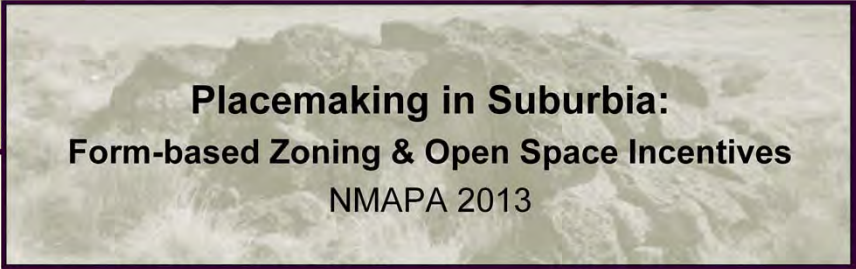


**Mikaela  
Renz-Whitmore**  
*Long-range Planner*

# Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan



**Placemaking in Suburbia:  
Form-based Zoning & Open Space Incentives**  
NMAPA 2013

October 2, 2013

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## City of Albuquerque

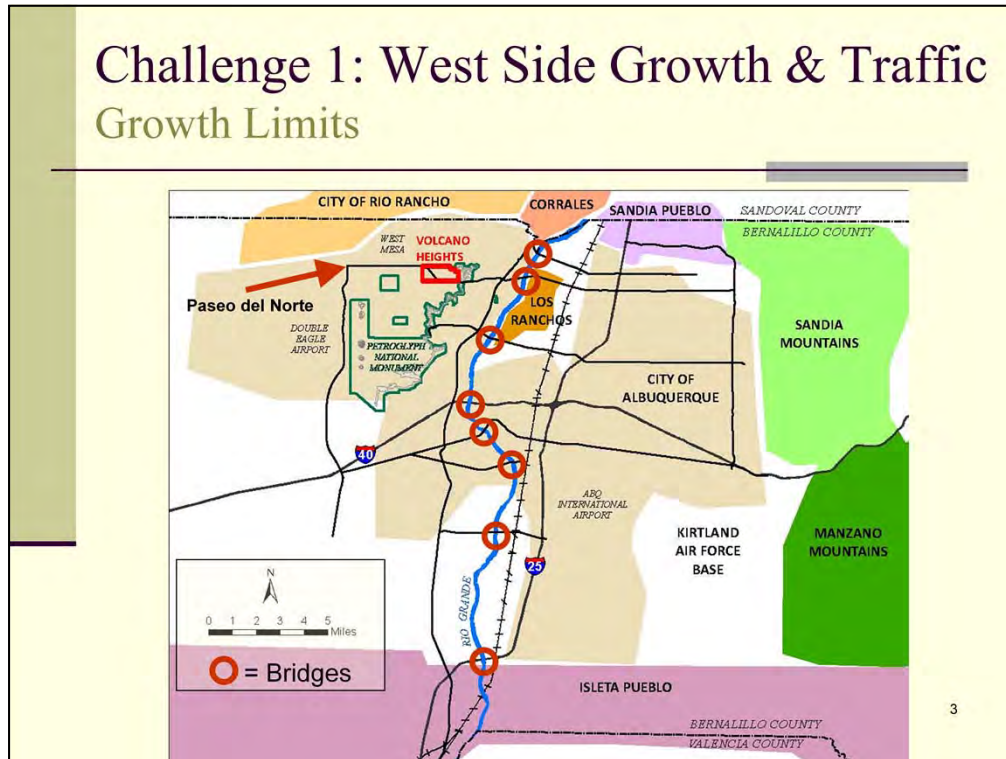
### Sector Development Plans

- Plans for small areas
- Purpose:
  - Protect and enhance special character of development
  - Set zoning, regulations, and policy

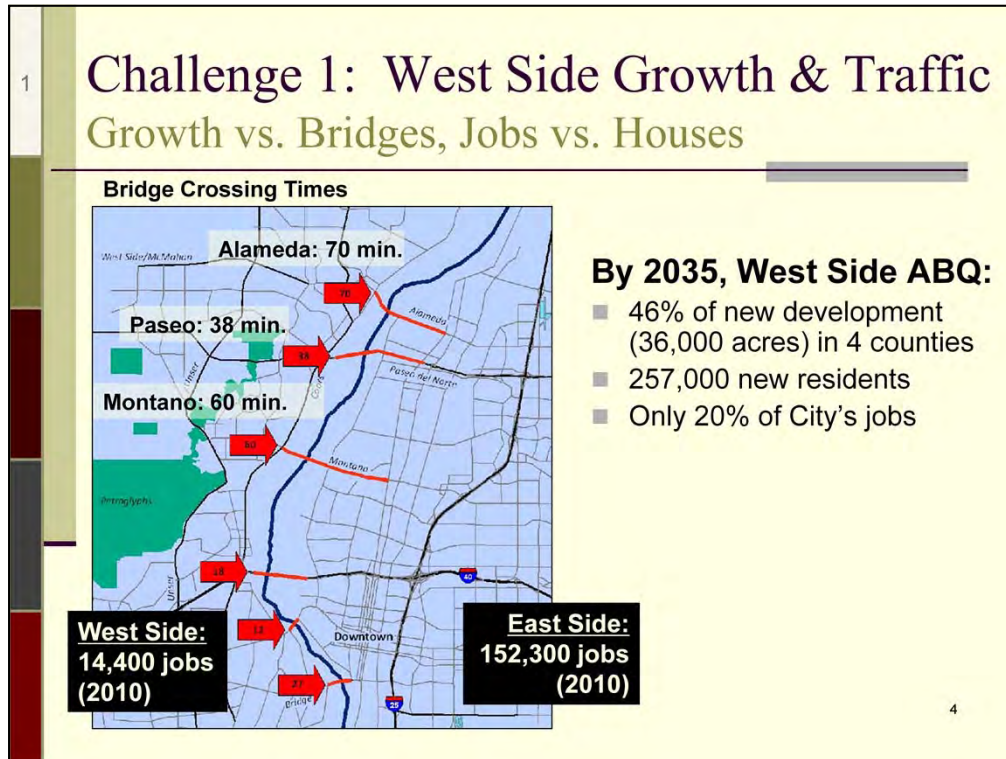
Sector Development Plans with SU-2 or SU-3 Zoning

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Most jurisdictions have different terminology to refer to their hierarchy of plans. Just so we're all speaking the same language, the City of Albuquerque calls plans for small geographic areas with zoning, regulations, and policy "sector development plans." These are Rank III Plans, which must conform to guidance set by the higher-ranking Comprehensive Plan (Rank I) and area plans (West Side Strategic Plan, the Rank II plan relevant in Volcano Heights).



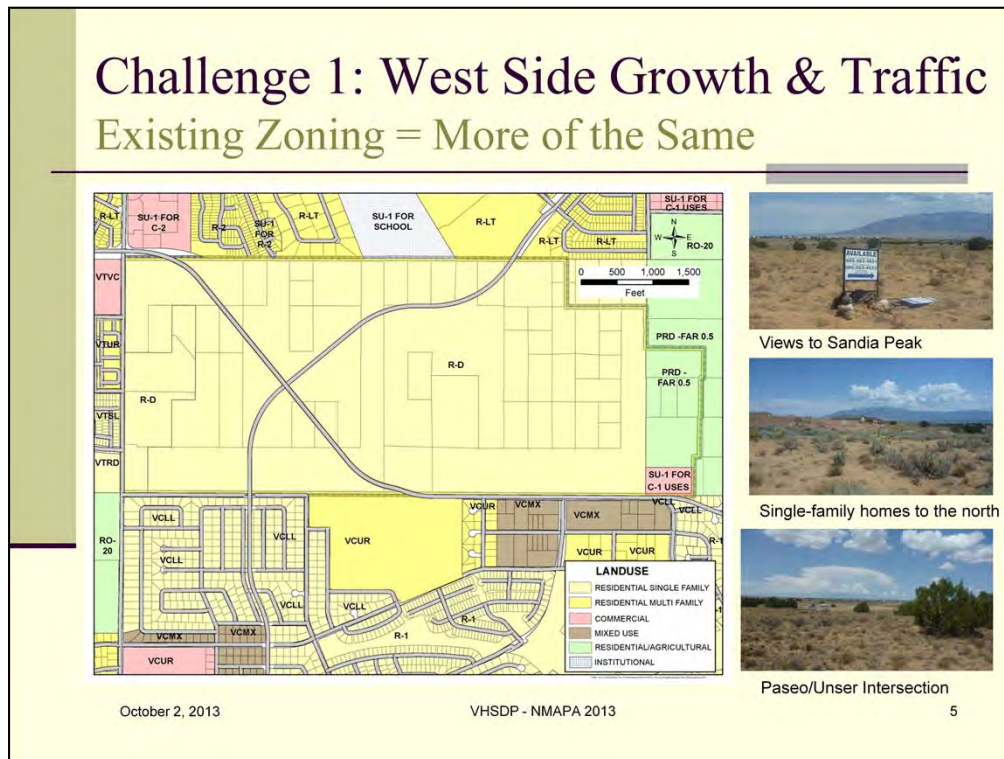
Let's start with the big picture. Opportunities for growth in Albuquerque are limited. The mountains to the east, other jurisdictions to the north, Kirtland Air Force Base and Isleta Pueblo to the south – all form barriers to growth on all but the City's west side. The region's limited river crossings, which are already congested, and the pattern of existing development – with primarily residential uses West of the river and almost all employment opportunities east of the river – pose significant challenges for land use and transportation in the future.



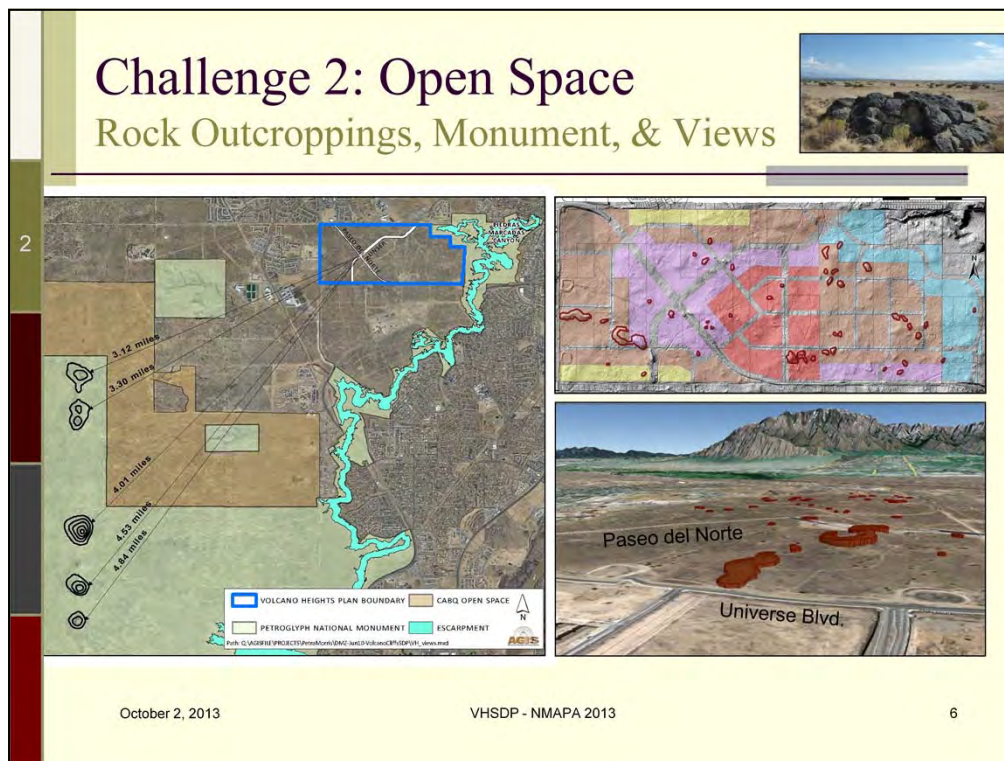
The problem is not new to many Albuquerque residents. For years, transportation studies have warned of the growing congestion problems on the City's bridges. The Mid-Region Council of Government's (MRCOG) latest Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the year 2035 estimates that river crossing times will approach an hour, pushing commute times to an hour and a half or more for West Side residents working at the largest regional employers east of the river.

The City's West Side is expected to receive almost half of new development in the four-county region (Bernalillo, Sandoval, Valencia, and Torrance). This growth is expected to account for over a quarter of a million new residents on the West Side alone by 2035.





Prior the Sector Plan, zoning within Volcano Heights was predominantly R-D (Residential Developing Area), which is a holding zone that allows single-family development permissively and townhouse development with a site plan for building permit. The single-family land use allowed by the pre-existing zoning would have perpetuated the same conventional suburban development pattern that contributes to the traffic congestion that exists today, which is only expected to worsen over time. The separation of uses – housing in one area, jobs across the river, shopping and services in another area – all but requires separate vehicle trips for each use. Families must own at least one vehicle (although they usually need 2 or 3), elderly residents can't give up driving even when it would be better to do so, and youth have to be ferried to activities, as the spread-out nature of development does not easily support transit use. Compounding the problem, the West Side's "spaghetti pile" of local roads and gated communities or cul-de-sac developments funnels most vehicles onto a few congested arterial roads.



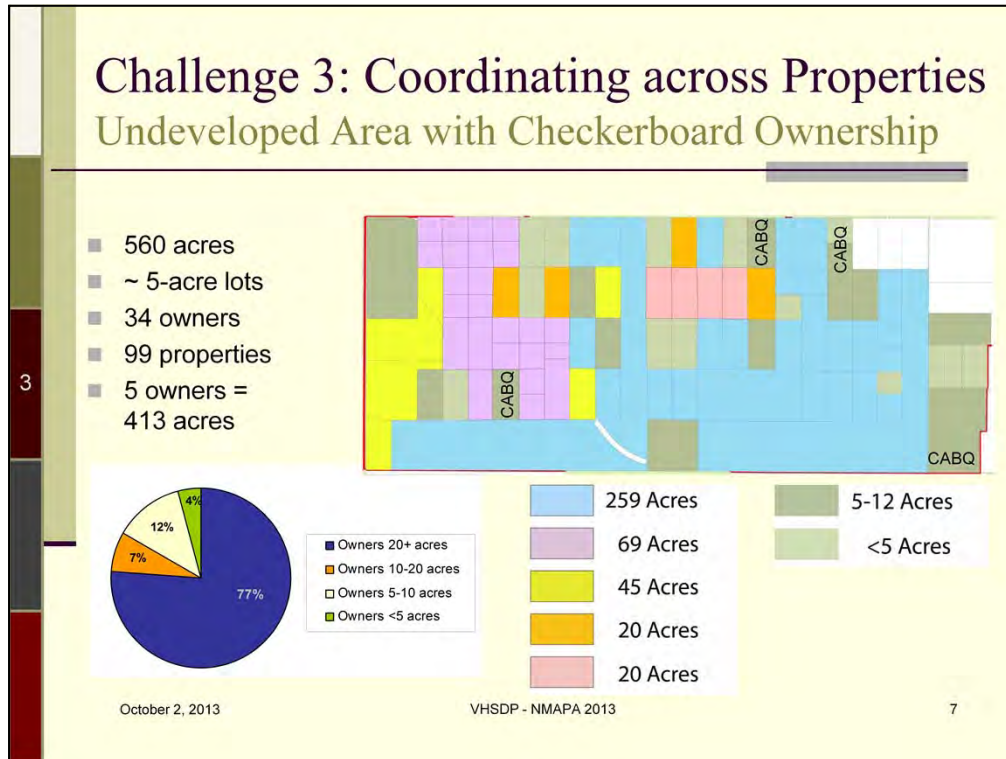
From the beginning of efforts to plan for Volcano Heights – going back to 2004 – one of the key issues has been how to acknowledge, respect, and preserve the unique natural environment bordering the Petroglyph National Monument, this incalculably valuable national treasure of more than 7,000 acres protecting some 25,000 rock art images. Designated by the U.S. Congress as a national monument in 1990, the area includes the five volcanoes on the west, the volcanic escarpment extending north and south on the west, as well as “geologic windows,” which someone more technically qualified would need to explain.

Within Volcano Heights – entirely privately owned by 30 separate property owners – there are spectacular views toward Sandia Peak and less spectacular views toward the volcanoes, low on the horizon to the southwest, as well as rock outcroppings of basalt, which are part of the volcanic landscape.

The previous R-D zoning had no provisions for preservation of natural resources, although it did include a requirement for “detached open space,” meaning open space off-site, via dedication, cash-in-lieu, or provision on-site, in addition to usable open space requirements. RD zoning allows building heights up to 26 feet, which matches the single-family housing that surrounds the Plan area. Volcano Heights lies within the boundary of another City planning document – the Rank III Northwest Mesa Escarpment Plan (NWMEP). The NWMEP, adopted in 1989 before the Petroglyph National Monument was officially designated, placed development limits to ensure compatibility with the unique, irreplaceable, invaluable natural, cultural, geological, historical resource of the volcanoes, petroglyphs, volcanic escarpment, and volcanic landscape connecting them. Within Volcano Heights, the majority of property is designated “View Area” by the NWMEP, while a small strip of land bordering the Monument edge is designated “Impact Area.” The NWMEP limits building heights to 40 feet within the View Area and 15 feet within the Impact Area.

These heights, if maintained in the Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan, would severely limit the potential for density and development at the scale of a Major Activity Center, which the Plan envisions. At the same time, the NWMEP was hard-fought and its protective provisions hard-won, so building heights needed to be changed with considerable caution and public support.

In addition to providing significant views, Volcano Heights includes rock outcroppings of volcanic basalt (officially defined as bedrock or other stratum a minimum of 6 feet high on its steepest side as measured from the adjacent 10% slope line and in excess of 500 square feet in surface area). These rock outcroppings make up approximately 10 acres within Volcano Heights, all on private property.



The Plan's 560 acres includes approximately 100 properties, ranging in size from 2.5 to 68 acres, with most at 5 acres. There are thirty-four separate property owners. One owns almost half the Plan area. This property owner together with four other major property owners account for over 75% of the Plan area. The majority of property owners account for the other quarter of acreage.

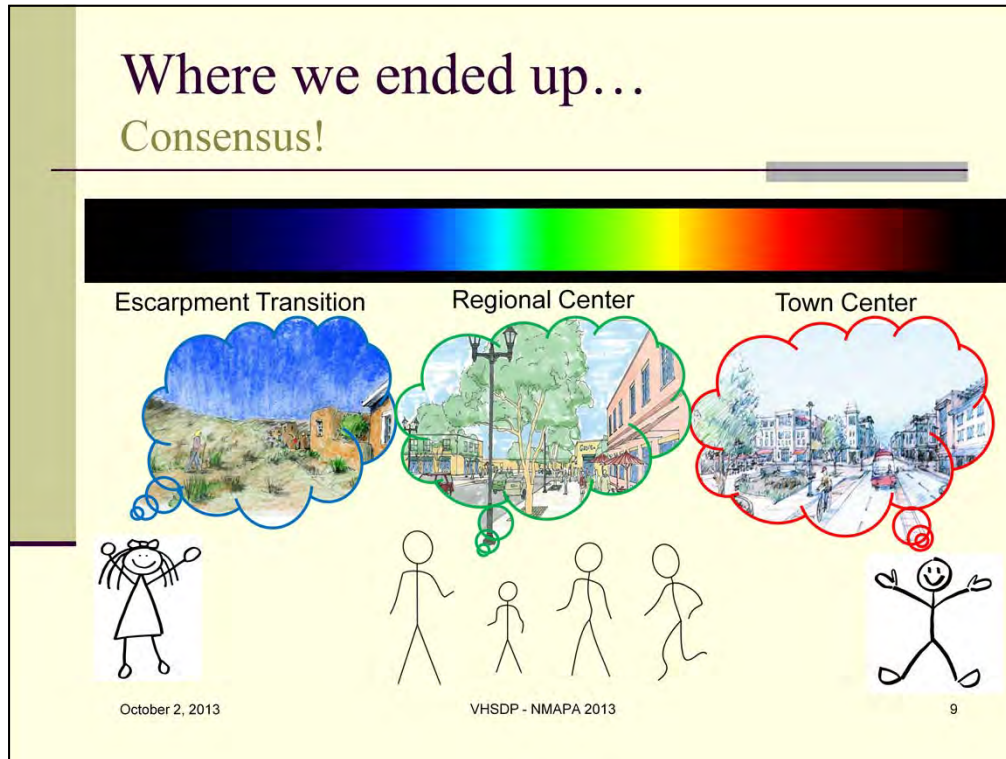
Compared to other major developments, such as Mesa del Sol or ABQ Uptown, where the City had only one property owner to negotiate with, this checkerboard ownership pattern complicates the planning process and poses significant challenges for implementation and future development.

Sector Plan takes the first steps by setting out a development vision, laying out a street network, establishing zoning districts with densities and height limits, codifying a architectural palette without regulating style, and ensuring compatibility with the natural landscape and across properties, along corridors, and over time.





Throughout the 9 years that the City tried to Plan for this area, there's been a huge chasm among the different visions of various stakeholders. Neighbors, who have used this area for years to walk their dogs and to access the Petroglyph National Monument on foot, wanted to see as little development and as much open space as possible. Property owners wanted to maximize their entitlements, allowing 10 story buildings and recreating downtown Albuquerque on the northwest mesa. Developers wanted to be able to plop down the typical suburban developments with seas of parking and corporate templates for footprints and styles.



It took 9 years and three iterations of the Plan, but we finally achieved a Plan that gave everyone a little of what they wanted to see. We got creative, worked collaboratively, hung on to the big picture, and prioritized the benefits of a consensus vision in the area to best achieve everyone's goals.

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## Volcano Heights SDP Challenges


1. Growth & Traffic
2. Open Space Preservation
3. Property Ownership
4. Land Use/Transportation Coordination
5. Putting It All Together




Views to Sandia Peak



Rock Outcropping



Single-family homes to the north



Paseo/Unser Intersection

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There are five key challenges we faced as we created the Plan, as well as challenges that will continue to impact future development as the Plan gets implemented.


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## VHSDP Goal: Create Job Center & Walkable Mixed-Use District


- **Major Activity Center**
  - ~ 2 million square feet of retail + office uses = ~ 5,500 jobs
- **High-density Residential**
  - <5,000 dwelling units = ~13,000 residents
  - ~350 Single-family
  - ~300 Townhouse
  - ~4,000 Multifamily



Volcano Heights  
Major Activity Center  
(570 acres)



Uptown Major Activity Center  
(595 acres)



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In order to begin addressing the imbalance of jobs and housing on the City's east and west sides of the river, and the congestion on roads and river crossings that results, the Plan sets out to create an opportunity for an employment center in a walkable district with transit-oriented development. This development vision is a drop in the bucket compared to what's needed on the West Side, but it's a step in the right direction that could help change the balance of jobs/housing. And more importantly, it's better than the alternative, which would just compound the existing problems.

Based on a market study, we tailored the zones and development standards to match a development vision of approximately 5,500 jobs based on 2 million square feet of retail or office uses. The Plan's regulations would entitle much more development at higher densities, but the development vision pares this back to provide a more practical estimate of what might get developed by 2035. Of course, if the market turns around or a major employer can seed development here, the success will be above and beyond what the vision sets out.

Unlike the R-D zoning the Plan replaced, single-family uses would not be allowed in any but the Transition Zones: the Escarpment Transition and the Neighborhood Transition, shown in yellow on the north and south borders of the Plan area, which are intended to provide a buffer for existing single-family residential areas to the



north and the south. The majority of the residential development within Volcano Heights is expected to be high-density residential development mixed in with employment and retail uses. This development vision capitalizes on the growing awareness that high-quality, urban environments are a significant factor in attracting desirable employees and employment headquarters, as well as attractive, lively places with the vitality and resiliency to attract development.

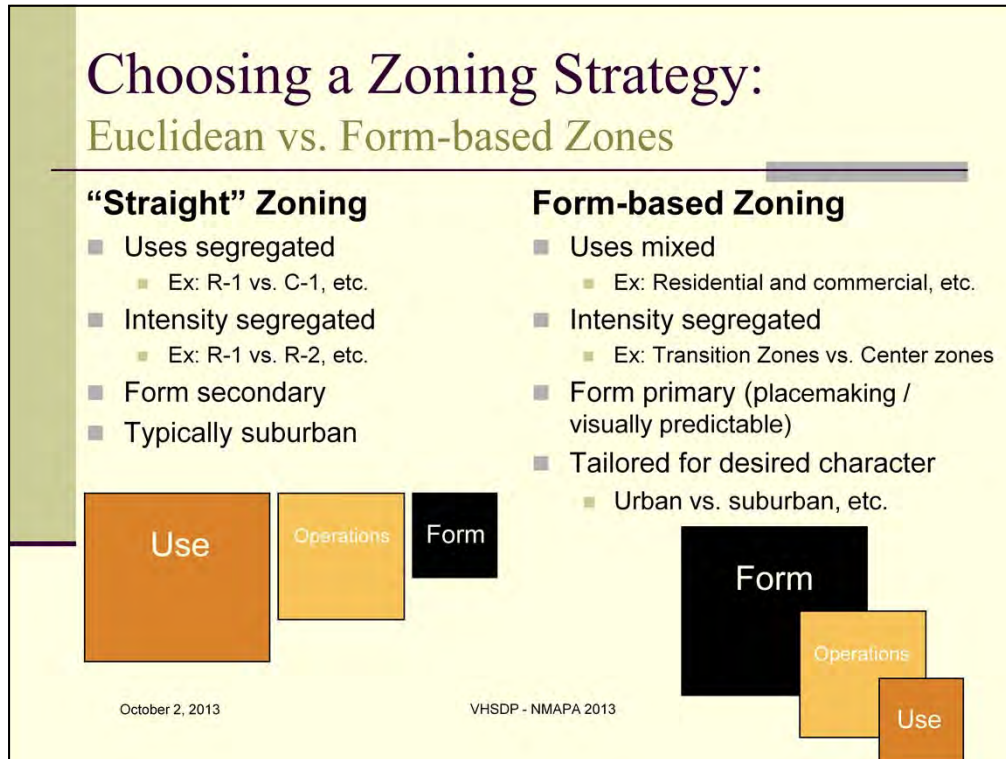
Major Activity Centers are mapped in the Rank I Comprehensive Plan, which has associated policies supporting dense, urban development and multimodal transportation opportunities.

Uptown Major Activity Center:

28,703 jobs

1.82 million SF office

1.95 million SF retail

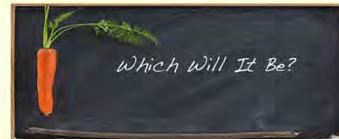


Sector Plans give the opportunity to decide the best zoning strategy to achieve the development vision – including the regulations to require minimum standards for quality, character of the built environment, and compatibility with surrounding development and the incentives that reward folks for doing what regulations require but also to do what you want but can't require.

We chose form-based zoning because it allowed us to easily mix uses within any particular zone and control the intensity of the mix from zone to zone. In this case, we cared more about the visual outcome of development than what particular use went in any particular location. We also wanted to allow a range of development from urban to suburban, which we ultimately coded for (urban near transit opportunities, suburban near the existing “highways” running through the Plan area, mostly residential near existing single-family neighborhoods).

## Creating a Successful Plan: Important Considerations

- Key development outcomes to regulate (i.e. fewest sticks)
  - Easiest to understand
  - Easiest to enforce
- Key incentives for desired development character (i.e. lots of carrots)
  - What neighbors & city want
  - What developers want



The recent economic downturn has swung the regulatory pendulum to favor developers, so as planners, we have to think harder about what's the minimum we should regulate to protect our key goals. Instead of regulations, we have to offer many more incentives, which is often a big challenge, as much of our zoning already provides more entitlements than the market wants right now.

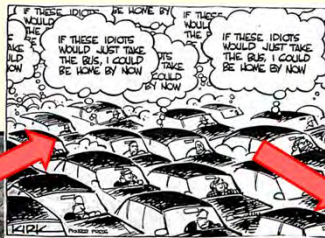
We also have to think more carefully about enforceability, as staff levels are down – everyone has more work than they can do, so you want the simplest, most straight-forward, pared down requirements as possible – easy to understand, easy to explain, easy to interpret and justify (since staff is being called onto the carpet to explain “slowing down” development more than in the good old days).

The carrots you offer need to get you what the City wants as its ultimate vision, what neighbors want to see or to protect. And the carrots need to ask something of developers that they are willing to trade for something they want – a nice trick when it works.

## Choosing a Zoning Strategy: Euclidean vs. Form-based Zones (cont'd)

### “Straight” Zoning

- Conflicting land-use vs. transportation
  - Auto-dependent
  - Auto-exclusive
  - Driving age only



### Form-based Zoning

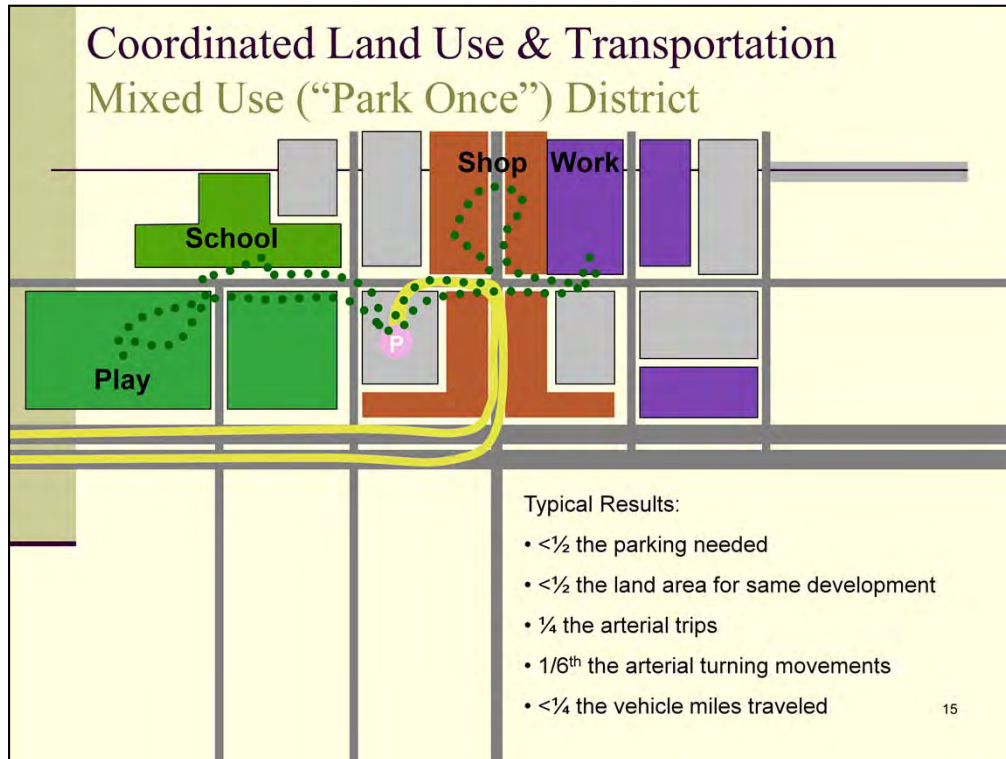
- Coordinated land-use and transportation
  - Multi-modal
  - Transit-supportive
  - Multi-age



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While the Plan’s vision includes a walkable, multi-modal mixed use development, the Plan does not assume that there won’t be any cars in the future. The car will remain the primary means of transportation, and the proposed street network accommodates all expected vehicle trips. But Volcano Heights is intended to develop as a mixed-used “complete neighborhood” instead of single-use development, which at least allows for the possibility of trips on foot, by bike, or via transit. This opportunity broadens the potential community to include those elusive millennials who can choose to live and work anywhere who are looking for “cool” places, often walkable districts where they can do both, families with kids who can go to school and soccer practice by bus, and boomers who want to downsize and age in place.





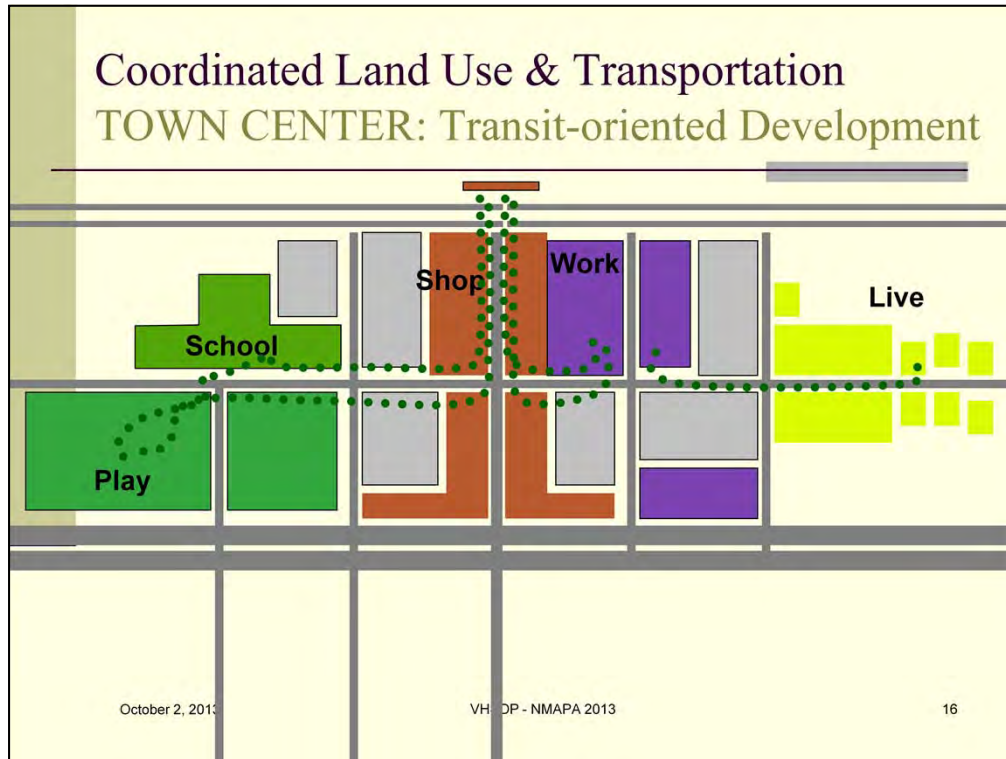
In a mixed-use district, uses are brought closer together, eliminating the need to drive to get to each of your destinations. In particular turning movements on and off the arterial are reduced, easing traffic congestion.

We were careful not to require parking minimums or maximums, leaving it up to the market to determine how much parking each use should have. The Primary Street cross sections for retail areas all included on-street parking. Otherwise, the Plan just says you have to put parking to the side or back of your building and screen it from public streets and civic spaces.

Image source: Nelson\Nygaard

P = Parking event

Green dots = Walk trip



The reduced traffic benefits of a mixed-use, park-once district are multiplied even further when good transit such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) serves the district. When buildings and streets are designed to support access to the transit stops, people are no longer forced to drive to get to each and every local destination, and more people can make more of their trips without driving at all.

For example: imagine walking, biking, or taking a short trip on a neighborhood shuttle to the bus rapid transit station, commuting to work on fast BRT, returning home the same way, picking up your kids from after-school soccer practice, grabbing something for dinner, and walking back home using neighborhood streets (where you see your car parked in the garage exactly where you left it that morning).

This kind of development not only benefits the built environment but adds to quality of life, health benefits associated with walking, reduced air pollution, economic development from small businesses along your walking path, and the list goes on.

Image source: Nelson\Nygaard

Green dots = Walk trip

[illegible]

To begin to counteract the existing pattern of spread out uses and long regional auto trips to access every need, the Volcano Heights SDP replaced R-D zoning with mixed-use zones that encourage employment and retail opportunities, bringing them within walking distance of existing residents as well as future residents within the Plan area. (The Plan area measures approximately 1 mile from north to south and 1.5 miles east to west.)

At the center of the Plan area, a Town Center is organized along a transit corridor backbone that MRCOG is currently studying for a high-capacity transit connection linking Rio Rancho to the north with the busiest employment corridor near Paseo del Norte and Interstate 25. This Town Center Zone envisions walkable, urban, transit-oriented development. The Town Center is concentrated in order to provide some gravity for the development surrounding it in other zones and establishes a core identity for placemaking that can extend to the rest of the Plan area.

Along the eastern edge of the Plan area, an Escarpment Transition zone is proposed to provide development at a scale and intensity intended to be compatible with the Petroglyph National Monument, which it borders. While the zone is still mixed-use, allowing both residential and non-residential development, all buildings are required to remain at the scale of a single-family residence. Special height restrictions are imposed at the Monument edge and within a buffer zone to help

ensure low-density, low-intensity development.

The remainder of the zones are all a mix of compatible uses at varying levels of intensity, as relevant for their location and purpose. These are meant to provide flexible land use that can respond to market conditions over the next 20 to 30 years. This flexibility is balanced with the predictability of design regulations that help ensure high-quality development across property lines, along corridors, and over time.



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## VHSDP Strategy: Mixed Use Zones

### Land Use Table

■ Use categories:

- **Residential**
- Commercial
- Arts, Entertainment, Recreation
- Educational, Public Admin, Healthcare, Institutional
- Manufacturing, Transportation, Communication, Utility
- Other (Miscellaneous)

CHAPTER II: REGULATIONS

4.0 Zoning

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TABLE 4.4 - LAND USE TABLE BY CHARACTER ZONE

	Character Zone	Center	Regional Center	Village Center	Mixed-Use	Ecotourism	Neighborhood Transition
	<b>Land Use</b>						
	<b>Residential Uses</b>						
RU-1	Home Occupations	P	P	P	P	P	P
RU-2	Multi-family residential						
RU-2 G							
RU-2 U							
		Ground floor					
		Upper floors					
RU-3	Residential Lofts	C	P	C	P	P	C
RU-4	Single family residential attached dwelling unit (Townhomes)	P	P	P	P	P	P
RU-5	Single family residential detached	NP	NP	NP	NP	P	P
RU-6	Secondary dwelling unit	P	NP	P	P	P	P
RU-7	Live-work unit	P	NP	P	P	P	P
RU-8	Senior housing facility	C	C	P	P	C	C

P= Permitted by right NP= Not Permitted C= Permitted with specific criteria as established in Table 4.5 (i.e. conditional) A= Accessory Use, not to exceed 25% of the primary use building square footage NA= Not applicable

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Uses allowed in each zone are set out in a Land Use Table. Zones are shown as columns, organized from most to least intense/dense, with Center zones first and Transition zones last.

Uses are categorized, with each major category as a table on a separate page. Each row is a somewhat general use, which is meant to give a little flexibility, requiring some discretion from code enforcement about what uses might be acceptable within that grouping.

In each zone, the use is either Permitted, Not Permitted, or Conditional. Conditional uses map to a separate table that provides additional criteria to be considered when assessing whether a particular use would be compatible with surrounding development.

The idea is to err on the side of permissive uses that would be compatible in a particular zone, grouped into rows of development that has the same basic performance and implications. In other words, as you create the table, aim to minimize the rows but maximize the uses that are included in each row. In thinking about the compatibility of uses in each zone, think about the intent and purpose for each zone and the maximum amount of density and intensity you want for each.

Note here the distinction between ground floor and upper floor multi-family residential. Vertical mixing of uses is much more important in Center zones; therefore ground floor is not allowed permissively in Town Center and Village Center, where you want to encourage more active uses at the pedestrian or street level.

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## VHSDP Strategy: Mixed Use Zones

### Land Use Table

Use categories:

- Residential
- Commercial**
- Arts, Entertainment, Recreation
- Educational, Public Admin, Healthcare, Institutional
- Manufacturing, Transportation, Communication, Utility
- Other (Miscellaneous)

TABLE 4.4 – LAND USE TABLE BY CHARACTER ZONE (Cont'd)

		Town Center	Regional Center	Village Center	Mixed-Use	Escarpment Transition	Neighborhood Transition
	Character Zone						
	Land Use						
	<b>Commercial Uses (Office, Retail, Sales, and Service Uses)</b>						
CU-1	Retail Sales or Service with no drive through facility (includes alcohol sales). Excluded from this category are retail sales and service establishments geared toward the automobile.	P	P	P	P	C	NP
CU-2	Auto-related Sales or Service establishments	C	P	C	C	NP	NP
CU-3	Finance and Real Estate establishments including banks, credit unions, real estate, and property management services, with no drive through facility	P	P	P	P	C	NP
CU-4	Offices for business, professional, administrative, and technical services such as, but not limited to, accountants, architects, lawyers, doctors, insurance sales/services, etc.	P	P	P	P	C	C
CU-5	Research laboratory headquarters, laboratories and associated facilities	P	P	P	P	NP	NP
CU-6	Food Service Uses such as full-service restaurants, cafeterias, bakeries and snack bars with no drive-through facilities*	P	P	P	P	C	NP
CU-7	Pet and animal sales or service (including vet clinic)	P	P	P	P	C	NP
CU-8	Any permitted use with a drive through facility	C	P	C	C	NP	NP

P= Permitted by right NP= Not Permitted C= Permitted with specific criteria as established in Table 4.5 (i.e. conditional) A= Accessory Use, not to exceed 25% of the primary use building square footage NA= Not applicable

\* Note for CU-6: Included in this category is cafe seating within a public or private sidewalk area with no obstruction of pedestrian circulation. Also included in this category is the sale of alcoholic beverages for consumption on and off-premise.

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Unlike many conventional zoning codes, where alcohol sales forms an important distinction between uses, this form-based code distinguishes between uses with drive-through facilities or auto-oriented sales and all other commercial uses. Again, the importance is the effect of development on the built environment. In assessing the compatibility of each use, we asked, is the use geared toward the pedestrian or the car? Note that the auto-oriented Regional Center has drive through and auto-oriented sales as permissive uses, as they are entirely appropriate in that zone.

For the Transition Zones, the question was the appropriateness of each use, based on its intensity, including performance criteria such as parking.

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## VHSDP Strategy: Mixed Use Zones

### Land Use Table 4.4 (pgs. 64-70)

Use categories:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Arts, Entertainment, Recreation
- Educational, Public Admin, Healthcare, Institutional
- Manufacturing, Transportation, Communication, Utility**
- Other (Miscellaneous)

TABLE 4.4 - LAND USE TABLE BY CHARACTER ZONE (Cont'd)

	Character Zone	Town Center	Regional Center	Village Center	Mixed-Use	Escarpment Transition	Neighborhood Transition
	<b>Land Use</b>						
	<b>Manufacturing, Transportation, Communication, and Utility Uses</b>						
MU-1	Food, beverage, and textile product manufacturing	C	P	NP	P	NP	NP
MU-2	Wood, paper, and printing products manufacturing	NP	P	NP	NP	NP	NP
MU-3	Machinery, electronics, and transportation equipment manufacturing	NP	P	NP	P	NP	NP
MU-4	Miscellaneous <b>light manufacturing</b> (included in this category are jewelry, silverware, personal metal goods, flatware, dolls, toys, games, musical instruments, office supplies, and signs.)	NP	P	NP	C	NP	NP
MU-5	Wholesale trade establishment	NP	P	NP	P	NP	NP
MU-6	Warehouse and storage services	NP	P	NP	P	NP	NP
MU-7-A	Transit Facilities*	P	P	P	P	P	C
MU-7-B	Transportation services (air, rail, road, truck and freight)	NP	P	NP	NP	NP	NP
MU-8	Publishing (newspaper, books, periodicals, software)	P	P	P	P	NP	NP
MU-9	Motion picture and sound recording	P	P	P	P	C	NP
MU-10	Telecommunications and broadcasting (radio, TV, cable, wireless communications, telephone, etc)	P	P	P	P	NP	NP
MU-11	Information services and data processing	P	P	P	P	NP	NP

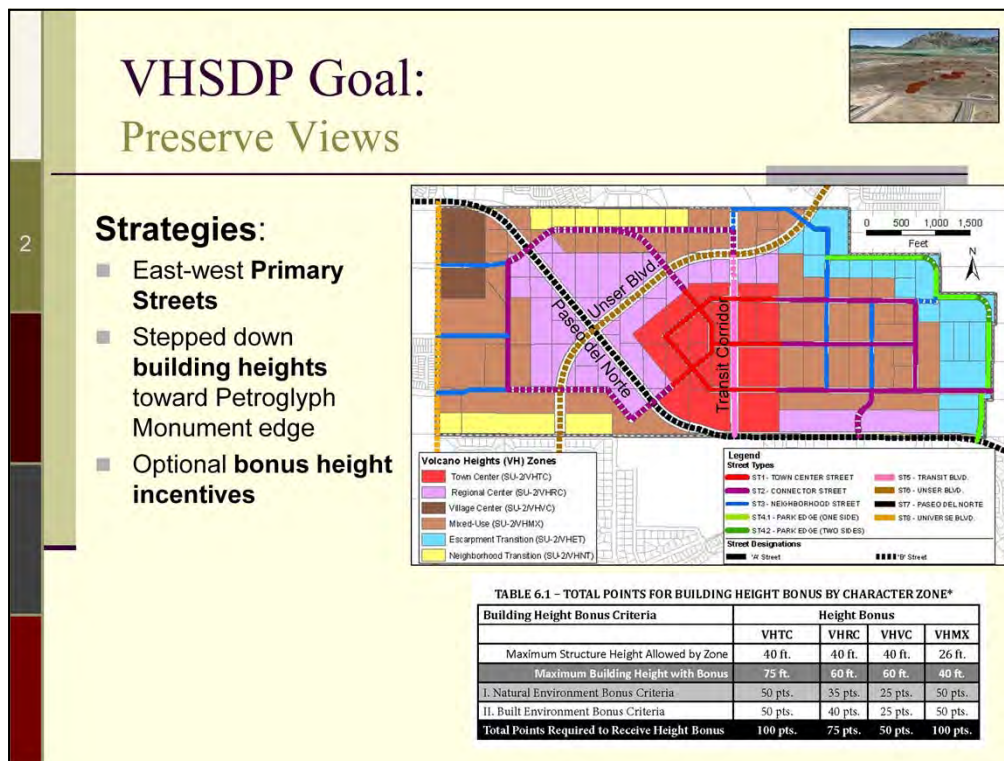
P= Permitted by right NP= Not Permitted C= Permitted with specific criteria as established in Table 4.5 (i.e., conditional) A= Accessory Use, not to exceed 25% of the primary use building square footage NA= Not applicable

\* Note for MU-7-A: Bus maintenance facilities shall only be permitted in Regional Center.

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There seems to be a general trend away from allowing manufacturing as a permissive use. Because one goal was employment, we wanted to include light manufacturing as an appropriate use in Regional Center.





Given the primary purpose of the Volcano Heights SDP, it seems almost contradictory to talk about preservation. The development vision is for a dense, urban, walkable, mixed-use area that can support regional transit and help counter an existing auto-dominated suburban development pattern.

Preserving views is often very important to property owners surrounding the area to be planned for new development. Particularly here, where views to Sandia Peak are such an identifiable part of the landscape, and views to the volcanoes are a reminder of the integrity of volcanic landscape stretching to the escarpment, views have been a significant topic of discussion.

Unfortunately, there are few effective mechanisms to legally preserve views. Development on private property must be assured. While setbacks are often used for this purpose, they are a clunky and inelegant solution, often unevenly applied (views from different sides of the street are not always equally worth preserving) to varying degrees of effectiveness. In the case of completely undeveloped land, it is all but impossible to create setbacks that preserve views without knowing the placement, orientation, or width of streets.

For this reason, one of the first innovations in the sector plan was the requirement of a mandatory street network. This network is defined as the *minimum* number of roads needed to support development throughout the Plan area. The east-west orientation of streets, particularly on the east side of the Plan area, are intended to

preserve view corridors toward the Sandia Mountains. The required cross sections that accompany each mandatory street type are also designed to enhance views as well as accessibility for all modes of travel to and through the area.

The Plan also proposes the tallest building heights within the Regional Center and Town Center zones at the center of the Plan area, with heights stepping down in the Mixed Use zone to the east and further in the Escarpment Transition zone at the Monument edge. In addition to the 15-foot height limit within the Impact Area as defined by the NWMEP, the Plan adds an additional height transition, capping heights at 18 feet within 200 feet of the Impact Area, with second-story heights allowed to 26 feet for up to 50% of the building footprint.

Finally, view preservation is included as a criterion toward a height bonus within the optional bonus height system. A development project that can demonstrate that they are preserving views primarily through building placement on the site, as well as other enhancements of the built or natural environment, can receive additional building height.

# VHSDP Goal: Balance Open Space

## Strategy: Optional Bonus Height Incentives

**TABLE 6.2 – BONUS HEIGHT POINTS PER CRITERION**

Criteria for Optional Height Bonuses	Points
<b>I. Natural Environment Bonus Criteria</b>	
a. Rock outcropping dedications	25
b. Rock outcropping private preservation*	20
Public Access Easement ( <i>Optional Bonus</i> )	5
c. Open space dedications	20
For dedications <b>abutting</b> rock outcroppings or other features deemed significant by the City Open Space Division ( <i>Optional Bonus</i> )	5
d. Private park construction	20
e. Public park land dedication of at least 2 acres	15
f. Pedestrian walkway connection to rock outcropping, parks, trails, rock outcroppings, or other features deemed significant by the City Open Space Division	10
Up to 2 additional connections to features deemed significant by the City Open Space Division ( <i>Optional Bonus</i> )	5 each
g. Landscaping / natural buffers in addition to what's required by Zone	10
h. Shared drainage/swales on <b>adjacent</b> developments / Low Impact Design (LID)	10
i. View preservation	10
j. Community garden	10
k. Interpretive signage	5
l. Preservation of native vegetation	5
m. Other benefits to the natural environment	5

**TABLE 6.1 – TOTAL POINTS FOR BUILDING HEIGHT BONUS BY CHARACTER ZONE\***

Building Height Bonus Criteria	Height Bonus			
	VHTC	VHRC	VHVC	VHMX
Maximum Structure Height Allowed by Zone	40 ft.	40 ft.	40 ft.	26 ft.
Maximum Building Height with Bonus	75 ft.	60 ft.	60 ft.	40 ft.
I. Natural Environment Bonus Criteria	50 pts.	35 pts.	25 pts.	50 pts.
II. Built Environment Bonus Criteria	50 pts.	40 pts.	25 pts.	50 pts.
<b>Total Points Required to Receive Height Bonus</b>	<b>100 pts.</b>	<b>75 pts.</b>	<b>50 pts.</b>	<b>100 pts.</b>

Criteria for Optional Height Bonuses	Points
<b>II. Built Environment Bonus Criteria</b>	
a. Publicly accessible plazas / courtyards in addition to what's required by <b>Section 9.5.4 starting on page 143.</b>	25
b. Living roof or accessible roof garden	25
c. Grey water retention system	25
d. Transit shelters on transit corridors	20
e. LEED certification	20
f. Transit Center within 500 feet of proposed project	15
g. Public art	15
h. Solar panels	15
i. Permeable paving	10
j. Permanent streetscape/plaza furniture and/or features	10
k. Gateway feature at key intersections	10
l. Rooftop water harvesting / cisterns	5
m. Other sustainable building practices	5

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The optional bonus height system proposes to allow additional height in all but the Transition zones, with limits tailored for each zone in exchange for “commensurate benefits” to both the built and natural environments. This system is designed as a menu of options, each with points assigned that are intended to match both the value to the community of such a benefit as well as the financial cost, to some degree, of the required improvement.

This menu of options was created through a public involvement process that included input from property owners, nearby residents, Open Space advocates, City Open Space staff, and other stakeholders. The process itself resulted in meaningful, productive, revealing, and insightful discussions across various stakeholder interests and contributed to a sense of compromise and buy-in by all involved. Each bonus height menu option is associated with the criteria to provide predictability for the developer as well as guidance to the Planning Director about the expected benefit and its requirements. Criteria are included in table form to be clear, concise, and usable.


There is some skepticism at this point, as this is a completely new and untested system, but for now, property owners and stakeholders appear to be cautiously open to the compromise it offers. Stakeholders who were adamantly against building heights above 40 feet now understand the benefit of some density in

designated areas to the regional traffic situation, and they seem satisfied that a few taller buildings that provide additional benefits to the community will be worth the tradeoff. Property owners, who were adamant that taller maximum building heights would be necessary in order to respond to the market and provide the density envisioned here, seem willing to provide the benefits included here as a satisfactory tradeoff for additional building height.

2

## VHSDP Goal:

### Preserve Rock Outcroppings



- **Not Required! (voluntary)**
- **Strategies:**
  - **Deviations** to move Primary Streets and buildings to avoid rock outcroppings
  - Required **usable open space** and **detached open space**
- **Incentives**
  - Usable open space **transferable** across properties
  - **Bonus building height** in the bonus system
  - **Double credit** for requirements and bonus system
  - **Double square footage** toward landscape requirement

**TABLE 9.2 – DETACHED OPEN SPACE: RESIDENTIAL USES**

	VHTC	VHRC	VHVC	VHMX	VHNT	VHET	Total
Available Acreage*	61.2	89.1	10.8	162	28.8	54.9	406.8
Detached OS Requirement (square feet/dwelling unit)	400	400	400	400	400	400	—
Detached OS Requirement Cap (dwelling unit/acre)	40	20	30	30	6	6	—
Intended Resulting Detached Open Space Acreage**	22	16	3	45	2	3	91

\* Total acreage minus **Primary Streets** minus 10% for usable open space  
\*\* For purposes of analysis only

**TABLE 9.3 – DETACHED OPEN SPACE: NON-RESIDENTIAL USES**

	VHTC	VHRC	VHVC	VHMX	VHNT	VHET	Total
Available Acreage*	61.2	89.1	10.8	162	28.8	54.9	406.8
Detached OS Requirement (square feet/30,000 SF building area)	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400	NA	NA	—
Maximum Stories with Height Bonus	5	4	4	3	NA	NA	—
Intended Total Detached Open Space Acreage**	17	20	3	27	0	0	66

\* Total acreage minus **Primary Streets** minus 10% for usable open space  
\*\* For purposes of analysis only

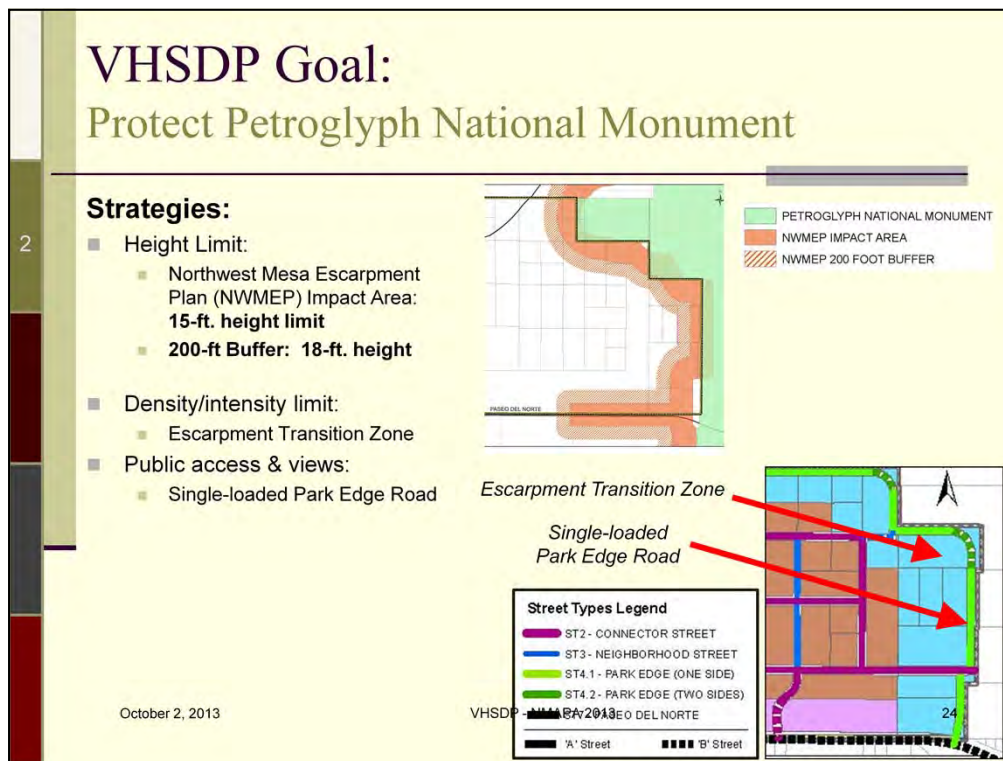
In addition to the incentives in the optional bonus height system, the Plan includes a combination of regulations and policies intended to encourage rock outcropping preservation, including a template for conservation easements in the Appendix. The Plan requires on-site open space as well as “detached” or off-site open space, both of which are currently required under the R-D zoning, but it adjusts the amounts based on each zone to match the intended development density and intensity. The detached open space requirements are differentiated for residential and non-residential use, and the requirements were calibrated to result in the potential for a significant amount of detached open space dedicated to the City that either has rock outcroppings or can be traded for land with outcroppings.

The Plan further specifies that usable open space can be transferred to other land with the same ownership, so a property owner with rock outcroppings on one parcel of land could “transfer” usable open space to it and develop more of the “sending” property. This provision falls short of a Transfer of Development Rights (or TDR), because the City does not have an ordinance in place that would allow TDR. The Plan does recommend that the City pass such an ordinance to be used for Volcano Heights and other lands in the Volcano Mesa area.

The Plan explicitly allows double credit for any menu items in the optional bonus height system that also satisfy a requirement of the Plan. This provision is intended as an additional incentive to encourage and reward preservation efforts.



Finally, the Plan includes a way for projects to receive administrative approval to deviate from the Plan requirements if doing so will preserve or avoid a rock outcropping. Because the Plan is primarily a high-level land-use tool and does not provide detailed infrastructure or site-level planning, this relief valve should help ensure a speedy, predictable administrative sanction of preservation efforts.



In order to preserve views to and from the Monument, building heights are limited nearest the Monument boundary.

As the most appropriate transition from the Monument to development, the Plan proposes a single-loaded road (i.e. a road with development only on the western side) where it abuts the Monument. Where the road pulls away from the Monument edge, development would be allowed on both sides of the road. As a mandatory road, this Park Edge Road matches a required cross section for the single-loaded and double-sided versions in the Plan. This road ensures views in perpetuity, as well as providing benefits to safety and security because of the additional visibility and accessibility to emergency vehicles along the Monument edge. (Staff research also shows higher property values for more of the lots adjacent to the single-loaded road, where it preserves views for all nearby residents.)

Finally, in order to ensure compatibility of development adjacent to the Petroglyph National Monument, the Plan limits the range of land uses and intensity of development within the Escarpment Transition Zone.



In order to help coordinate high-quality development across properties, along corridors, and over time, the Plan includes several strategies that attempt to strike a balance between the predictability of development outcomes and the flexibility required to accommodate a wide range of development options.

Perhaps most importantly, the Plan includes a backbone street network with associated cross sections that developers are required to build concurrently with their projects. These are the minimum number of streets required to support development throughout the Plan area, forming a backbone grid. The plan also requires secondary streets, which are not mapped, to serve local development. These cross sections are presented as a menu of options, and various strategies are employed to ensure coordination across properties.

The mix of uses in each zone is intended to provide flexibility to meet market demand, while the zones are tailored to ensure compatible uses and appropriate development densities and intensities. The Plan includes detailed standards for site development, including building placement and structure heights, etc., as well as building design, including façade materials, architectural features, etc. Most of these standards are presented as a menu of options, with the possibility of administrative approval of additional options.

As a high-level planning document, the Plan must assure enough flexibility to encourage the area to develop over time and as new challenges emerge as engineering-level detail reveals them and as the market changes, while providing the predictability of high-quality development with a distinct development pattern, a palette of building materials and architectural features, and a streamlined approval

process for those projects that follow the Plan.

The most innovative component of the Plan, the optional bonus height system, is a mechanism of compromise that also attempts to balance flexibility and predictability. This component comes into play in facing the next challenge: preserving the natural environment.

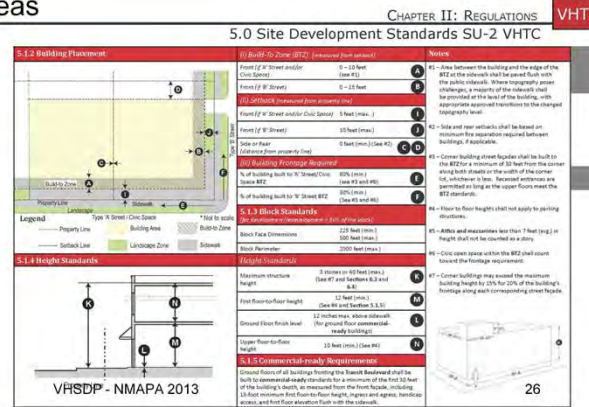
## VHSDP Goal: Coordinating Properties

### Strategy: Site Development Standards

- Building placement
- Height standards
- Frontage requirements
- Parking and service areas
- Façade elements

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Again, in the case of a development with one property owner, these high-level decisions would be made for the entire property before development got rolling. By setting out minimum requirements customized for zones with distinct character, this Plan acts as a master developer, providing predictability for all property owners but enough flexibility to encourage a wide range of development.



## VHSDP Goal: Coordinating Properties

### Strategy: Predictable, Flexible Development Pattern

1. **No required phasing** of development in zones or along corridors.
2. **Site development standards** to encourage density over time.
3. **Commercial-ready ground floors** required along Transit Blvd. in Town Center zone.
4. **Minimum ground floor heights** in other zones that could accommodate retail uses in the future.

Section 5.0  
p. 79

**Suburban Development Model**

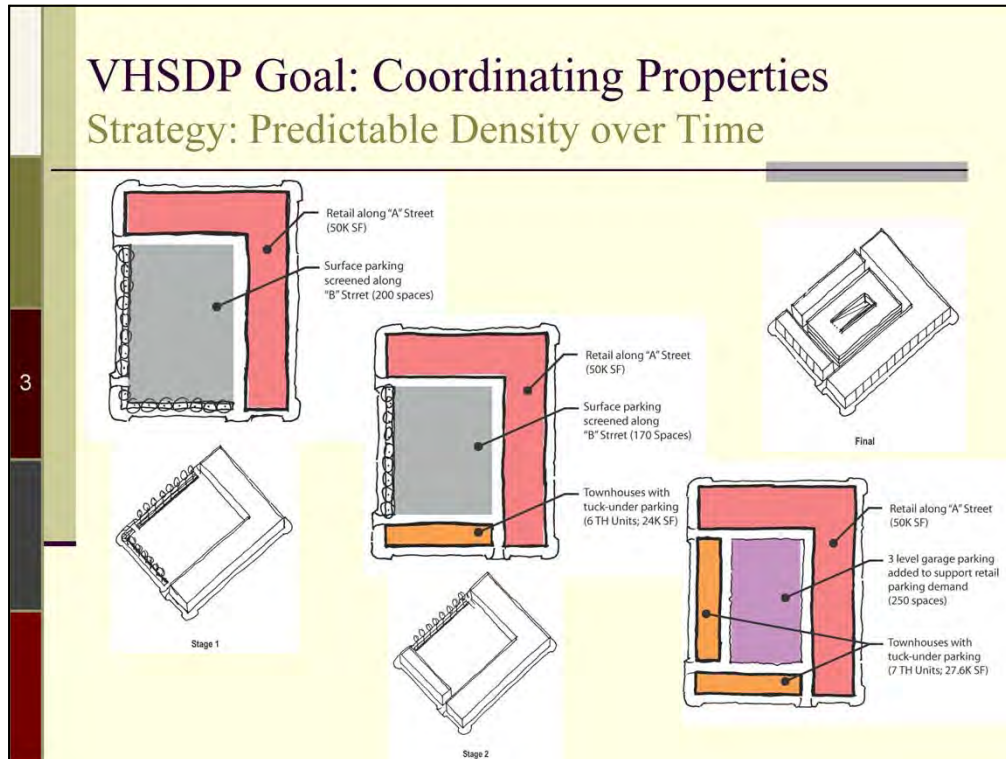


**VH Development Model**



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Finding the right balance between predictability and flexibility is the key to success here. Property owners need to be able to respond to the market while it's down, while the Plan needs to preserve opportunities for density when the market booms. In this Plan, we stayed away from minimum 2 stories or required structured parking, which could dampen development, and instead required what does go in to line the streets, building pedestrian-friendly corridors over time.



Initial development sets the character at the street edge. Surface parking at the center of the site is "reserved" for future buildings over time as market conditions warrant. In this diagram, townhouses are added later at the third street edge. Ultimately, structured parking replaces surface parking at the center of the block, and buildings screen it from site.

Density is built over time in a predictable pattern that starts with the desired character from the beginning.

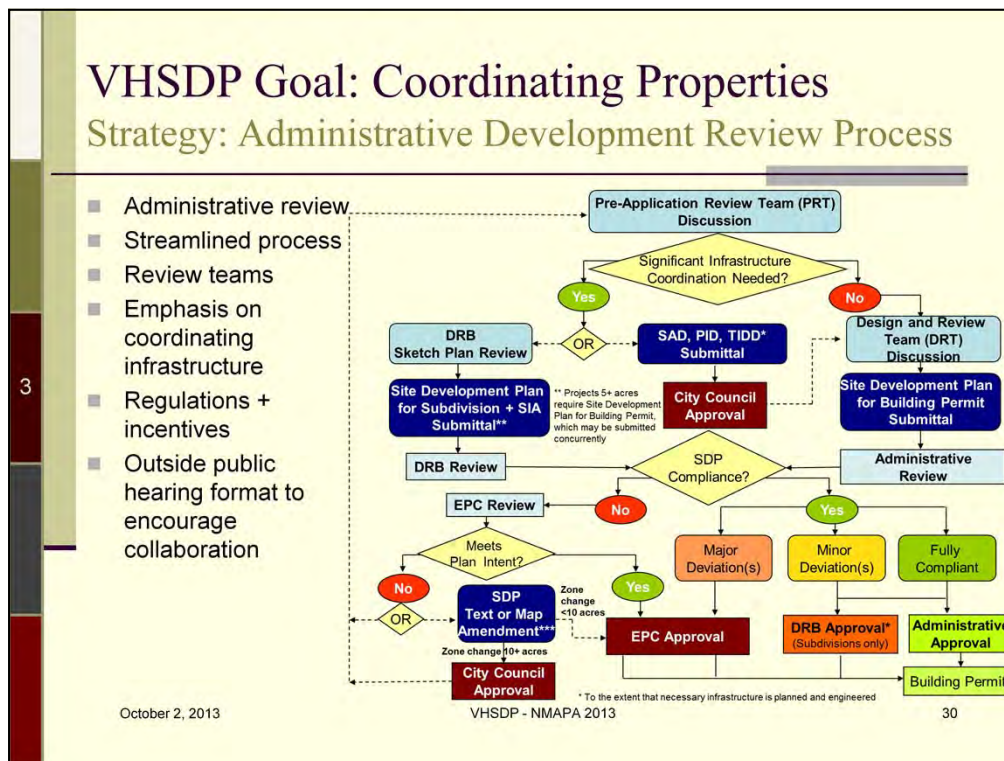
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## VHSDP Goal: Coordinating Properties

### Strategy: Building Design Standards

- Massing and façade composition
- Building materials
  - Vocabulary for development character
  - High-quality materials
  - Tailored to zone
  - Administrative approval for “other”
- Architectural Details
  - Tailored to zone
  - Choice of 12 features

Again, in the absence of one property owner, the Plan makes these high-level decisions, providing predictability for all property owners and assurance that their investment in high-quality development today will be matched by neighboring property owners along corridors and over time.



One important incentive we can offer developers is administrative review. This “streamlined” process offers predictability in several ways:

- 1) Time. Time is money. Administrative review can happen more quickly than a defined public process.
- 2) Consistency. Offer to assign staff to a review team, who will become experts on this Plan over time and can provide consistent interpretations and can err on the side of flexibility to make development happen.
- 3) Informal collaboration. As an administrative process outside a formal hearing, staff can work more creatively with developers to find address issues. Perhaps most importantly, developers do not have to negotiate with neighbors about what they are already entitled to build. The public input takes place during the creation of the sector plan. After that, developments that follow the rules bypass public hearings. This substantially increases the predictability and time savings for developers – a huge benefit to them and one they value highly.



## VHSDP Goal: Land Use & Transportation Strategy: Zoning Regulations

- **Mix of uses**
- **Site development standards:**  
Balance pedestrian & auto needs
  - Block Size
  - A vs. B Street Requirements
- **Frontage standards:** Coordinate land use and transportation
  - Build-to Zones (BTZ)
  - Percent (%) Frontage Requirements

Character Zone	Secondary Streets		Building Frontage Required	
	'A' Street (min.)	'B' Street' (max.)	'A' Street (min.)	'B' Street' (min.)
Town Center	50%	50%	80%	30%
Regional Center	25%	75%	60%	20%
Village Center	25%	75%	60%	30%
Mixed Use	25%	75%	50%	25%
Escarpment Transition	25%	75%	60%	30%
Neighborhood Transition	0%	100%	60%	30%

50% / 50%      50% / 50%      25% / 75%      75% / 25%

Exhibit 10.19 - Example Diagrams: Alley Configurations with 'A' vs. 'B' Street Percentages

Character Zone	Total Acreage	Max. Height	Bonus Height	Block Length	Block Perimeter	Setbacks (feet)		Built-to Zone (feet)	
	(in acres)	(in feet)	(in feet)	(in feet)	(max. in feet)	Front 'A' Streets	Front 'B' Streets	'A' Street	'B' Street'
Town Center	83	40	75	300 - 500	2,000	5	10	0-10-5	0-15
Regional Center	109	40	60	300-800	2,200	5	10	0-15	0-15
Village Center	12	40	60	300-800	2,000	5	10	0-10	0-20
Mixed Use	219	26	40	300-1200	3,600	5	10	0-15	0-20
Escarpment Transition	68	26*	NA	250-600	2,000	5	10	0-10	0-20
Neighborhood Transition	33	26	NA	200-600	2,000	5	10	0-10	0-20

All infrastructure to be borne by property owners & developers as projects go in. There is no required timeframe or phasing.

In some ways, this is the same as developing under RD zoning. Here, benefit is coordination across property lines with property owners who might not be ready to develop yet. The Plan at least sets out a system by which properties can develop when owners are ready and the market is right.

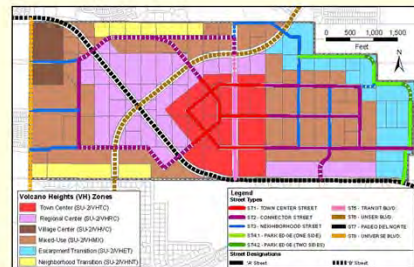
Plan recommends financial mechanisms (i.e. alphabet soup of SAD, PID, TIDD) to pool funds for infrastructure that benefits multiple owners. Each of these mechanisms has challenges, but they are the only mechanisms available that allow the City to assist in development financing.



## VHSDP Goal: Land Use & Transportation Strategy: Street Standards

- **Primary Streets:** Minimal number of streets to serve all properties
  - Detailed Cross Sections
  - Multimodal accommodations
- **Secondary Streets:** Local streets to serve development projects
  - Cross section options
  - A vs. B Street Requirements
    - 'A' Street = Pedestrian-oriented
    - 'B' Street = Auto-oriented

**Primary Streets**



**Sample Secondary Streets**

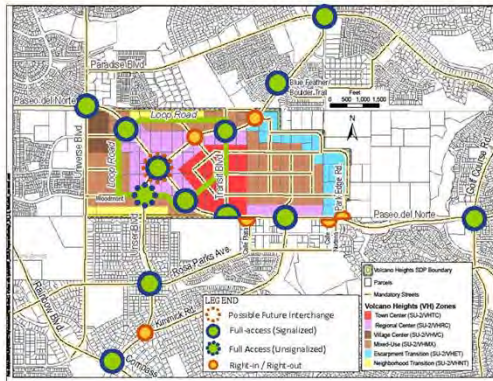


## VHSDP Goal:

### Protect Traffic Function of Arterials

**Strategies:**

- Street grid to disperse regional traffic and serve local development
- New “Loop road” around busy intersection
- Transit-oriented development
- Multimodal cross sections



The map displays the VHSDP (Valhalla Highway Study District) boundary in yellow. It shows a network of streets, including major arterials like Highway 101 and Highway 17. Various zones are color-coded: red for Regional Center (SU-2/VRHC), orange for Village Center (SU-2/VRMC), yellow for Mixed-Use (SU-2/VRMC), green for Employment Transition (SU-2/VRMT), and blue for Neighborhood Transition (SU-2/VRNT). The map also indicates potential future interchanges, full-access (signalized and unsignalized) points, and right-in/right-out locations. A legend in the bottom right corner provides a key for these symbols and zones.


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Consider the right hierarchy of your roadways. Some streets need to work best for trucks and municipal services. Some need to work best for pedestrians and retail uses. Not every street should be a 20 mile per hour pedestrian-oriented street! That said, development lining each street should work with, not against, the street type. Consider what kinds of streets work best for each zone. In your zeal to plan for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users, don't forget to plan for semis, garbage trucks, and fire engines.

## VHSDP Goal:

### Create Transit-oriented Development (TOD)

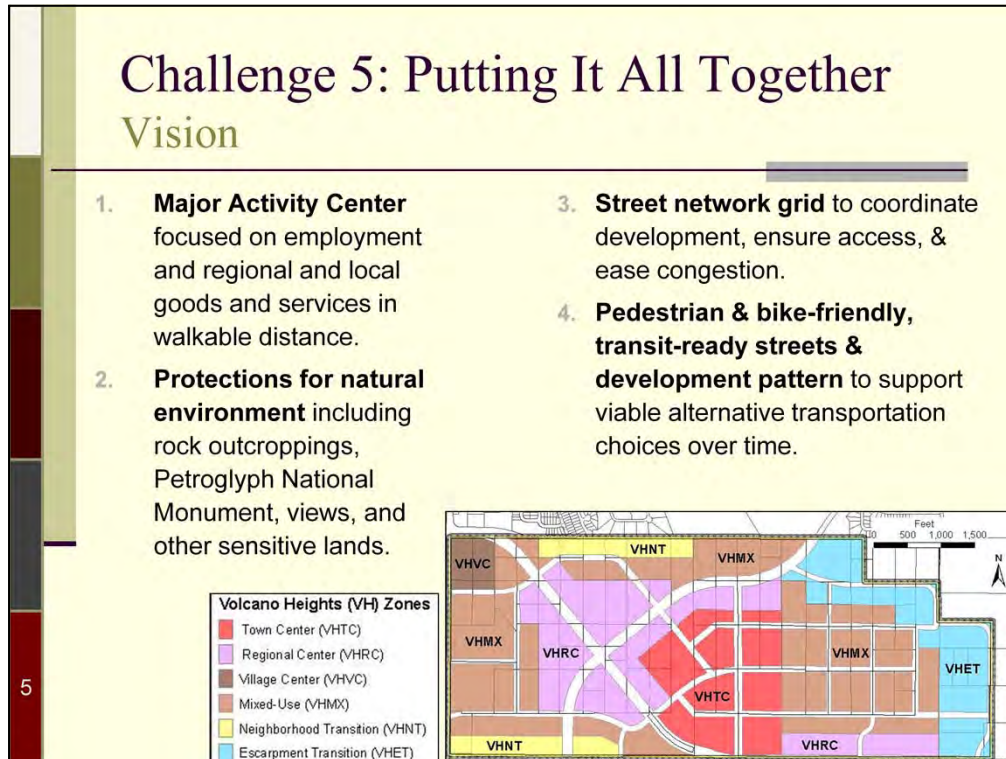
- Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG)
  - High-capacity Transit Study for Paseo del Norte - Rio Rancho to Journal Center/I-25
- VHSDP Strategies
  - Mixed Use zones
  - Center zones
  - Multimodal cross sections
  - Development pattern to encourage more density over time



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Cast about for partners who can help implement pieces of your plan! We bent over backwards to coordinate with the water utility, the flood control authority, and our COG, and these planning efforts will continue.

Our property owners asked repeatedly for the City to show some investment – even token – to justify their own investment in the Vision and in the area. To some extent, the planning process itself was a significant financial investment, but if we could have found some loose change to put in a roadway or some vital infrastructure ... that small investment would have been more than paid for itself in matching development by the private sector.



The Plan attempts a balancing act between incentives and regulations, flexibility and predictability, and the natural and built environments. Its provisions embody a series of compromises by stakeholders across various interests.

The Plan is intended to create an employment center, with regional and local goods and services in walking distance to nearby residents. This transit-oriented and transit-supportive density is balanced with protections for the natural environment through a combination of incentives, regulations, zoning, and policies. A mandatory street network provides the backbone to support development compatible with benefits to the natural environment.

Taken together, the Plan hopes to create opportunities for a distinct district in Albuquerque in harmony with its unique setting.




## Challenge 5: Putting It All Together

### Approach

<p><b><u>Innovations</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coordinated land-use and transportation</li> <li>2. Land use table with broad categories</li> <li>3. Mix of regulations &amp; incentives to protect natural resources</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Strategies:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Primary street network</b> with required cross sections to coordinate development across properties.</li> <li>■ <b>Mixed-use zones with design standards</b> to balance flexibility of land use with predictability of built form</li> <li>■ <b>Transition zones</b> to protect existing neighborhoods &amp; Petroglyph National Monument</li> <li>■ <b>Optional height bonus system</b> to balance density with benefits to natural and built environments.</li> </ul>
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The Plan represents a new level of commitment to the coordination of land-use and transportation, including forward-looking transit planning. The Plan's optional bonus system is an innovative, incentive-based approach toward the preservation of views and rock outcroppings on private land. The Plan is largely made up of tables, graphics, and photographs to provide clear, understandable, concise guidance to property owners, developers, and reviewing City staff.

The Plan's main strategies include (1) Transition zones to protect the Monument as well as existing single-family residential areas to the north and south of the Plan area; (2) mixed use zones with design standards to balance land use flexibility with the predictability of built form; (2) a mandatory street network to help coordinate predictable development along corridors, across property lines, and over time; and (3) an optional height bonus system as the compromise to balance development density/intensity benefits to the natural and built environments.



## Challenge 5: Putting It All Together

### What the Plan Does and Doesn't Do

Does:	Doesn't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Regulate zoning &amp; allow mix of land uses</li> <li>■ Coordinate land use &amp; transportation at a high-level of planning</li> <li>■ Set predictable development pattern</li> <li>■ Allow density to be phased in over time</li> <li>■ Provide incentives for open space amenities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Plan specific projects</li> <li>■ Master-plan infrastructure</li> <li>■ Force collaboration among property owners</li> <li>■ Require density from day one</li> <li>■ Require preservation of rock outcroppings or new parks or trails</li> </ul>

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By definition, a sector Plan's primary purpose is to change the zoning to establish land use and character of the built environment.

Many property owner comments about the lack of detail about infrastructure coordination.

Sector Plan, while it can do a lot, isn't the best tool for providing that level of detail about infrastructure or implementation.

While City will need to continue to be involved beyond the adoption of this Plan, right now the focus is putting this Plan in place so that properties that can develop now – extending infrastructure from nearby, etc. – can do so, and for others who will need to coordinate with other property owners to fund improvements that benefit everyone – the Sector Plan sets the vision and pattern for development, from which the infrastructure planning can take place in order to determine the improvements needed and estimate costs, etc.

The Plan does recommend that property owners work together through some mechanisms that the City has available to help coordinate that infrastructure – SAD/TIDD/PID – but these are voluntary measures by property owners, and those processes will necessarily take place after and outside the sector planning process.

For the moment, the City's major investment is in the sector planning process, as we've created a master-plan level sector plan that makes design decisions to create predictability across properties, allows opportunities for buy-in from nearby property owners so that these agreements become embodied in the Plan regulations to enable streamlined approvals as development comes in, and provides enough administrative flexibility to anticipate issues that may come up as development occurs so that developers don't have to go through onerous processes because that level of detail wasn't available at the sector planning level.

We had to walk a fine balance between folks wanting more detail about infrastructure but less detail about design guidelines. Because of the size of the area, the multiple property owners, and the larger goal of creating a Major Activity Center here, the Sector Plan grants entitlements with design regulations, much like a single property owner would set the character and quality of development with design decisions. Here, these design regulations are intended to ensure predictability of character while allowing enough flexibility for

different styles, materials, and architectural features that property owners can develop according to their own tastes over time.

The Plan's strategies also represent an attempt to walk the fine line between encouraging preservation and precluding development without just compensation.

## Lessons Learned

*If it ain't broke...*



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Don't fix it!

## Choosing a Zoning Strategy: Weigh the Trade-offs

<h3>“Straight” Zoning</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Permissive</li> <li>2. Streamlined development approval</li> <li>3. Predictable</li> <li>4. Understood</li> </ol>	<h3>Form-based Zoning</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Permissive uses             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ More layers for approval to check form of development?</li> <li>■ Seen as “more restrictive”?</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Streamlined development approval             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ May take time to train staff</li> <li>■ May need ‘how-to’ info for development community</li> <li>■ Important to incorporate informal processes</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Predictable form             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Unpredictable mix of uses</li> <li>■ Unpredictable development timing</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
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There were so many compromises we had to reach in the planning process that if we could have accomplished what we needed to do with straight zoning, we probably would have stayed with that zoning approach, just to have one fewer front on which we had to engage strategically speaking.


(These compromises include:

- development densities vs. natural environment
- the right balance of development intensity
- rock outcropping protections – voluntary with incentives
- design regulations vs. flexibility of land uses allowed by zoning
- development intensities to the Plan center vs. edges (represented by transition zones)
- building heights allowed by right vs. eligible for bonus
- Park Edge road placement)

If you're not careful, form-based zones can be less permissive, take a longer development review time, and result in more inconsistency from varying staff interpretation. From the neighbor perspective, the results may vary widely in quality, which was not the promise of the form-based approach.

## Choosing a Zoning Strategy: Weigh the Trade-offs

<b>“Straight” Zoning</b>	<b>Form-based Zoning</b>
1. Permissive	1. Permissive uses
2. Streamlined development approval	2. Streamlined development approval
3. Predictable	3. Predictable form
4. Understood	4. Clear but complex <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Uses illustrations &amp; tables</li><li>■ Takes education</li><li>■ May take time</li></ul>



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Remember that straight zoning is “easy” because we’re used to it, not because it’s inherently more straight-forward. It’s a different way to slice and dice the regulations. Done well, form-based codes are the same basic elements only illustrated through diagrams and reduced down to the minimum requirements to protect the built environment you want in a particular character zone.

Done poorly, they’re a foreign way to ask for the unreasonable.



## Selling Form-based Codes: Why a Community Should Want Form-based Codes



- Promote **streets as public spaces**
- Tailors regulations to achieve a **community's vision**
- Shows developers what the **community wants**
- Catalyzes **desirable changes**, rather than merely adding red tape on what you don't want (i.e. permit-processing procedures)
- Codifies public input (fewer hearings later!)

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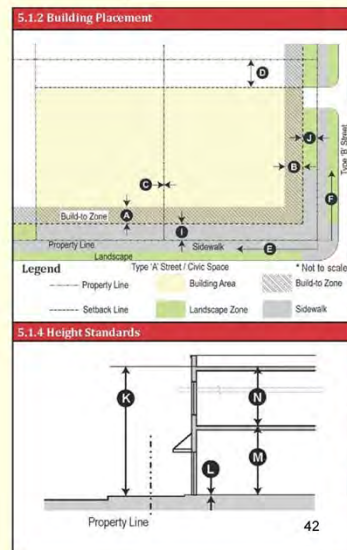
Just like any plan and any zone change, form-based codes need to be “sold” to the community. As with any approach, there are significant benefits that should be emphasized.

## Selling Form-based Codes: Why Owners Should Want Form-based Codes

- **Graphics** instead of words – shows what development will look like
- Focus on **administrative** review – streamlined process, no fights with NIMBY neighbors or inconsistent staff
- Mix of uses **by right** – increases marketability and potential development value
- Standards for the **public realm** – protects investment and raises property values
- Emphasis on placemaking – raises property values and rents
- Predictable development pattern & high-quality development

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Similarly, developers and property owners need to understand the potential benefits of the form-based approach.

## Creating a Successful Plan: Important Considerations

### ■ Administration, Review, & Approvals

- Negotiations now about character of desired development, not fight over specific development project later
- Predictable & Streamlined
  - Follow the rules = administrative approval
  - Plan = public input
    - Set a vision
    - Set the rules
    - Set conditions for development success



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Remind everyone (staff, public, property owners) that the process to create the new zones is THE opportunity for public input. Once the public input is codified in the Plan, the vision and the rules are set, and development that plays by the rules should be rewarded with speedy approvals. Property owners and developers need to understand, too, that the planning process is the time to adjust the rules. The Plan can set out small administrative deviations within specified thresholds that can handle specific challenges that arise when a particular development project gets planned, but that is not the appropriate time to fight a whole category of requirements, as developers sometimes do.

## Creating a Successful Plan: Important Considerations

- Balance of Predictability & Flexibility
  - Tailored deviations
  - Guidance on “exceptions”
- Policies:
  - Vision
  - Intent
  - Wish list



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While the Plan's requirements need to include a balance of flexibility and predictability, it is important not to overlook the importance of the policies to set out a vision and a plan intent that can guide decision-makers and staff, and even inspire developers to incorporate the community's "wish list" for development in special places.

## Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan

### Contact



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505-924-3932



Plan and additional materials available here:  
[www.tinyurl.com/volcanoheights](http://www.tinyurl.com/volcanoheights)