

ALBUQUERQUE & BERNALILLO COUNTY

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

As Adopted By City Council in MARCH 2017



IMPROVING PLACE FROM PLANNING TO ZONING







Albuquerque/Bernalillo County **Comprehensive Plan**

AS ADOPTED BY CITY COUNCIL
MARCH 2017



IMPROVING PLACE FROM PLANNING TO ZONING

CITY of ALBUQUERQUE

TWENTY SECOND COUNCIL

COUNCIL BILL NO. R-16-108

ENACTMENT NO.

R-2017-026

SPONSORED BY: Trudy E. Jones and Isaac Benton

RESOLUTION

ADOPTING AN UPDATED ALBUQUERQUE/BERNALILLO COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

WHEREAS, the Council, the Governing Body of the City of Albuquerque,
has the authority to amend the Comprehensive Plan as authorized by statute,
Section 3-19-9, NMSA 1970, and by its home rule powers; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan is the Rank I plan for the physical
development and conservation of areas within the City of Albuquerque and
unincorporated Bernalillo County, which sets out the context, goals and
policies, monitoring and implementation, and supporting information to
further its vision and purpose; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan has not been significantly updated
since its original adoption in 1989 and its subsequent amendment in 2001 to
establish "Centers and Corridors" boundaries and policy language to focus
development in appropriate areas connected by multi-modal transportation
corridors; and

WHEREAS, the City Council, the City's Planning and Zoning Authority, in
April 2014, via R-14-46 (Enactment No. R-2014-022), directed the City to update
the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan in coordination with
Bernalillo County, MRCOG, and other agencies; and

WHEREAS, an increased range of housing options are needed closer to
employment centers, and employment centers are needed closer to existing
housing, especially west of the Rio Grande; and

WHEREAS, preserving agricultural lands is increasingly important in order
to protect rural character and cultural traditions, provide for regional food

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1 demands locally, and to improve stormwater retention and groundwater
2 infiltration; and

3 WHEREAS, the largest demographic segments of the population – Baby
4 Boomers and Millennials – are increasingly seeking urban lifestyles in mixed-
5 use areas that provide for employment, entertainment, and services without
6 requiring driving or automobile ownership; and

7 WHEREAS, the demand for these types of developments are not
8 sufficiently met in Albuquerque, because, in large part, existing land-use
9 policies and regulations strongly encourage suburban, single-family detached
10 development over compact mixed-use; and

11 WHEREAS, jurisdictional and geographic boundaries limit the opportunity
12 to accommodate growth in the City via annexation and expansion, prompting
13 the need to accommodate infill and densification in appropriate locations,
14 such as Centers and Corridors; and

15 WHEREAS, an update of the Comprehensive Plan would be an opportunity
16 to employ contemporary best practices for land use, transportation, and
17 preservation planning techniques and strategies for regional, interagency
18 transportation and land-use planning activities; and

19 WHEREAS, the existing hierarchy of overlapping Rank I, Rank II, and Rank
20 III Plans were all created at various points in time with little or no strategic
21 coordination and contain overlapping and sometimes conflicting policies and
22 regulations that have not been evaluated in a comprehensive manner; and

23 WHEREAS, these uncoordinated policies often present unnecessary and
24 counter-productive obstacles to both neighborhood protections and the
25 development process; and

26 WHEREAS, these lower-ranking plans need to be analyzed and revised to
27 ensure they support and are consistent with an updated Rank I
28 Comprehensive Plan and provide a simpler, clearer, and more effective means
29 of implementing the growth and development vision; and

30 WHEREAS, an update to the Comprehensive Plan provides an opportunity
31 to foster increased collaboration and coordination between the City of
32 Albuquerque and Bernalillo County by serving as a regional plan for healthy
33 growth, efficient transportation, infrastructure needs, and land use policies to

1 better reflect new market demands, diversify and bolster the economy, better
2 serve all demographics, support alternative transportation modes to the
3 automobile, and improve efforts to grow and develop in ways that are
4 sustainable, respect and preserve natural and cultural resources, and improve
5 the quality of life for all citizens; and

6 WHEREAS, staff of the City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County have
7 worked together to update the narratives, policies, and maps; and

8 WHEREAS, on September 1, 2016, the Environmental Planning
9 Commission (EPC), in its advisory role on land use and planning matters,
10 recommended approval to the City Council of the amendment to the
11 Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan.

12 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF
13 ALBUQUERQUE:

14 SECTION 1. The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan is
15 hereby replaced in its entirety by the 2016 Draft Updated Comprehensive Plan,
16 attached hereto as Exhibit A.

17 SECTION 2. FINDINGS ACCEPTED. The City Council adopts the
18 following findings as recommended by the Environmental Planning
19 Commission (EPC):

20 1. The request is for an update to the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County
21 Comprehensive Plan (1989, as subsequently amended, the "Comp Plan"). The
22 update, which will reflect new demographic trends and anticipated growth in
23 the region, is designed to more effectively coordinate land use and
24 transportation and to leverage and enhance a sense of place.

25 2. The Comp Plan applies to land within the City of Albuquerque municipal
26 boundaries and to the unincorporated area of Bernalillo County (the
27 "County"). Incorporated portions of the County that are separate
28 municipalities are not included.

29 3. Council Bill No. R-14-46 (Enactment R-2014-022) became effective on May
30 7, 2014, which directed the City to update the Comp Plan.

31 4. The EPC's task is to make a recommendation to the City Council regarding
32 the Comp Plan update. As the City's Planning and Zoning Authority, the City
33 Council will make the final decision. The EPC is the Council's recommending

body with important review authority. Adoption of an updated City Master Plan (Comp Plan) is a legislative matter.

5. The existing, key concept of Centers and Corridors will remain the same, as will the boundaries of existing Centers. In the City, the existing development areas (Central Urban, Developing & Established Urban, Semi-Urban, and Rural) will be replaced with Areas of Change and Areas of Consistency. In the County, the development areas will remain the same.

6. The 2016 Comp Plan update incorporates changes in the narrative descriptions as well as the goals, policies, and actions of each existing chapter. Approximately 90% of existing Goals and policies from the City's various Sector Plans (Rank III) and Area Plans (Rank II), except for facility plans and Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) plans, have been integrated into the updated Comp Plan. Many of these Goals and policies address similar topics and/or can be expanded to apply City-wide.

7. The State Constitution and Statutes, the ROA 1994 (which includes the City of Albuquerque Charter and the Planning Ordinance), the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, and the City of Albuquerque Comprehensive Zoning Code are incorporated herein by reference and made part of the record for all purposes.

8. State Constitution and Statutes: The Constitution of the State of New Mexico allows municipalities to adopt a charter, the purpose of which is to provide for maximum local self-government (see Article X, Section 6-Municipal Home Rule). The City of Albuquerque is a home rule municipality and has the authority to adopt a comprehensive plan as granted under Chapter 3, Article 19, Section 9 NMSA 1978 (3-19-9 NMSA 1978) and by the City Charter.

9. The request is consistent with the intent of City Charter Article XVII, Planning, as follows:

A. Section 1 - The review and adoption of an updated Comp Plan is an instance of the Council exercising its role as the City's ultimate planning and zoning authority. The updated Comp Plan is written and formatted to help inform the Mayor and the Council about community priorities for the formulation and review of Capital Improvement Plans.

1 **B. Section 2 - The updated Comp Plan will help guide the implementation,**
2 **enforcement, and administration of land use plans and regulations that reflect**
3 **current trends and priorities as well as the future vision for growth and**
4 **development. The Plan's implementation strategies are to: build public**
5 **awareness and engagement; improve inter-governmental coordination;**
6 **promote growth, development and conservation; and create an ongoing**
7 **process for monitoring progress toward the vision, which will give the Council**
8 **and the Mayor a common and effective framework to build upon.**

9 **10. Intent of the City Charter - Related Sections:**

10 **A. Article I, Incorporation and Powers- Updating the Comprehensive Plan**
11 **is an act of maximum local self -government and is consistent with the**
12 **purpose of the City Charter. The updated policy language of the Comp Plan**
13 **will help guide legislation and provide support for necessary changes to**
14 **ordinances and standards.**

15 **B. Article IX, Environmental Protection- The updated Comprehensive Plan**
16 **reflects recent best practices for policy to guide the proper use and**
17 **development of land coordinated with transportation. The update will help**
18 **protect and enhance quality of life for Albuquerque's citizens by promoting**
19 **and maintaining an aesthetic and humane urban environment. Committees will**
20 **have up-to-date guidance to better administer City policy.**

21 **11. Intent of the Zoning Code (Section 14-16-1-3): The update to the Comp**
22 **Plan will provide up-to-date guidance for amendments and changes to land**
23 **use regulations in the Zoning Code. This will allow the Zoning Code to better**
24 **implement the city's master plan -in particular the master plan documents that**
25 **comprise the Comp Plan. This updated Comp Plan will facilitate a**
26 **comprehensive review of land use regulations and regulatory processes to**
27 **ensure that they reflect the most recent best practices and the vision for future**
28 **growth and development in the city to promote the health, safety and general**
29 **welfare of Albuquerque's citizens.**

30 **12. Intent of the Planning Ordinance (Section 14-13-2-2): Updating the Comp**
31 **Plan will ensure that it will reflect recent best practices for land use and**
32 **transportation planning, the priority needs and desires of residents and**
33 **businesses, and a vision of sustainable growth and development for the next**

twenty years. This will also help ensure that lower ranking plans reflect current ideas, technologies, and up-to-date demographic and market trends. The Comp Plan update process identified several conflicting provisions in lower ranking Plans that require an updated long-range planning process. The proposed Community Planning Area (CPA) assessments will address planning issues City-wide as well as within each CPA on an on-going, proactive basis.

13. The Comp Plan update addresses the main topics in Section 14-13-1, the Planned Growth Strategy (PGS), such as natural resources conservation, traffic congestion, and infrastructure provision, as follows:

A. Sustainable development is a key to the region's long-term viability. The 2016 Comp Plan promotes sustainable development best practices related to water resources, storm water management, multi-modal transportation, and urban design. A new chapter on Resilience and Sustainability (Chapter 13) has been added and includes sections on water quality and air quality, and discusses the importance of becoming more resource-efficient.

B. The update addresses transportation and traffic on a regional basis. A priority is to improve mobility and transportation options (p. 1-11). The Transportation chapter (Chapter 6) discusses the importance of balancing different travel modes and providing complete and well-connected streets to provide a variety of travel options.

C. The Land Use chapter (Chapter 5) includes policies to encourage a development pattern that will foster complete communities, where residents can live, work, learn, shop, and play, and that will maximize public investment in denser areas. One primary goal is to improve the balance of jobs and housing on each side of the river to help reduce traffic congestion and bring jobs to where people already live.

D. The Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services chapter (Chapter 12) covers a wide range of infrastructure systems, community facilities and public services that support the existing community and the Comp Plan's vision for future growth. The chapter emphasizes increased inter-agency planning and coordination, and ways for pooling resources to maximize efficiencies, bridge service gaps, and provide added value. The guiding

1 principle of equity helps identify gaps in service provision and how they might
2 be addressed.

3 14. City language that refers to the Comp Plan is found in various locations
4 of ROA 1994. This language will need to be correspondingly revised with the
5 adoption of the 2016 Comp Plan in order to maintain the intent of the policies
6 and to maintain internal consistency in ROA 1994.

7 15. The 2016 Comp Plan update improves coordination with the Mid-Region
8 Metropolitan Planning Organization (MRMPO) and the Metropolitan
9 Transportation Plan (MTP), which includes a new growth forecast to 2040 and
10 a preferred growth scenario. The Comp Plan update responds to the MTP by
11 updating Comp Plan Corridors to be consistent with MTP corridors,
12 coordinating Center designations with MTP center designations used to
13 develop a preferred future growth scenario, and developing an analysis tool to
14 analyze performance metrics based on different growth scenarios.

15 16. A number of elements of the existing Comp Plan will remain the same
16 with the 2016 Comp Plan update, including:

17 A. The Comp Plan's geographic scope, which includes the area in
18 Albuquerque's municipal limits and the unincorporated areas in Bernalillo
19 County.

20 B. The Centers and Corridors framework as a means to encourage future
21 growth and density in appropriate areas while protecting existing
22 neighborhoods, natural resources, and open space lands.

23 C. Most of the goals, policies, and actions in the current Comp Plan,
24 supplemented by those in Sector Development Plans and Area Plans adopted
25 by the City. Approximately 90% of the City's existing 1,200 policies in these
26 plans are represented in the 800 policies and sub-policies of the Comp Plan
27 update.

28 D. The County's Development Areas (Rural, Reserve, Semi-Urban,
29 Developing Urban, and Established Urban) from the existing Comp Plan will
30 continue to be used in the unincorporated area, and their associated policies
31 will remain unchanged.

32 17. The 2016 Comp Plan update has reorganized and reworded the existing
33 Comp Plan to reflect new data and trends, be more user-friendly and provide

clearer guidance to decision-makers. The most significant changes in the 2016 Comp Plan update are:

A. The inclusion of a Vision chapter (Chapter 3), which serves as a “People’s Summary” of the plan and provides an overview.

B. Modifications to the Center and Corridor descriptions and the introduction of new Center and Corridor types.

i. Three Major Activity Centers have been re-designated as Downtown or as Urban Centers (Uptown and Volcano Heights).

ii. The remaining Major and Community Activity Centers have been re-designated as Activity Centers or Employment Centers.

iii. The new Employment Center type reflects the need for concentrated job centers.

iv. Certain corridors have been designated as Premium Transit corridors to be consistent with MRCOG’s MTP; Enhanced Transit Corridors have been re-named and designated as Multi-Modal Corridors, and Express Corridors are renamed and designated as Commuter Corridors. Main Street Corridors have been introduced as a new Corridor type.

C. Reorganization of the Comp Plan into ten Elements (Chapters) that reflect more recent best practices in planning as well as the needs of area residents:

i. Community Identity and Heritage Conservation (Chapters 4 and 11, respectively) in response to public comments about the importance of neighborhood character, preserving traditional communities, and cultural landscapes.

ii. A new chapter, Urban Design (Chapter 7) describes design elements that support and/or constitute good design for our community, in distinct rural, suburban, and urban contexts.

iii. A new chapter, Resilience and Sustainability (Chapter 13), reflects community concerns about conserving natural resources, preparing for climate change and natural hazards, and creating healthy environments for people.

D. The introduction of six guiding principles that indicate what is particularly important to residents.

1 E. A new focus on coordinating land use and transportation to strengthen
2 Centers and Corridors and to address traffic congestion on river crossings by
3 improving the jobs-housing balance west of the Rio Grande.

4 F. Two Development Areas in the City, Areas of Change and Areas of
5 Consistency, will replace the six current Development Areas.

6 G. Updated City and County Community Planning Areas (CPAs) and
7 policies that guide the City Planning Department regularly to engage with
8 residents and other stakeholders in 12 City CPAs on a five-year cycle of
9 assessments.

10 H. An Implementation chapter (Chapter 14) with strategic actions,
11 performance metrics, and policy actions to be updated on a five-year cycle.

12 18. In 2017, City Planning Staff intend to initiate an ongoing, proactive
13 engagement and assessment process (Community Planning Area
14 Assessments) to work with communities throughout the City to address
15 planning issues and develop solutions. Performance measures will be used to
16 track progress toward Comp Plan Goals over time.

17 19. The public engagement process, which offered a range of opportunities
18 for input, discussion, and consensus-building, featured a series of workshops
19 and public meetings that included daytime focus groups organized by topic
20 and evening meetings with a more traditional presentation and a question and
21 answer session. The project team was invited to speak at over 100 meetings
22 and local conferences. To reach more people and a broader cross-section of
23 the community, the project team staffed booths and passed out promotional
24 material at community events and farmers markets.

25 20. Articles about the ABC-Z project appeared regularly in the City's
26 Neighborhood News and ads specifically for the Comp Plan update were
27 placed in print and social media. There is also a social media page for the
28 ABC-Z project on Facebook.

29 21. Staff received official written comments from agencies and interested
30 parties. Agencies that commented include the ABCWUA, the AMAFCA,
31 Bernalillo County, the City Parks and Recreation Department, and PNM. Their
32 comments suggest specific revisions to clarify topics related to their agency's
33 charge. Staff is considering all comments carefully and addressing them.

1 22. The comments submitted by interested parties cover a variety of topics,
2 including but not limited to time for public review and comment, annexation,
3 effect on vulnerable populations, and the focus on centers and corridors.
4 Some comments express significant concerns that policies crafted to address
5 localized issues are applied broadly and that sector plans are being replaced.
6 Staff is considering all comments carefully and addressing them.

7 23. The EPC held two advertised and noticed public hearings, on August 4
8 and August 25, 2016, to elicit public comments and participation for the
9 record.

10 24. Planning Department Staff and City Council Staff will continue to
11 collaborate regarding themes raised in the August 2016 Staff Report, and in
12 public, departmental, and agency comments, to consider any additional
13 information that should be included in the Comp Plan update.

14 SECTION 3. EFFECTIVE DATE AND PUBLICATION. This legislation shall
15 take effect five days after publication by title and general summary.

16 SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY CLAUSE. If any section, paragraph, sentence,
17 clause, word or phrase of this resolution is for any reason held to be invalid or
18 unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not
19 affect the validity of the remaining provisions of this resolution. The Council
20 hereby declares that it would have passed this resolution and each section,
21 paragraph, sentence, clause, word or phrase thereof irrespective of any
22 provisions being declared unconstitutional or otherwise invalid.

1 PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 20th DAY OF March, 2017
2 BY A VOTE OF: 6 FOR 2 AGAINST.

3
4 Against: Peña, Sanchez
5 Excused: Winter
6

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10 
11 Isaac Benton, President
12 City Council
13

14
15 APPROVED THIS 7th DAY OF April, 2017
16

17
18
19 Bill No. R-16-108

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22 
23 Richard J. Berry, Mayor
24 City of Albuquerque
25

26
27 ATTEST:

28
29 
30 Natalie Y. Howard, City Clerk
31





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Acronyms

A	Albuquerque
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials
ABC	Albuquerque/Bernalillo County
ABCWUA	Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority
ABQ	Albuquerque
ABQ RIDE	Albuquerque Transit Department (City)
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AGIS	Albuquerque Geographic Information System (City, Division of Planning Department)
AMAFCA	Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority
AMI	Area Median Income
APD	City of Albuquerque Police Department
APS	Albuquerque Public Schools
BBER	University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research
BC	Bernalillo County
BCSO	Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office
BNSF	Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit

CIP	Capital Implementation Program (City) or Capital Improvement Program (County)
CNM	Central New Mexico Community College
Comp Plan	Comprehensive Plan
CPA	Community Planning Area
CPTED	Crime Prevention through Environmental Design
DASZ	Data Analysis Subzone
DMD	Department of Municipal Development (City)
DPM	Development Process Manual
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
GO	General Obligation (Bonds)
HMP	Hazard Mitigation Plan
HUD	US Department of Housing and Urban Development
IDO	Integrated Development Ordinance
IPGR	Infrastructure Planning & GEO Resources Department (County)
ITE	Institute for Transportation Engineers
LOS	Level of Service
LRTS	Long Range Transportation System (Guide)
MMLOS	Multi-Modal Level of Service
MPOS	Major Public Open Space (City, Division of Parks & Recreation Department)
MRA	Metropolitan Redevelopment Area
MRCOG	Mid-Region Council of Governments

MRGCD	Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District
MRMPO	Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan
NACTO	National Association of City Transportation Officials
NMDOT	New Mexico Department of Transportation
NMGC	New Mexico Gas Company
NMPRC	New Mexico Public Regulation Commission
NPS	National Park Service
NTMP	Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (City)
PCC	Planned Communities Criteria
PNM	Public Service Company of New Mexico (electric utility)
PROS	Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (County)
RMRTD	Rio Metro Regional Transit District
SDP	Sector Development Plan
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
SU	Special Use
SWRP	Southside Water Reclamation Plant
TOD	Transit-Oriented Development
UNM	University of New Mexico
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
WRMS	Water Resources Management Strategy





Chapter 1 **INTRODUCTION**

Image Crédit: City of Albuquerque

INTRODUCTION

1.1 A Plan as Unique as Albuquerque & Bernalillo County

In the heart of central New Mexico, Albuquerque and Bernalillo County have been shaped over centuries by a unique geology, natural setting, and settlement by Native American, Spanish, Anglo, and other cultures. This rich history contributes to the physical and social fabric of our region. Our physical and cultural distinctiveness provides the foundation for many of our residents' identity, our sense of place, and our quality of life.

The area's beautiful and diverse landscape encompasses the Rio Grande Valley and surrounding Bosque, volcanoes on the West Mesa, and forested Sandia Mountains to the east. Complemented by a mild and sunny climate, this landscape provides breathtaking vistas and countless year-round outdoor activities including hiking, skiing, biking, camping, equestrian sports, and wildlife watching. Residents and tourists alike are attracted to the vibrant and deeply rooted arts and culture scene and the famous New Mexico cuisine that melds the region's historic Hispanic and native heritages. Compared to many other regions,

our residents enjoy a low cost of living and manageable traffic, further contributing to our high quality of life.

This Plan refers to the city and unincorporated area of Bernalillo County as the "Albuquerque area" – not to elevate the City's concerns or neglect the needs and contributions of county and rural areas, but rather to recognize the interdependence of rural and urban areas that contribute to the future success of the larger metropolitan area. The Albuquerque area offers a range of lifestyles from urban to rural, which is part of what gives our community its sense of place and makes our economy diverse and robust.

The Albuquerque area is the state's largest population center, accounting for over 675,000 people.¹ The city and county are part of a larger metropolitan area of nearly one million residents, which comprises neighboring Sandoval, Valencia, and Torrance counties.



Image credit: Bill Tondreau

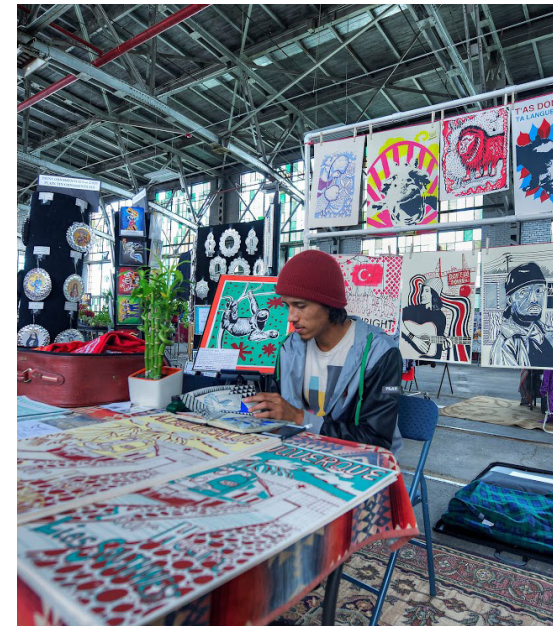


Image credit: Sean Poitras

A community steeped in culture and surrounded by natural features.

Centered on the intersection of Interstate 40 and Interstate 25 and home to two airports and a regional rail system, the area is also the state's primary transportation and commercial hub. The convergence of transportation systems here connects the region and our economy to the rest of the state, nation, and other countries.

Albuquerque serves as an educational center, home to prestigious higher education institutions including the University of New

By 2040, the population of the Albuquerque area is expected to increase by 311,000 people, representing a 46% increase from 2012.

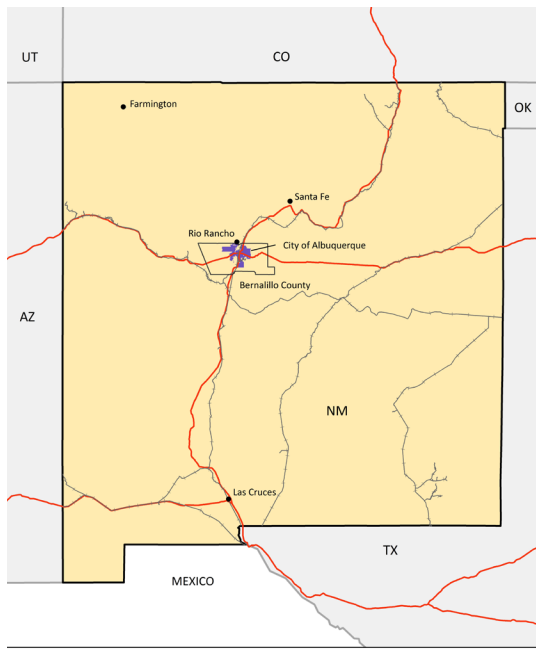


Figure 1-1: Location Map of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County



The Albuquerque area is a vibrant and growing community.



Image credit: City of Albuquerque



INTRODUCTION

Mexico, the Central New Mexico Community College, and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute. We are also home to the largest concentration of hospitals and medical providers in the state, which supports the local population and draws patients from across the Southwest.

By 2040, the population of the Albuquerque area is expected to increase by 311,000 people, representing a 46 percent increase from 2012,² and we need to accommodate this growth in a sustainable way. The long-term vitality and happiness of our residents hinge on thoughtfully locating, designing, and integrating new places for residents and businesses in a way that reflects our vision for the future. This will help us preserve what we love most about our region, while preparing for future challenges and working to secure prosperity for the next generation.

Several ongoing planning efforts make us proud, like protecting and enhancing the region's parks and natural areas, successful water conservation efforts, and revitalization in Downtown, Uptown, 4th Street, Sawmill, and Central Avenue. Other issues threaten the livability of our city and county and require our attention:



Image credit: City of Albuquerque

Residents take pride in their community and heritage.

- **Economic development:** Although the region is relatively affordable, it is also recovering slowly from the 2008 recession. As population grows, we need to ensure that the economy grows with it and promotes prosperity for everyone.
- **Water:** In our dry climate, supporting new and existing residents also means that we have to manage our water resources sustainably in the face of climate change.
- **Environmental justice:** After making significant gains in protecting our natural environment, we will need to continue to develop and implement strategies to address the environmental health hazards that affect vulnerable populations more severely in some areas of our community.
- **Housing affordability and services:** The number of households experiencing poverty is increasing. Ensuring access to quality affordable housing and health and social services for families and individuals is critical.
- **Connectivity:** While transit ridership has increased significantly in the past decade, many people still lack convenient access to transit, and pedestrians and cyclists face poor connectivity and threats to their safety.

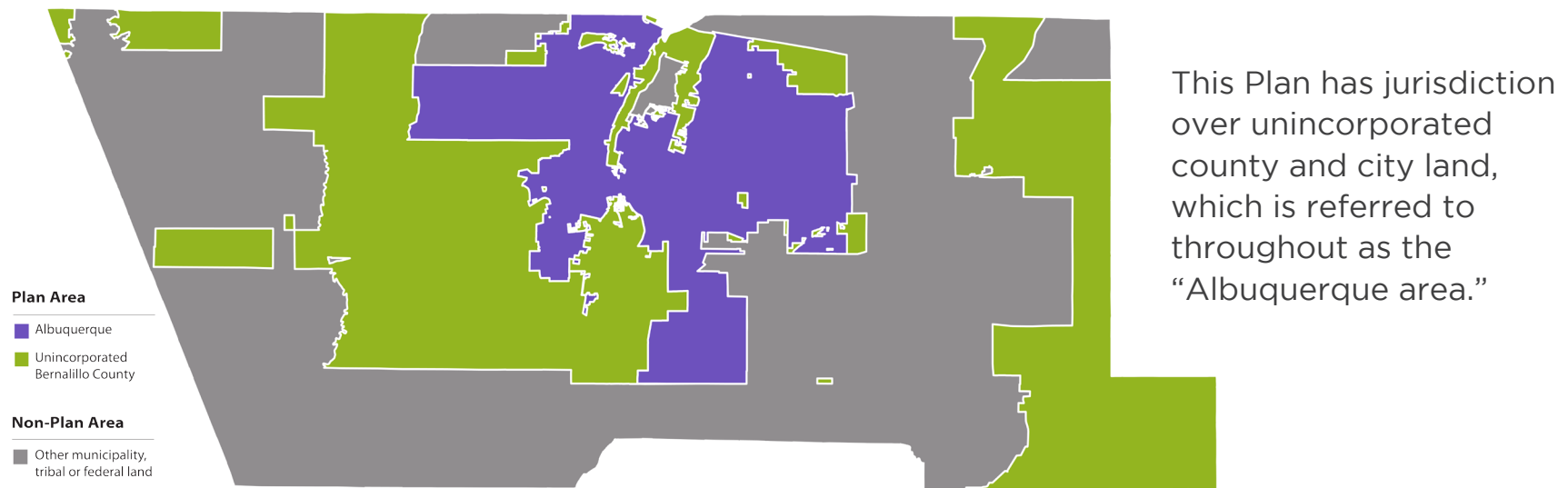


Figure 1-2: Geographic Scope of the Comp Plan

1.2 Geographic Scope of the Plan

The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) guides growth and development within Albuquerque's municipal limits and the unincorporated portions of Bernalillo County. Unincorporated Bernalillo County includes federal lands, such as Cibola National Forest, but does not include Kirtland Air Force Base, tribal lands, or other municipalities.

Although neighboring jurisdictions are not directly addressed in this Plan, coordination is

managed through the regional transportation planning organization, the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG), which includes Bernalillo, Sandoval, Valencia, and Torrance counties.

1.3 Benefits & Limits of Comprehensive Plans

The Comp Plan is primarily a land use document. It has the power to shape land use and zoning decisions as the Rank 1 Master Plan for both Albuquerque and

Bernalillo County. While a comprehensive plan can suggest priorities for economic development or housing, it only has direct influence over land use decisions. At the same time, the distinctive benefit of comp plans is how they identify and confront significant issues in a holistic way. Rank 2 and Rank 3 City and County plans are more focused and deal with topics such as parks, solid waste, transportation, or smaller geographic areas. Only a comprehensive plan fully considers how the whole community's values, needs, people, and places are interrelated and interdependent.

INTRODUCTION

This Comp Plan identifies issues that are central to the region's future success and describes how we can preserve and enhance the special places we value, even as we grow and evolve.

The Comp Plan provides goals and policies in each topic area to guide private development land use decisions, relevant City and County governing departments, and decision-makers as they contemplate new plans and public investments affecting the whole community. In instances where other entities or organizations have more control over or impact on a particular issue, the Comp Plan's goals and policies direct the City and County to coordinate appropriately.

1.4 Legal Purpose of the Comp Plan

The Comp Plan is the general plan for Albuquerque and Bernalillo County, providing a course of action for urban conservation and development and for environmental management. Its statutory purpose, in NMSA 1978, Section 3-19-9(A), is "to guide and accomplish a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the City, which will, in accordance with existing, and future needs, best promote health, safety, morals, other, convenience,

prosperity or the general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development."

The Comp Plan is prepared in accordance with State law (NMSA 1978, Sections 3-19-1 to -12), which authorizes municipalities to "prepare a general or master plan which may be referred to as the general plan."³ Article IX of Albuquerque's City Charter, adopted in 1971, requires that City officials "in the interest of the public in general shall protect and preserve environmental features such as water, air, and other natural endowments, ensure the proper use and development of land, and promote and maintain an aesthetic and humane urban environment." The County is also authorized to conduct long-range planning by state statute in NMSA 1978, Section 4-57-1 to -3.

1.5 Comprehensive Planning in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County

The first Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan was prepared in 1975 with resident assistance in response to rapid growth after 1960. It included both policies and maps designating open space areas,

This comprehensive plan describes how we can preserve and enhance the special places we value, even as we grow and evolve.

six "metropolitan" areas (with prescribed housing density ranges), and urban centers. The 1975 Plan's development strategy was based on four objectives:

1. Emphasize infill development
2. Balance public improvements between proposed new development and existing service area needs
3. Create an open space network
4. Support existing and new diverse neighborhoods

The Albuquerque and Bernalillo County Planning Commissions commenced a revision in 1986 that largely replaced the 1975 plan to address issues and choices

Comp Plan 101

WHAT IS THE COMP PLAN?

This Comp Plan is a policy document jointly adopted by the City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County. It describes the community's vision for the future of the built and natural environment and provides goals, policies, and implementing actions to achieve that vision. In this way, the Comp Plan shapes the future of Albuquerque and the unincorporated areas of Bernalillo County by guiding decisions about growth, development, and public investments related to land use, transportation, urban design, parks and open space, housing, economic development, community identity, infrastructure, community facilities, and services.

HOW WILL IT BE USED?

The Comp Plan will be used to analyze zone change requests and development proposals and to shape other planning efforts made by the City and County, including as representatives

to regional bodies such as MRCOG and the Albuquerque Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA). The Comp Plan includes policies that address many potentially conflicting challenges, issues, and opportunities for development. Staff and decision-makers must weigh all applicable policies on a case-by-case basis. The Comp Plan can also guide how the City and County prioritize infrastructure investments, and how they should coordinate with other public agencies and private partners to harness the necessary resources to implement and fulfill the community vision.

Comprehensive Plans typically include:

- A brief historic, cultural, and geographic context
- A community vision for future growth
- Existing conditions and trends
- Goals and policies grouped
- Actions to implement the vision

GOALS & POLICIES

The Comp Plan is the main policy document used to guide discretionary decisions about changes to zoning and the adoption of new plans. The Plan relies on coordinated zoning standards and capital investment programs to give “teeth” to the “shoulds” that it sets out. The advantage of policy language is the ability to aspire to outcomes that may not be achievable through individual regulations. Where “should”



is used in this Comp Plan, it is not merely a suggestion but rather the appropriate language to indicate policy. “Shall” indicates regulations and are appropriate in zoning codes and ordinances.

The Comp Plan, along with zoning regulations, will be the primary implementation tool for the Centers & Corridors Vision, illustrated in the Vision Map (**Figures 3-1 and 3-2**).

HOW & WHEN WILL IT CHANGE?

The Comp Plan guides growth to 2040. It is anticipated that the Comp Plan will be updated every five years to account for changing conditions and minor issues, but it is not expected to undergo a major rewrite for twenty years.

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identified by residents and staff. This version was adopted in 1988 and was amended again in 2002 to establish a “Centers and Corridors” framework for future growth.

In 2016, the Plan was updated to better coordinate land use and transportation, improve the viability of biking and walking options for better mobility and access for all residents and workers, and promote placemaking for economic development and community engagement.

The 2016 update confirms and strengthens the Centers and Corridors framework from 2002, which prioritizes infill and growth in more urban areas and encourages any growth undeveloped areas outside the urban footprint to remain low density or develop as Master Planned communities with Centers and Corridors. Although emphases have shifted, the overarching goals and vision for the region remain the same.

1.6 How Does the Comp Plan Relate to Other Plans?

By ordinance, other adopted City and County plans are subordinate to and must be consistent with this Comp Plan. Both entities



Image credit: City of Albuquerque

Residents participating in a visioning exercise that informed the Comp Plan.

will continue using existing Rank 2 Facility Plans for a handful of services and networks, such as electricity, trails and bikeways, and public Open Space. While the Comp Plan remains the overall guiding policy document for both the City and the County, implementation will differ between the two jurisdictions (see **Figure 1-2**).

1.6.1 UNINCORPORATED BERNALILLO COUNTY

The County will continue using the current system of ranked plans for specific areas, neighborhoods, and corridors to provide additional guidance beyond the Comp Plan. In the County, Development Areas guide density (for zoning purposes), site development plans, master plans, and other planning documents for specific areas and

developments. The current Bernalillo County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance will remain in effect following the adoption of the updated Comp Plan.

1.6.2 CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

From the 1970s through 2014, the City adopted almost 100 standalone plans to provide guidance beyond the Comp Plan for smaller geographic areas. These plans included over 1,300 policies that range from very general to narrowly targeted. The system became increasingly difficult to implement and administer, as plan boundaries sometimes overlapped, and policies often conflicted. Many were not coordinated with other City policies and plans, and most were not updated over time.

The 2016 Comp Plan update simplifies this structure by incorporating land use and development-related policies that should be extended citywide or to larger geographic areas from the City's Rank 2 Area Plans and Rank 3 Sector Development Plans (SDPs) into the Comp Plan. Information, goals, and policies have been updated as much as possible and coordinated across topics. This approach is intended to improve consistency and legibility of the City's guiding policies,

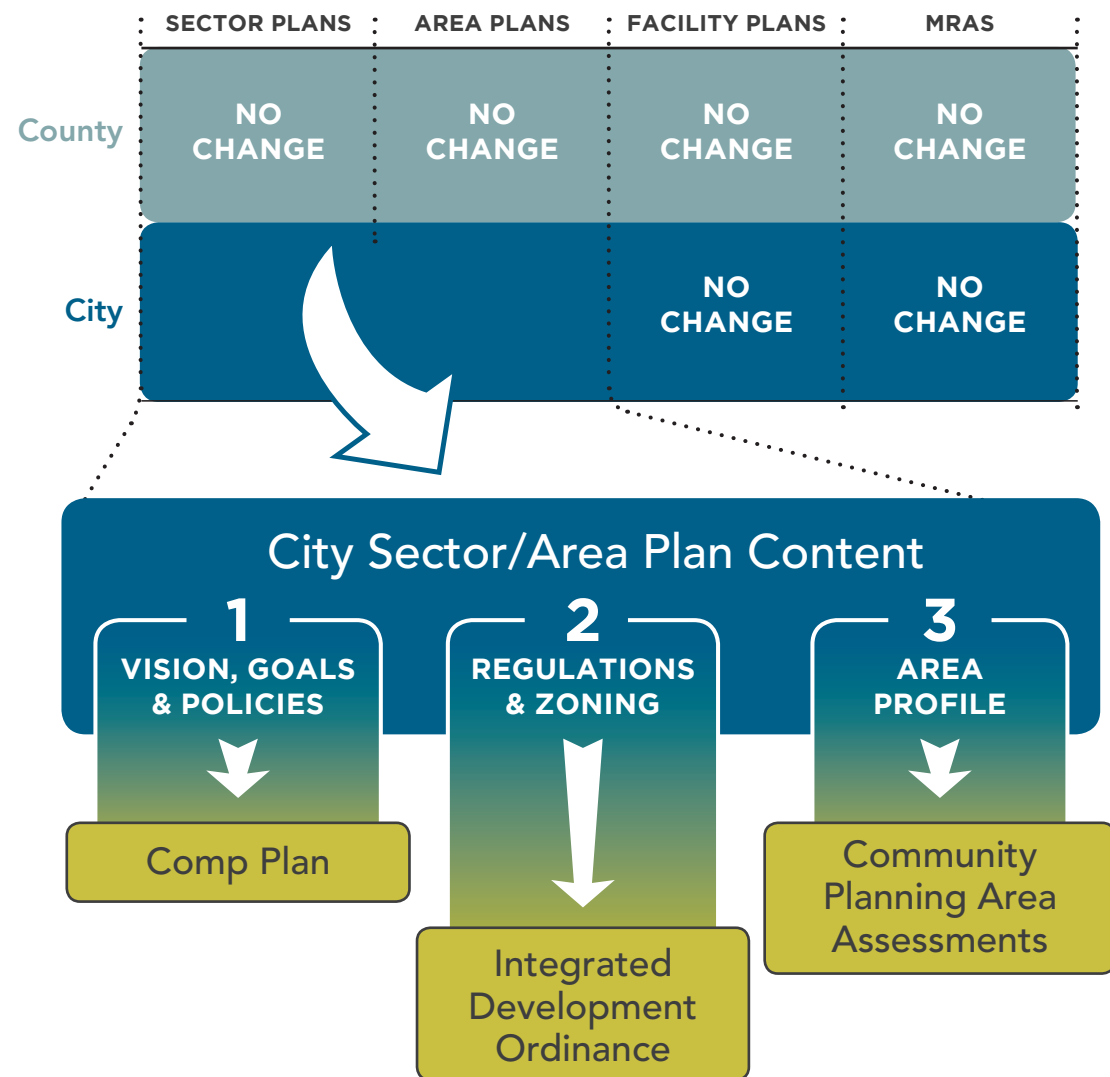


Figure 1-3 How the 2016 Update Affects the Land Use Planning Framework in the City and County

INTRODUCTION

so that they can be more easily accessed and applied by staff and the public. The City will continue to use Rank 2 Facility Plans and Rank 3 Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plans as standalone documents.

In the future, the City plans to replace sector planning efforts with a proactive, ongoing five-year cycle of assessments of Community Planning Areas (CPAs) to understand the pressures and needs of neighborhoods and recommend updates to policies in the Comp Plan, regulations in the zoning code, and/or implementation steps for agencies and departments.

1.6.3 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Comp Plan is coordinated with MRCOG's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The Center and Corridor designations in the Comp Plan go into greater detail to provide guidance for implementation to the City and County as local jurisdictions.

The MTP is updated every four years, so the Comp Plan's goals and policies must be broad and adaptable enough to remain relevant and responsive to the MTP's more frequent update cycle. A five-year cycle for updates to the Comp Plan, coordinated with

the City's CPA assessments, is proposed to ensure that the Comp Plan and the MTP remain in alignment to achieve regional and local goals.

1.7 Building the Vision

The Vision described in **Chapter 3** reaffirms many goals from the previous Comp Plan and brings our priorities into sharper focus. Through public workshops, focus groups, and surveys conducted in 2015-2016, community members pointed to goals that are still important and suggested new goals for the future.

The public engagement process inspired thoughtful ideas about challenges we face and opportunities we have to improve our community (see **Appendix B** for more about public engagement). With a better understanding of our shared vision for the community's future, we have updated the Comp Plan goals and policies to coordinate our efforts for each topic in order to move us toward our Centers and Corridors vision.



Image credit: City of Albuquerque

Multiple generations working together to plan for the future of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County.

1.8 Key Updates to the 2016 Comp Plan

1.8.1 UPDATED CENTERS & CORRIDORS FRAMEWORK

When the Centers and Corridors vision was first adopted in the Comp Plan in 2001, a lengthy public hearing process in both the City and the County resulted

in a hierarchical framework of Centers, incorporating areas that were recognized as Major, Community, and Special Activity Centers. These designations were based on existing development and future activity areas adopted in separate Area Plans, Master Plans, SDPs, or Corridor Plans. The 2013 Comp Plan update added Centers and Corridors that had subsequently been approved through separate planning efforts, including updates to the West Side Strategic Plan.

The 2016 Comp Plan update adds Centers subsequently approved by the County. It makes slight changes to the category names and terminology describing the different kinds of centers and introduces a new type of Center, *Employment Center*, to prioritize job creation. The change in language is intended to make the categories easier to understand and use, as well as to ensure that key goals are implementable.

For the Corridors, the term, *Multi-Modal* replaces *Enhanced Transit* to better describe corridors where transit and autos share lanes, with bike facilities provided either in protected lanes in the roadway or on parallel streets within the Corridor. *Premium Transit* is a new Corridor type added to reflect routes that have been studied for high-capacity and high-frequency transit service, such as

bus rapid transit, which may ultimately have a dedicated transit lane. **Tables 1-1 and 1-2** outline the general transition from the previous terms to the new ones and provides a high-level description of the changes.

1.8.2 CHANGES TO DEVELOPMENT AREAS

The 2016 Comp Plan update replaces the City's Development Areas from 1974 (Central Urban, Established Urban, Developing Urban, and Semi-Urban) with two new Development Area designations: *Areas of Change*, where change is desired or anticipated, and *Areas of Consistency*, where significant growth is unlikely or undesirable and where any new development or redevelopment will need to be consistent with the established character of the surrounding context (see **Land Use chapter, Section 5.1.2.5** for more information about new City Development Areas).

For the County, areas of anticipated change are designated within Centers and Corridors and in other locations through Area Plans, SDPs, and Corridor Plans. Master Plans adopted within Rural or Reserve Areas in the County will also designate areas that are expected to change, including new Centers and Corridors and areas appropriate for

mixed-use and higher-density development. The Development Area designations within the unincorporated County will remain unchanged.

1.8.3 RELATIONSHIP TO REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

As of 2016, the City intends to adopt a new regulatory framework – the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) – that includes an updated zoning code, subdivision ordinance, planning ordinance, and associated development standards. Policies from the City's existing Rank 2 Area Plans and Rank 3 Sector Development and Corridor Plans were assessed to determine their potential benefit to the city as a whole. Appropriate policies have been elevated to the updated Comp Plan to apply city-wide or to larger geographic areas, while effective and enforceable zoning and regulations are being consolidated into IDO regulations. Policies for smaller areas of the city will be identified through the City's CPA assessment process and reflected in the **Community Identity chapter** over time.

For the County, the current zoning regulations, system of special use permits, and sector plans with zoning and/or overlays will remain in place.

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PREVIOUS NAME	NEW NAME	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE
Major Activity Center	Downtown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritizes Downtown as its own Center, with the highest level of intensity.
Community Activity Center	Urban Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes two Urban Centers, with less intensity than Downtown but still serving a more regional market than Activity Centers.
	Activity Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasizes a neighborhood-scale and market size for mixed-use centers throughout the Plan area.
NEW	Employment Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritizes job creation. Focuses on industrial, office, and retail opportunities. Tends to be auto-oriented, with excellent access to the freight network.
Specialty Activity Center	Deleted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removed designations for lands not under City jurisdiction.
Rural Village Activity Center	Village Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasizes the size of the Center rather than the location (i.e. rural).

Table 1-1: Centers Framework Changes

PREVIOUS NAME	NEW NAME	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE
Express Corridor	Commuter Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More clearly communicates the primary users of this Corridor type.
Major Transit Corridor	Premium Transit Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritizes key Corridors for the highest level of public investment in high-quality, high-capacity transit service.
	Major Transit Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritizes high-frequency transit in Corridors consistent with regional transportation plans. Updates designations consistent with the Mid-Region Council of Governments Metropolitan Transportation Plan.
Enhanced Transit Corridor	Multi-Modal Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages balancing priorities between transit and vehicle traffic within a shared roadway, with improved pedestrian environment and protected or parallel bike facilities.
NEW	Main Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a new designation for streets with neighborhood-scale retail and pedestrian-oriented building design, orientation, and scale.

Table 1-2: Corridors Framework Changes

1.8.4 OTHER CHANGES

- **Added content and organization:** The introduction and context for each topic area (Section I prior to 2016) have moved into a combined chapter with goals and policies (previously Section II).
- **Comp Plan Elements: Community Identity; Urban Design; Parks & Open Space; Heritage Conservation; Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services; and Resilience & Sustainability chapters** reorganize and expand content from the previous Comp Plan. See **Chapter 3** for a description of the layout of Comp Plan Element chapters.
- **Guiding Principles and Vision Map:** New Guiding Principles, a description of the community Vision, and a Vision Map communicate a clearer picture of what we want for the future.
- **New and revised goals:** Goals for each topic area have been synthesized from the current adopted goals and policies, as well as issues and concerns raised by the public through engagement efforts in 2015 and 2016.
- **New implementation tools:** An updated **Implementation chapter** includes five-year strategic actions, performance measures, and a policy action implementation matrix to guide City and County departments. Performance metrics helps establish baseline data, and ongoing processes are proposed to track and analyze them over time to ensure implementation and guide equitable public investment throughout the community. See the **Implementation chapter** for more about strategic actions and performance metrics.



Image credit: City of Albuquerque



Residents enjoy a variety of outdoor activities.

Chapter 1 Endnotes

1. U.S. Census Bureau 2014 estimate
2. Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) Socioeconomic Forecast for 2040
3. Other New Mexico Statutes refer to the term “comprehensive plan” limited to a rational pattern of zoning for the official zone map.