



City of Albuquerque

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Richard J. Berry, Mayor

Interoffice Memorandum

November 7, 2014

To: Ken Sanchez, President, City Council

From: Richard J. Berry, Mayor 

Subject: Project# 1008887 / 14EPC-40054 - The Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) unanimously voted to recommend APPROVAL of the Bikeways & Trails Facility Plan (BTFP) to the City Council. The plan is a Rank II Facility Plan, which applies city-wide. Staff Planner: Carrie Barkhurst

Introduction

The Department of Municipal Development, Parks & Recreation Department, and the Planning Department jointly developed the proposed *Bikeways & Trails Facility Plan* (BTFP). The proposed plan will update, consolidate, and supersede two City planning documents - the *Trails & Bikeways Facility Plan* (1993) and the *Comprehensive On-Street Bicycle Plan* (2000). The BTFP represents the culmination of previous planning efforts and will continue implementation work that has been ongoing since 1972.

The purpose of the BTFP is to describe the bikeways & trail system serving the City of Albuquerque and to provide a planning framework and policy guidance for future bikeway and trail facilities projects and programs. People use both bikeways and trails for a variety of activities, including recreation, commuting, exercise, and utilitarian travel. Additionally, funding for both facilities come from the same sources. For these reasons, the City has determined that consolidating these two existing plans into one document will help the City better manage the growth of the bikeway and multi-use trail system. The overarching goal is to ensure a well-connected, enjoyable, and comfortable non-motorized transportation and recreation system throughout the metropolitan area.

Summary of Plan

The BTFP describes the existing system and policies, and establishes recommendations and proposes new projects to improve the bikeways and trails network. The plan does not allocate new funding. It will serve as a guide for future planning efforts and funding requests to implement the recommendations, including facility improvements, new facilities, maintenance, and education/outreach programs. The Plan is organized as follows:

Chapter 1, Introduction provides a general orientation to the Plan, including its purpose, the benefits of investing in bikeways and trails, and an overview of the planning process.

Chapter 2, Planning and Policy Framework contains the Plan's vision, goals, and policies, as well as how the plan fits into the broader planning and policy context.

Chapter 3, Existing Conditions & Current Issues provides an assessment of user needs and considerations for developing the bikeway & trail system. It also provides an overview of current issues.

Chapter 4, Recommended Network recommends capital projects for new facilities and enhancements for existing facilities.

Chapter 5, Recommended Programs reviews current programs and projects and recommends new efforts as resources and staff time allow.

Chapter 6, Implementation Strategies details administrative processes and recommends legislative changes, maintenance and operations improvements, and monitoring and evaluation efforts.

Chapter 7, Design Manual, provides guidance and standards for the development of bikeways, trails, and related facilities, such as wayfinding, end-of-trip facilities, and amenities.

The **Appendices** include a list of all the proposed facilities that are shown in Plan maps and additional technical data that support Plan content and recommendations.

Summary of Planning Process

The BTFP was formulated over a period of more than 6 years. The Department of Municipal Development hired a consultant team to update the current plans to address current conditions, goals, policies, issues, and future priorities. The initial data collection and analysis for the plan was conducted by DMD and consultants between 2009 and 2010. They solicited input through a technical advisory team, stakeholder workshops, key person interviews, a survey of bicyclists' needs and preferences, and three public open house events held from May to July 2010.

In 2012, Parks & Recreation took the lead to strengthen the Plan's recommendations regarding trails and the needs of recreational bicyclists and other trail users. In late 2013, the Planning Department was asked to help directly respond to public comments collected in the earlier planning effort and to edit the plan to reflect the concerns raised by the public, advisory groups, and agency interviews.

In 2014, a working group was formed with members from the Planning, Municipal Development, and Parks & Recreation Departments. This team worked together to assess how the City currently administers the bikeway and trail system; to develop recommendations to improve administrative coordination and maintenance practices; and to explore how the advisory groups can be most effective. This team also reviewed and updated the GIS data and proposed facilities and revised the design guidelines and standards.

A complete draft of the BTFP was made available for public comment in June 2014 on the project webpage and as a hard copy. Three open house events were held in July 2014, with over 100 citizens in attendance. Many of the comments and recommendations from those meetings were incorporated into the current draft of the plan. The project team also had ongoing coordination with the City's two advisory groups – the Greater Albuquerque Bicycling Advisory Committee (GABAC) and the Greater Albuquerque Recreational Trails Committee (GARTC).

The Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) reviewed the BTFP at two public hearings, on September 4 and October 9, 2014, with presentations from staff and testimony from city departments and agencies, advisory group members, and the public. The EPC found that the BTFP furthers applicable goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan and is consistent with the themes and strategies of the 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Key Issues / Outstanding Issues

Through the agency review process, extensive comments and conditions were provided in the September EPC Staff Report. The majority of these changes were minor text edits for clarity and to add additional information; however, there were numerous substantive changes recommended. The Planning Department supports most of the changes recommended, and these were incorporated into the *Bikeways & Trails Facility Plan: October 2014 Red-Line Draft*. The EPC unanimously supported these changes in their recommendation to City Council. There was a small number of outstanding items to continue working on as the plan moves forward in the approval process, as identified in the October 9 Notice of Decision.

Regarding public comments, over 1,000 individual comments have been submitted throughout the planning process. The Planning Department catalogued and classified all of these comments in the public record. The comments received by the initial planning team led by Gannett Fleming West were used to develop the initial 2010 Draft Bikeways Master Plan. Comments received since then were used to refine the first draft into the version that was proposed for adoption this fall. All comments received since the EPC application submittal have been included in the EPC Comment/Response Matrix.

At the two EPC hearings, at GABAC and GARTC meetings, and through informal communications, numerous concerns have been raised, primarily by GABAC and GARTC members. They have indicated that the BTFP, as currently proposed, does not adequately address these following concerns:

- Some GABAC and GARTC members believe that combining the *Trails & Bikeways Facility Plan* (1993) and the *Comprehensive On-Street Bicycle Plan* (2000) will *not* best serve the greater community desires and needs, and that bicycle travel and recreational trail development should be addressed in separate plans. *Note: pedestrian and bicycling facilities are part of an interconnected network of on-street and off-road facilities used for transportation as well as recreation. The City believes that combining the two plans will improve the City's administration of this multi-purpose and multi-use system.*
- Similarly, representatives in GABAC and GARTC do not support the option identified in the plan to combine the two advisory groups into one. GARTC has voted to oppose any change to combine the two current advisory groups. GABAC members have individually expressed both support and concerns. *Note: The City explored options to improve the operations of the two advisory groups in response to comments from members of the groups that they were ineffective. Any action to change the structure of these groups would require future legislative amendments to the City's Code of Ordinances.*
- Some commenters feel that this planning effort has not adequately engaged bikeway and trail users, advocacy groups, or the community at large, which the plan intends to reach as potential bikeways and trails users. They have the perception that the academic tone of the document is a reflection of the disconnect between administrators and the public. *Note: there have been several stages of public engagement. An earlier survey resulted in over 1,200 responses, as well as extensive input collected in three workshop meetings. These comments were used to inform the 2010 draft plan. In 2014, there were over 100 attendees at three open house meetings that served to inform and collect information from the public. This relatively high level of engagement in this planning effort reflects the community passion and support for these facilities.*
- GABAC is concerned that the 2010 user count collected to inform this plan is now outdated and shouldn't be used to guide the current plan recommendations. *Note: the recommended project list was updated in 2014 to reflect current system and gaps; newer projects and programs were added. The City should revisit this data when preparing the next Decade Plan/ CIP priority list for construction and maintenance. Additionally, the plan recommends continued data collection on the numbers of bikeway and trail users and safety/ crash data.*

Finally, some stakeholders have expressed concerns about how the Plan would be implemented, given the need for considerable coordination among City departments and other agencies. The following summarizes separate but parallel efforts outside this facility planning process to coordinate infrastructure and implementation.

- General comments provided throughout the planning process indicate that community members would like the plan to more specifically identify projects that will be designed or built in any given year and for the plan to establish a more transparent project prioritization process. *Note: as a long-range document, it is not possible for the BTFP to forecast which projects will be designed or constructed each year. This level of implementation occurs through the biennial Capital Implementation Program (CIP) Decade Plan, and described in the BTFP on page 69. Also, there is the potential for the Advisory Groups to help develop and recommend priorities for future projects that can be considered as the City develops its future projects list.*
- Stakeholders and general community members would like to see enhanced coordination with the Albuquerque Police Department to develop and conduct a crash reporting system, enforcement actions (prioritizing and metrics), education programs, and reporting to help inform needs analysis and future policies/programs. *Note: enhanced coordination with APD is recommended as an implementation action.*
- Desire to improve facility maintenance. The BTFP shows a reduction in maintenance frequency, while the community would like to improve the quality of maintenance of these facilities. *Note: changes to the current maintenance practices would require additional dedicated funding.*
- Cycling advocates believe they should have representation at the decision-making table at the MRCOG Transportation Coordination Committee, NMDOT projects/designs, local development approvals (DRC), etc. *Note: Any change in representation in other agencies would need to be initiated by MRCOG or NMDOT. The GABAC ordinance allows one EPC representative to be a member of GABAC, to serve as a liaison between GABAC and EPC in relation to local development requests heard by the Planning Commission.*

Conclusion

The Bikeways & Trails Facility Plan furthers a preponderance of applicable City goals and policies, including those in the Comprehensive Plan, Major Open Space Facility Plan, and the Facility Plan for Arroyos. The plan is consistent with the key themes of the 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The Administration, the Planning Department, the Parks & Recreation Department, and the Department of Municipal Development respectfully request that the City Council accept the EPC's unanimous recommendation of approval of the BTFP, as recommended in the findings and conditions within the October 9, 2014 staff report (see Record). The Plan provides policies and recommendations to guide future investment in the City's bikeways & trails facilities and programs as well as an implementation approach to realize the plan's vision.

While acknowledging the above mentioned critiques of the current draft plan, the City administration believes that it is time to adopt this guidance document. Delaying approval in order to strengthen aspects of the plan will only serve to focus limited resources on revision of the planning document, and away from actual implementation of the plan's recommendations. The draft plan sets a new direction for the City to approach bikeways and trails planning in a more coordinated manner, and it is strongly endorsed by the Municipal Development, Parks and Recreation, and Planning Departments.

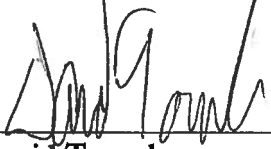
Title/ Subject of Legislation: Project# 1008887, 14EPC-40054, Adoption of the proposed Rank II Bikeways & Trails Facility Plan

Approved:



Robert J. Perry Date
Chief Administrative Officer 11/21/14

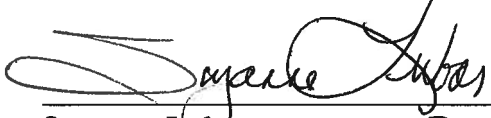
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208

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Cover Analysis
Project #1008887 – 14EPC-40054

1. What is it?

The *Bikeways & Trails Facility Plan* is a proposed Rank II Facility Plan that aims to ensure a well-connected, enjoyable, and comfortable non-motorized transportation and recreation system throughout the metropolitan area. Rank II facility plans describe the existing facilities, policies, recommendations, and proposed projects.

2. What will this piece of legislation do?

This legislation will adopt a Plan will replace the existing *Trails and Bikeways Facility Plan* (1993) and *the Comprehensive On-Street Bicycle Plan* (2000). The Plan includes goals, policies, proposed projects, development standards, and an implementation approach to guide coordinated development over the next 20 years and beyond.

3. Why is this project needed?

Combining these two current Plans into one, consolidated Facility Plan will help the City better manage the growth of the bikeway and multi-use trail system. The Plan guides development and maintenance of bikeways and trails through its proposals of future facilities, programs, and administrative policies. Because the proposed Plan is consistent with the key themes of the 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the *Bikeways & Trails Facility Plan* will assist the City in securing state and federal funds to implement the plan.

4. How much will it cost and what is the funding source?

The proposed Plan has no immediate fiscal impact on the City. (See attached Fiscal Impact Analysis)

5. Is there a revenue source associated with this Plan? If so, what level of income is projected?

No.

FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

TITLE: **Bikeways and Trails Facility Plan** R: O:
 FUND:
 DEPT:

No measurable fiscal impact is anticipated, i.e., no impact on fund balance over and above existing appropriations.

(If Applicable) The estimated fiscal impact (defined as impact over and above existing appropriations) of this legislation is as follows:

	Fiscal Years			
	2015	2016	2017	Total
Base Salary/Wages				-
Fringe Benefits at	-	-	-	-
Subtotal Personnel	-	-	-	-
Operating Expenses				
Property			-	-
Indirect Costs 8.52%	-	-	-	-
Total Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<input type="checkbox"/> Estimated revenues not affected				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estimated revenue impact				
Amount of Grant	-	-	-	-
City Cash Match				
City Inkind Match				
City IDOH *21.5%	-	-	-	-
Total Revenue	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

These estimates do not include any adjustment for inflation.

* Range if not easily quantifiable.

Number of Positions created **0**

COMMENTS: The adoption of this Plan by itself does not create a fiscal impact to the city. However, the Plan recommends projects and new programs to be implemented in the future. These projects involve construction of new bike lanes, trails, signage, and grade-separated crossings. There are also recommendations for improvements to existing facilities, such as repaving, restriping, and ADA retrofits. Finally, there are on-going maintenance costs for existing facilities, and there will be additional maintenance needs for future proposed infrastructure. These proposed projects will improve opportunities for non-motorized transportation across the city, potentially reducing congestion and wear-and-tear on the City's roads. These projects also provide opportunities for recreation in the City and will improve access to the City's Open Space properties. Four percent of the 1/4 cent transportation tax is dedicated to bikeways and trails projects (approximately \$1.65 million every two years), and 5% of the Streets GO Bonds is set aside for bicycle projects. Additional funding through the General Fund or the CIP could be invoked; in addition to State and Federal funding sources. Planning level cost estimates are included in the Plan, which total approximately \$121 million, exclusive of right-of-way costs. At current levels of funding, the full system build-out will take approximately 50 years.

COMMENTS ON NON-MONETARY IMPACTS TO COMMUNITY/CITY GOVERNMENT:

This is a request to adopt the Bikeways & Trails Facility Plan (Project 1008887, 14EPC-40054), which will replace the Trails & Bikeways Plan, adopted in 1993 and the Comprehensive On-Street Bicycle Plan adopted in 2000. The Bikeways & Trails Facility Plan applies city-wide.

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