

January 31, 2009

Dear East Gateway Community Members:

In August 2008, City Councilors Don Harris and Rey Garduño and the City of Albuquerque Planning Department hosted a three-day workshop to develop concepts to address East Gateway area issues expressed in earlier meetings. The report from that workshop, *The August 2008 Workshop Summary for the East Gateway Sector Development Plan*, was discussed at a large public meeting held November 20, 2008 at the East Gate Church. Community comments concerning major concepts in the report were collected through December 2008. Those comments led to neighborhood, technical team, and special topic meetings that continue to be held through this winter as the Planning Team begins work on a draft plan. The draft plan should be ready for your review by late Spring 2009.

The East Gateway Sector Development Plan website <http://www.cabq.gov/planning/long-range/eastgatewaysdp.html> updates East Gateway Sector planning progress and contains links to planning reports. You can ask for paper copies of these reports by calling or emailing Paula Donahue at 924-3932 or pdonahue@cabq.gov.

This plan update covers the following topics:

- 1) Proposed Draft Plan Outline**
- 2) The 1983 Singing Arrow Neighborhood Plan update**
- 3) Gibson Corridor status and proposals for Southern Boulevard**
- 4) Neighborhood discussions - Four Hills Blvd./Tramway Blvd./ Wenonah Avenue**

1. Draft Plan Outline

Based on research and community input, the draft plan will contain the following parts:

Executive Summary

Introduction

Planning Process

Existing Conditions

Area location and context, history, demographics, highlights of real estate market study, archaeological and historic sites, environmental features, utilities, land uses (office, retail, residential, industrial, parks and Major Public Open Space), public facilities (schools, community buildings, fire, police) and vacant land, streets (network, hierarchy and design, traffic circulation and operations), bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and transit service

Plan Vision, Principles, Goals and Objectives

The Plan

Future Land Use and Zoning Proposals

Transportation Circulation Plan for Vehicles, Bicycles, Transit and Pedestrians

Parkland, Major Public Open Space and Civic Facilities

Project Proposals

Policy Changes (if necessary)

Project and Policy Implementation Phases/ Responsibility/ Cost/ Funding

2. The Singing Arrow Neighborhood Plan

This topic was not discussed in the *August 2008 Workshop Summary*. Singing Arrow (Central – Tijeras Arroyo and Juan Tabo – Four Hills Road) is the only neighborhood within East Gateway Sector Development Plan boundaries that has an adopted City plan. The plan's issues, goals, and proposals need reexamination and updating. Current neighborhood issues, goals, and proposals will probably become part of the East Gateway Sector Development Plan when it is adopted.

Singing Arrow residents and property owners are currently reviewing the 1983 Neighborhood Plan. The Singing Arrow Neighborhood Association is hosting meetings on February 4 and 12 at Singing Arrow Community Center to discuss 1983 Plan successes and failures and current area issues, goals, and recommendations. If you live, work, or own a business or property in the Singing Arrow Plan area you are invited to fill out a questionnaire and/or participate in the meetings. For more information contact Paula Donahue at 924-3932 or pdonahue@cabq.gov.

3. Southern Boulevard Redesign Proposals and the Gibson Corridor

The East Gateway Sector Development Plan will propose street design ideas to improve transportation for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians, spur economic success of the area, and improve daily life for area residents, employees, and visitors. Preliminary design concepts for Southern between Eubank and Juan Tabo were proposed in the *Workshop Summary*. They are *not* based on an assumption that this street segment will be part of a high-speed limited-access roadway.

From the 1980s through 2001 studies were conducted to determine whether to build a limited-access roadway called the Gibson Corridor, part of a proposed limited access loop road around the city. The section of Southern Boulevard from Eubank to Juan Tabo was intended to become the southeastern leg of this corridor. Consequently, a very wide section of land was obtained for Southern Boulevard. The current street within this right-of-way is awkwardly striped and dangerous for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians.

Some meeting participants and questionnaire respondents have asked what happened to the Gibson Corridor. To better understand the intent, status and future of the Gibson Corridor, the East Gateway Planning team met in January 2009 with representatives of the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG), City of Albuquerque Department of Municipal Development (DMD) and Kirtland Air Force Base (KAFB). These agency representatives indicate that the Gibson Corridor is not and will not be pursued for a number of reasons. They indicated that the Gibson Corridor concept finally "collapsed under the weight of its constraints." The Gibson Corridor is not in the regional 2030 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Neither DMD nor KAFB have requested or will be requesting funding for it.

The intent of the Gibson Corridor was 1) to provide access to future major SE corridor destinations, 2) to provide transportation system connectivity and continuity, 3) to divert some traffic from Zuni and Central, and 4) to provide a corridor with multi-modal features.

MRCOG, DMD, and KAFB representatives say that: 1) the road is no longer essential to serve southeast destinations because the area did not and will not develop as intensively as envisioned, 2) transportation system connectivity for both general

motorists and trucks has improved substantially with interstate highway improvements at the Big I interchange and elsewhere, 3) Gibson and Southern already have too many connections to local businesses and adjacent neighborhoods to function as a limited-access roadway, 4) the corridor would not sufficiently benefit the travelling public, and 5) existing neighborhoods along Gibson west of Kirtland Air Force Base do not want it, 6) Zuni/Central traffic is not substantial enough to need a relief road, and 7) multi-modal transportation can be provided better on an interconnected street network rather than a high-speed limited access facility that offers few places for bicycles or pedestrians to cross the street.

Additional reasons why the Gibson Corridor concept is not being pursued are as follows: 8) The corridor is not beneficial to KAFB, but prior to the increased security demands and measures of 9/11/01 the base offered to work with the City to be a good neighbor. A public roadway in this location is considered a security risk. Roadway construction would require moving a well, changing the location of the Wyoming Gate, and building a fly-over roadway. 9) This type of roadway construction is expensive. The estimate for construction was \$77 million in 2001 and increases by at least 2 percent for each year after that. 10) Loop Roads in most regions serve suburb-to-suburb job commutes. This roadway pattern will not serve commuter patterns in the Albuquerque metropolitan region. The RailRunner and connecting City buses now serve a segment of regional commuter traffic.

4. Four Hills Blvd./Tramway Blvd./ Wenonah Avenue Concepts

The *Workshop Summary* contained some proposals that combined a civic building, transit transfer station, and park and ride lot in the area of Four Hills Boulevard, Tramway Boulevard and Wenonah Avenue. People living nearby objected to the proximity and apparent intensity of these uses, particularly a civic building.

The Sector Development Plan will *not* recommend that a civic building be built close to homes in this area. The Planning Team will separate these topics and analyze each independently to determine a variety of locations that would optimally serve the public. The Plan will only offer recommendations for further study.

Please continue to involve your neighbors. If you would like to become more involved in the process, please contact Paula Donahue at 924-3932 or pdonahue@cabq.gov. Thanks for your time.