

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
600 2nd Street NW, 3rd Floor, Albuquerque, NM 87102
P.O. Box 1293, Albuquerque, NM 87103
Office (505) 924-3860



OFFICIAL NOTICE OF DECISION

June 26, 2025

City of Albuquerque
Council Services
1 Civic Plaza
Albuquerque NM, 87103

Plan # PLAN-2025-00001
Comprehensive Plan Amendment

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

The City of Albuquerque Council Services Department requests an amendment to the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan to designate a section of Rio Grande Blvd NW from I-40 to Indian School Rd. NW and the section of Menaul Blvd/Indian School Blvd from Rio Grande Blvd NW to Louisiana Blvd NE as a Major Transit Corridor. This includes a revision to the Centers and Corridors maps and Vision maps to reflect the new ABQ-Ride Forward Recovery Network. Staff Planners: William Steele and Megan Jones

On June 26, 2025, the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) voted to forward a recommendation of APPROVAL to the City Council for Plan # PLAN-2025-00001, an amendment to the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan to designate a section of Rio Grande Blvd NW, Indian School Blvd NW/Menaul Blvd to Louisiana Blvd NE as a Major Transit Corridor to reflect the new ABQ-Ride Forward Recovery Network based on the following Findings and Conditions for Recommendation of Approval.

FINDINGS – PLAN-2025-00001, a Comprehensive Plan Amendment

1. This request is for an amendment to the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan (the “Comp Plan”) to change the designation of a section of Rio Grande Blvd. NW, Indian School Rd. NW, and Menaul Blvd. from Multi-modal Corridors to Major Transit Corridors (“MT Corridor”). These new Major Transit Corridors would include extending the existing Rio Grande Blvd. NW MT Corridor north of I-40 to Indian School Rd NW. The MT Corridor would continue east of Rio Grande Blvd. on Indian School Rd. NW to the Menaul Extension NW transition to Menaul Blvd. NW and would end at Louisiana Blvd. NE. Associated maps in the Comp Plan would be amended. There are no other requested changes to the Comp Plan.
2. The proposed amendment to the Comp Plan will help implement the City’s [ABQ RIDE Forward Network Plan \(May 2024\)](#) proposed by ABQ RIDE with the City Transit Dept. and reviewed by the Transit Advisory Board.
3. The amendment is a result of an updated transit network proposed by ABQ RIDE. The [ABQ RIDE Forward Network Plan \(May 2024\)](#) is a culmination of years of research and analysis into how to

recover from the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on transit ridership. The plan identifies Menaul Blvd. as a key corridor in the Recovery Network and the MT corridor designation would match the intent of the ABQ Ride Forward Network Plan. By designating sections of Rio Grande Blvd. NW, Indian School Rd. NW, and Menaul Blvd. as MT Corridors, the Comp Plan would reflect the most recent plan for public transit and would encourage higher-density residential development and mixed-use development along the corridor, which can best be supported by – and support – public transit.

4. The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, ABQ RIDE Forward Network Plan (2024), Rank 3 Menaul Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan, ABQ RIDE Forward Proposed New “Recovery” Bus Route Network Spring 2025 ABQ RIDE Equity Analysis and the City of Albuquerque Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) are incorporated herein by reference and made part of the record for all purposes.
5. Rio Grande Blvd. NW, Indian School Rd NW. and Menaul Blvd. are existing Multi-Modal Corridors that would be changed to Major Transit Corridors with this amendment. Major Transit Corridors are anticipated to be served by high frequency and local transit (e.g., Rapid Ride, local, and commuter buses) and connect to Centers.

The proposed Menaul Blvd. MT Corridor passes through the Indian School Activity Center, American Square Activity Center and Uptown Urban Center.

6. The American Square Activity Center includes both sides of Menaul Blvd. NE from Richmond Dr. east to half block before Morningside Dr. Activity Centers provide convenient, day-to-day services at a neighborhood scale to serve the surrounding area within a 20-minute walk or a short bike ride.
7. The Uptown Urban Center begins on Menaul Blvd. NE at Cagua Dr. and continues east past Louisiana Blvd. NE to San Pablo St/Mesilla St. Urban Centers are intended to be distinct, walkable districts that incorporate a mix of employment, service, and residential uses at a density and intensity lower than Downtown but higher than the neighborhood-oriented Activity Centers. Urban Centers serve a smaller regional area than Downtown, while Activity Centers serve the immediate surrounding area.
8. The proposed MT Corridor passes through the Menaul Metropolitan Redevelopment Area.
9. Although Corridors are not designated development areas, the proposed MT Corridors passes through a majority of Areas of Change and some Areas of Consistency as designated by the Comprehensive Plan.
10. Charter of the City of Albuquerque: The City of Albuquerque adopted the City Charter in 1971. Applicable articles include:

- A. Article I. Incorporation and Powers: Establishes the City of Albuquerque that may exercise all legislative powers and perform all functions not expressly denied by general law or charter, whose purpose is to provide for maximum local self-government.

Updating the Comprehensive Plan is an act of maximum local self-governance and is consistent with the purpose of the City Charter, as it serves as the guide for the zoning code and the substance of policy analysis for proposed development.

- B. Article IX, Environmental Protection: The Council (City Commission) 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. To affect these ends the Council shall take whatever action is necessary and shall enact ordinances and shall establish appropriate Commissions, Boards or Committees with jurisdiction, authority and staff sufficient to effectively administer city policy in this area.

The proposed update to the Comprehensive Plan reflects best practices for policy to guide the proper use and development of land coordinated with transportation. The change to a MT Corridor designation will help protect and enhance quality of life for Albuquerque's citizens by creating an easily accessible public transit network which translates to a humane urban environment.

11. Pursuant to §14-16-6-7(A)(3) of the Integrated Development Ordinance, Review and Decision Criteria, " an application for Adoption or Amendment of the Comprehensive Plan shall be approved if it meets all of the following criteria."

- 6-7(A)(3)(a) Because of changed economic, social, environmental or other conditions, the adoption or amendment is necessary to protect the public health, safety, or welfare.

The request is intended to align with the proposed ABQ Ride Recovery Network. The Transit Department provided a thorough analysis and data that shows that an increase number of bus riders would have efficient access to more areas of the city in the same about of time as when compared to the Existing ABQ Ride Network. Therefore, the change is necessary to protect or enhance public welfare through transit ridership along Rio Grande Blvd and Indian School Rd./Menaul Blvd.

- 6-7(A)(3)(b) The adoption or amendment will protect the public health, safety, or welfare better than retention of the continued application of the existing Comprehensive Plan.

The request to change the designation of Menaul Blvd. from a Multi-Modal Corridor to a Multi-Transit Corridor will protect the public health, safety, or welfare better than retention of the continued application of the existing Comprehensive Plan, which is the Multi-Modal Corridor designation.

The Major Transit Corridor would prioritize transit Rapid Ride, local, and commuter buses above other modes to ensure a convenient and efficient transit system, which is consistent with the proposed 2024 ABQ-Ride Network Plan and the Menaul MR Area Plan.

The MT Corridor would better align with the purpose of prioritizing efficient and cost-effective transit as noted in the [Rank 3 Menaul Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan](#). This MR Area includes Menaul Blvd. starting at I-25 to the west and ending at the North Diversion Channel (Embudo Channel) to the east. The Menaul MR Area Plan prioritizes Comp Plan goals and policies pertaining to land use and transportation, which is in line with amending the Comp Plan for the benefit of Public Welfare:

Goal 5.1 Centers and Corridors: Grow as a community of strong Centers connected by a multi-modal network of Corridors.

The proposed Major Transit Corridor will be part of a multi-modal network of Corridors by connecting Indian School Rd NW/Menaul Blvd. to three Centers.

Policy 5.6.2 Areas of Change: Direct growth and more intense development to Centers, Corridors, industrial and business parks, and Metropolitan Redevelopment Areas where change is encouraged.

The majority of the area along the proposed Major Transit Corridor is designated as an Area of Change and includes a MRA where more growth and development are encouraged.

Goal 6.1 Land Use-Transportation Integration: Plan, develop, operate, and maintain a transportation system to support the planned character of existing and future land uses.

The ABQ-Ride Recovery Network Plan and MRA ensures that transit will support the planned character of existing and future land uses as encouraged in the Comp Plan. The update to a MT Corridor aligns with the goals of these plans.

Policy 6.2.1 Complete Networks: Design and build a complete, well-connected network of streets and trails that offer multiple efficient and safe transportation choices for commuting and daily needs.

The request is aligned with the Recovery Network Plan and MRA plan to update Rio Grande Blvd. NW, Indian School Rd NW and Menaul Blvd. as MT Corridors. This would create a complete and well-connected network of corridors and provide safe transit options for daily commuting needs along the Corridor, which connects to Centers.

Policy 6.4.2 Air Quality: Reduce the adverse effects of automobile travel on air quality through coordinated land use and transportation that promote the efficient placement of housing, employment, and services and improve the viability of multi-modal transportation options.

The request will reduce the effects of automobile travel on air quality by promoting bus transit to more individuals which will reduce the number of automobiles on the roads and related air pollution.

- 6-7(A)(3)(c) The adoption or amendment will result in general benefits to a large portion of the residents or property owners in the city.

In adherence to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 the Transit Department preformed a service equity analysis based on ABQ Ride's proposed major service change to determine whether those changes have a disparate impact on minorities or disproportionate burden on low-income populations.

According to ABQ Ride's policy, a "major service change" is a change that increases or decreases service revenue hours on a route by 35 percent or more or that adds or eliminates service to 35 percent or more of the bus stops on a route.

The Equity Analysis found the "Recovery Network" represents a major service change by changing some routes and adding approximately 40% more service than the current service, which has been reduced due to staffing shortages, and will return total service to pre-pandemic levels.

The Equity Analysis of the ABQ RIDE Forward Proposed New "Recovery" Bus Route Network concluded that there was no disparate impact on minorities or

disproportionate burden on low-income households as defined in the Department's 2023 Title VI Program.

On June 2, 2025, City Council approved the "[ABQ RIDE Forward Proposed New "Recovery" Bus Route Network Spring 2025 ABQ RIDE Equity Analysis.](#)"

According to the Recovery Network Plan, "The average resident could reach +11% more jobs within 30 minutes, +32% more jobs within 45 minutes and +63% more jobs within 60 minutes of travel." This would benefit the majority of existing and future bus riders and allow them to have access to more jobs.

The proposed Major Transit Corridor will result in general benefits to a large portion of the residents or property owners in the city by providing transit to more individuals and provide access to more areas in the City.

- 6-7(A)(3)(d) If the adoption or amendment is being proposed by a small group of residents or property owners, it would not create significant adverse impacts on the remaining residents or property owners in the city.

This amendment it is not being proposed by a small group of residents or property owner. It's being proposed by City Council Services.

12. Two public meetings and presentations were held with various neighborhood associations and members of the public to provide information, receive public input and for discussion of the amended Comp Plan request.

A. Near North Valley Neighborhood Association – May 21, 2025

The residents were in favor of increased bus frequency along the corridor. They had questions regarding how the Major Transit Corridor would impact Areas of Change and Areas of Consistency. The applicant explained the request would not impact the designation of the Areas. The residents questioned the ability of the bus to travel on Indian School Rd. NW and were informed that an existing bus route routinely travels the road with no problems.

B. North Valley Coalition – June 3, 2025

The residents in attendance were in favor of increased bus travel though not an aspect of the MTC designation. They were concerned about the character and land entitlements and traffic congestion. The applicant was able to inform the residents most of the lots off Rio Grande Blvd NW are primarily comprised of small single family homes. It was highlighted larger lots were mostly east of 4th St. NW on Menaul Blvd NW. Some residences wanted the multi-modal corridor to remain in certain sections but the applicant inform them this creates a broken corridor network which is not encouraged in the Comp Plan and inhibits consistent right-of-way design.

13. The CABQ Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA) provided comments stating that designating Menaul as a Major Transit Corridor aligns with the goals and objectives to the Menaul Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan.
14. The CABQ Municipal Development Transportation Section submitted a comment stating that the proposed Comp Plan Amendment is complementary and consistent with the CABQ Vision Zero Year in review/ Action Plan Update goals and prioritized actions.

15. CABQ Parks and Recreation/Urban Forestry recommends a “robust street tree plan” along the Major Transit Corridor for shade and to promote walkability.
16. Bernalillo County Transportation Planning submitted a comment stating that CABQ Transit will need to coordinate on changes to the corridor and routes affected in unincorporated areas.
17. Staff received two letters requesting a deferral of four months for more public engagement opportunities from the North Valley Coalition and an individual from the Rio-Grande Blvd. Neighborhood Association. Both letters stated that they would oppose the request if more opportunities for public engagement regarding the request was not given.
18. An email was received on June 11, 2025 from an executive member of the North Valley Coalition and the chair of GAATC with questions regarding; differences in zoning and development intensities as well as restrictions on development made by this request; and changes in transit frequencies and biking facilities needed due to the request. The individual suggests that City Transit coordinate with TAB and GAATC. The applicant responded to the questions.
19. Pursuant to IDO 14-16-6-4(J)(2)(e) all City Neighborhood Associations were notified as required. Meetings were held with Neighborhood Associations which included the general public.
20. During the June 26, 2025 EPC Hearing Council Services staff stated that they intend to notify the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (IPCC) of the request prior to consideration by the City Council. The EPC acknowledges that the required notice for the request was given upon original application and the notice to the IPCC goes beyond this requirement.
21. This proposed change to the Comprehensive Plan is on the July 14, 2025 GAATC agenda and the August 14, 2025 Transit Advisory Board agenda.

CONDITIONS FOR RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL – PLAN-2025-00001, a Comprehensive Plan Amendment

1. The applicant shall coordinate with the staff planner to ensure that all Conditions of Approval are met and then submit a vetted, final version to the staff planner for filing at the Planning Department.
2. Make any necessary editorial changes to the document, including minor text additions, revisions for clarity (without changing substantive content), adding cross references, reorganizing content for better clarity and consistency throughout, revisions to graphic content for clarity, and updating tables of contents, including, but not limited to the following:
 - A. Updated Maps in the Comp Plan that shall be amended with this amendment:
 - Figure 3-1: Countywide Vision Map
 - Figure 3-2: Metro-focused Vision Map
 - Figure 5-2: Vision Map with Center Boundaries
 - Figure 5-4: Centers and Corridors
 - Figure A-15: Centers and Corridors
 - Table A-9: Corridors

APPEAL

It is not possible to appeal an EPC Recommendation to the City Council, since this is not a final decision. For more information regarding the appeal process, please refer to Section IDO §14-16-6-4(T) (FINALITY OF DECISIONS) of the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO).

Sincerely,

Megan Jones

for Alan Varela
Planning Director

AV/MJ/WS

cc:

Eleanor Walther, eawalth@comcast.net
Jordon McConnell, jordon.b.mcconnell@gmail.com | strongtownsabq@gmail.com
Erin Thornton, erinthorn2000@att.net
Patricia Willson, info@willsonstudio.com
Peggy Norton, peggynorton@yahoo.com
Jane Baechle, jane.baechle@gmail.com
Mark Bailon, lunaephemera@gmail.com
Althea Atherton, AltheaRidestheBus@gmail.com
Bryan Dombrowski, BryanDombroeski3@yahoo.com
Evelyn Rivera, rioreal@earthlink.net
Carlos Michelen, c.michelen.strofer@gmail.com
Rene' Horvath, aboard111@gmail.com
Marit Tully, marit.tully@gmail.com
Legal, acon@cabq.gov
All recognized/affected ABQ Neighborhood Associations
EPC file