General Obligation Bond Program, which is approved by the voters and is updated every two years. Bicycle and trail projects are funded through a number of City departments including Parks and Recreation, Department of Municipal Development, and Planning. **The Decade Plan is the primary instrument for setting priorities for each two year Capital Improvement Program cycle.** As such, efforts to rank and prioritize projects within this Plan would not be able to take into account the changing fiscal, political, and maintenance-driven factors that determine what is programmed by the City.

3. Regional Plans & Policies

2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning Area

Every four years the Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) updates the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The purpose of the MTP is to guide the development of the transportation system for the AMPA. The 2035 MTP sets goals that will lead to the development of an integrated transportation system and includes recommendations aimed at relieving congestion, maintaining air quality, and improving quality of life. The MTP establishes bicycle facilities and trails as important elements in their transportation demand management strategy.

2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan – Key Bicycle & Pedestrian Policies

- Provide sufficient funding to develop and maintain efficient, high-quality pedestrian and bicycle circulation systems for safe, affordable, convenient, and comfortable travel between activity centers, activity corridors, residential neighborhoods, and public transit.
- Support opportunities to redevelop existing roadways as multi-modal facilities (complete streets).
- Promote the development of street patterns and designs that strongly support pedestrian and bicycle comfort, convenience, and safety and give high priority to development projects that closely integrate transportation and land use planning and design.
- Build safe facilities. Plan, design, and build bicycle and pedestrian facilities in accordance with the best practices described in the latest edition of the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities and the AASHTO Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities.
- Develop educational programs that encourage walking and bicycling; teach smart walking and bicycling skills; and teach motorists how to interact safely with pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Maintain strong and effective travel demand management and education programs to encourage, support, and enable shifts of person trips away from single-occupant vehicles and toward walking, bicycling, public transportation, ride-sharing, and work-at-home.
- Collect data and develop analytical methods to monitor and consistently evaluate the effectiveness of all projects and programs.

New Mexico Bicycle / Pedestrian / Equestrian Advisory Plan (2009)

The New Mexico Bicycle/Pedestrian/Equestrian (BPE) Advisory Plan, developed for the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) provides goals, guidance, and recommended design standards intended to improve the facilitation of non-motorized facilities in New Mexico. **State law requires that provisions for pedestrians, bicycles, and equestrians be properly considered in all NMDOT projects.** The BPE Advisory Plan provides recommendations specific to various functions within NMDOT. Recommendations for planning and programs; funding, engineering and design; and education, enforcement, and encouragement have a statewide scope.

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) is responsible for developing the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the state's capital improvement program for multi-modal transportation improvement projects. The STIP prioritizes projects through a transportation planning process with local governments and develops a funding budget for a four-year period. In Fiscal Years 2010-2013, NMDOT allocated \$8.5 Million for bicycle and trail related projects in the City of Albuquerque. However, with recent changes to federal transportation programs and funding, the City is likely to see much less federal funding for bikeway and trail projects in the future.

5. Federal Policies and Programs

Mainstreaming Non-Motorized Transportation

Bicyclists and pedestrians have the same origins and destinations as other transportation system users, and it is important for them to have safe and convenient access to jobs, services, recreation facilities, and neighborhoods.

Federal surface transportation law places a strong emphasis on creating a seamless transportation system that all users can enjoy and use efficiently and safely. Current federal transportation policy is to increase non-motorized transportation to at least 15% of all trips and to simultaneously reduce the number of non-motorized users killed or injured in traffic crashes by at least 10%. This shift in policy has given tremendous flexibility to States and MPOs to fund bicycle and pedestrian improvements from a wide variety of programs. Virtually all the major transportation funding programs can be used for bicycle and pedestrian related projects. Specifically, States and MPOs are encouraged to:

1. **Include bicycle and pedestrian improvements as an incidental part of larger projects.**
2. Review and use the most appropriate funding source for a particular project and not rely primarily on transportation enhancements. Many bicycle and pedestrian projects are more suitable for funding under the congestion mitigation and air quality improvement program or the surface transportation program.
3. **Exceed minimum design standards and requirements** of transportation agencies and local communities to create safe, attractive, sustainable, accessible, and convenient bicycling and walking networks.
4. **Consider walking and bicycling as equals with other transportation modes.** Because of the benefits they provide, transportation agencies should give the same priority to walking and bicycling as is given to other transportation modes. Walking and bicycling should not be an afterthought in roadway design.
5. **Ensure that there are transportation choices** for people of all ages and abilities, especially children. People who cannot or prefer not to drive should have safe and efficient transportation choices.
6. Collect data on walking and biking trips and set mode share targets for walking and bicycling and track them over time.
7. **Improve non-motorized facilities during maintenance projects.** Transportation agencies should find ways to make facility improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists during resurfacing and other maintenance projects.

Improving conditions and safety for bicycling and walking embodies the spirit and intent of Federal surface transportation law and policy to create an integrated, inter-modal transportation system that provides travelers with a real choice of transportation modes. State and local agencies are challenged to work together cooperatively with transportation providers, user groups and the public to develop plans, programs, and projects that reflect this vision. For more information on these policies, see the 2010 U.S. Department of Transportation “Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation.”

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)

In 2012, Congress passed the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). MAP-21 requires that planning organizations incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities into all annual and long-range Transportation Improvement Programs. MAP-21 creates a streamlined, performance-based, and multimodal program to address the many challenges facing the U.S. transportation system. These challenges include improving safety, maintaining infrastructure condition, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency of the system and freight movement, protecting the environment, and reducing delays in project delivery. Bicycle and pedestrian improvements are now addressed in the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), which is equal to 2% of the total amount authorized.