

**MINUTES
COMPLETE STREET ADVISORY GROUP MEETING
FEBRUARY 12, 2013**

MEMBERS/ATTENDEES

Keith Ashmore	Velo de Animas Bike Club
Judy Castleberry	San Juan College Enterprise Center
David Eppich	San Juan College
Larry Hathaway	San Juan County
Virginia King	City of Farmington
Joe Kozimor	Consolidated Constructors
Steve Krest	City of Farmington
Cindy Lopez	City of Farmington & MPO Technical Committee
Gayla McCulloch	City of Farmington Councilor & MPO Policy Committee
Roshana Moojen	City of Aztec
Christa Romme	Aztec Chamber of Commerce
Anngela Wakan	Safe Routes to School Coordinator
Nica J. Westerling	City of Farmington

MPO STAFF

Mary Holton	City of Farmington Community Development Director & MPO Officer
Joe Delmagori	MPO Planner
Duane Wakan	MPO Associate Planner
June Markle	MPO Administrative Aide

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

The Advisory Group members introduced themselves to the group. Mr. Delmagori welcomed all and thanked them for their participation.

RECAP OF OCTOBER 23 ADVISORY GROUP MEETING

Mr. Delmagori reviewed the minutes from the October 2012 Advisory Group meeting. Following that meeting and the direction received from the Advisory Group, MPO Staff began presenting overviews of Complete Streets to local councils and commissions and various other organizations over the past several months. At that meeting, MPO staff discussed examples of well-designed and poorly designed roadways. MPO Staff mentioned it would be working with the Advisory Group on how best to pursue the Complete Streets project and to determine the role of the MPO in that process. Mr. Delmagori stated the intent of the Advisory Group was to assist in the development of regional design guidelines and policies and then have those guidelines reviewed and approved by the MPO's Policy and Technical Committees. These guidelines would then be used by the local entities as a planning tool when they design and create new streets or retrofit existing streets.

At the end of the October meeting, the Group discussed how to begin developing the resolution for Complete Streets and consensus from the Group was that the actual resolution should be one of the final steps in the process. The Group believed the

guidelines and policy should be in place before developing the resolution. The Group discussed and reviewed some of the examples of Complete Streets resolutions that were developed and passed by other cities.

Mr. Delmagori asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 23, 2012 Advisory Group meeting. Ms. Lopez made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Ashmore seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was passed unanimously.

RECAP OF COMPLETE STREETS OVERVIEW

Mr. Delmagori reiterated that at the direction of the Advisory Group, MPO Staff developed a presentation to inform the community about Complete Streets. Since November, Staff has given this presentation to explain the purpose of Complete Streets and the MPO's role in its development. Staff also has several presentations still upcoming in the next few months.

Mr. Delmagori gave a brief review of Complete Streets for the Advisory Group for the benefit of those members who were attending today for the first time. Complete Streets is designing, planning, and constructing roads that will safely accommodate all types of users whether they are motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, those with disabilities, or public transportation riders. Mr. Delmagori restated three strong definitions for Complete Streets:

- Designed for all users, all modes, and all ability levels;
- Meant to be safe, comfortable and convenient for travel for everyone, regardless of age or ability;
- Strive to balance the needs of drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit based on the roadway.

Mr. Delmagori showed a picture of a section of Dustin Avenue where medians were used to help slow down the traffic and the roadway includes one lane of traffic in each direction. This roadway was also constructed with bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides along with on-street parking. Mr. Delmagori stated that this was a good local example of the use of Complete Streets.

Mr. Delmagori said the concept of Complete Streets was emphasized during the Walkable Communities Workshop held last summer with Mr. Dan Burden. Mr. Burden is a nationally recognized spokesperson for walkable and livable communities. During the workshop, he stressed the importance of a sense of place which means having a community that provides Complete Streets amenities to all users and creates neighborhoods and meeting places where people want to meet and interact with others.

Mr. Delmagori stated that the MPO goal is to work toward building a sustainable, multi-modal network. He added that the Complete Streets process will support and help implement the MPO's bicycle/pedestrian plan.

Studies have shown that one-third of Americans do not drive (elderly, children, and households with no vehicles) yet they also need to be able to easily navigate around

the community. Mr. Delmagori said Staff would elaborate on the health and exercise benefits associated with Complete Streets later in the meeting.

Mr. Delmagori remarked that Complete Streets can provide the multi-modal network that provides travel options to all groups and can reduce the number of car trips which then reduces emissions, congestion, and travel delays. Complete Streets creates a safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists and provides the community with more transportation options.

Mr. Delmagori showed several examples of good Complete Streets designs. One picture depicted the Aztec downtown corridor and the other showed an urban setting that was a low volume and low speed corridor so that bicyclists could share the roadway with motorists. The roadway also had sidewalks on each side along with on-street parking. Mr. Delmagori showed a residential section on 30th Street from Hutton to College Blvd. and noted how the roadway was narrowed and medians and on-street parking added. Those changes helped to reduce speeds so bicyclists could share the road. The final local example showed the separation of bike lanes and travel lanes with a buffer for the sidewalks.

Mr. Delmagori also presented some pictures of why Complete Streets are needed: areas where individuals with special needs cannot easily or safely cross the road, provide a means for pedestrians to safely cross a multi-lane roadway, and change the focus of the community from simply vehicles to multi-modal.

Complete Streets is very flexible and can be changed to relate to land uses along the corridor as well as to the road classifications. Mr. Delmagori noted that an arterial roadway in a commercial corridor will look different than a residential collector. Mr. Delmagori said this would be discussed in more detail later in the meeting.

Mr. Delmagori reported that following the October meeting, five major themes or values were identified:

- Multi-Modal - Provide needed amenities for all types of users. In many areas there are no bike lanes, sidewalks or vibrant pedestrian markers. Many intersections, streets, and bus stops are not ADA compliant. All of these tend to reinforce a reliance on the automobile.

Mr. Delmagori showed some local pictures that illustrated the lack of Complete Streets design:

- An area in Bloomfield that is simply a wide band of pavement where bike lanes and sidewalks could easily be added;
- Intersections like US 64 and US 550 that have so many travel lanes as to make them nearly impossible for pedestrians or bicyclists to safely traverse;
- A section of Apache Street that has sidewalks for pedestrians, but which are blocked by trash bins or utility poles;
- Connectivity - This is improving the overall network connections for travel. Mr. Delmagori showed several slides from the Walkable Workshop to demonstrate the importance of connecting neighborhoods. This could also involve the use of a grid system to disperse traffic versus a cul-de-sac development that feeds

traffic back onto an arterial. Mr. Delmagori noted that a six-lane roadway can effectively be broken down into a grid system of two-lane roads that disperses traffic, assists with turn movements and capacity, and lends itself to creating walking and biking amenities.

One of the presentations by Mr. Burden was of a California city that was attempting to identify the gaps in their roadway connectivity. The individual road network layers were stripped away to expose only the connections and where improvements were needed. Using this example, Staff presented a map of the Farmington MPO which showed only the roads that connect a motorist through the network. Mr. Delmagori stated that with the MPO's long-range planning process, this information could be used to make recommendations for new roads that would improve connectivity, help reduce volumes on existing streets, and be good candidates for Complete Streets plans and designs.

- Economic Vitality - Mr. Delmagori noted that if a downtown area has wide sidewalks, bike lanes, and other Complete Streets amenities, people are drawn to the area. Complete Streets features will help to develop businesses and create retail opportunities. He noted that Aztec's planned extension of their Main Street north of the US 550/NM 516 intersection would provide a good opportunity for Complete Streets designs.

Mr. Delmagori showed a transitional slide from the Walkable Workshop which showed how an area can be transformed by a single developer with a vision. He explained that adding pedestrian amenities can improve an entire street scape which acts as a catalyst for further investment and growth. This is what creates a sense of place for that location.

In research by MPO Staff, a study of 94,000 real estate transactions in 15 major markets found that in 13 of the 15 markets, higher levels of walkability, as measured by Walk Score, were directly linked to higher home values.

Mr. Delmagori reported results from a study conducted by the Victoria Transportation Policy Institute in December 2012. In the study, it was shown that places with walking and biking trails will bring in tourists and attract employers who want those amenities available to their employees. Additionally, the presence of non-motorized modes of travel encouraged commercial and retail destinations to locate closer together.

- Health - Mr. Delmagori stated the health benefits of Complete Streets would be discussed in more detail in Mr. Wakan's presentation.

Mr. Delmagori briefly reported that national statistics show that obesity and diabetes are lower in places where people walk, ride bicycles, and use public transportation. He noted that the United States has one of the lowest levels of walking/biking trips and one of the highest obesity rates in the world. Those bike-friendly nations have, on average, the lowest rates of obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

- Safety - Mr. Delmagori showed a graph which illustrated that by reducing travel speed from 40 MPH down to 20 MPH, the chance of a pedestrian death is reduced from 80% to 5%. This provides greater safety for walkers and bikers.

Mr. Delmagori reminded the group to keep in mind their daily trip to and from work and to be aware of others using the roadway. He reported on a study done a few years ago by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Safety Bureau which showed that the New Mexico pedestrian fatality rate per capita was the highest in the United States (3.53 per 100,000), more than twice the national rate of 1.60 per 100,000.

Mr. Delmagori concluded by saying that with Complete Streets designs the MPO wants to create a sense of place and a sustainable, multi-modal network, provide the community with more travel options, and encourage the use of Complete Streets designs as roads are planned, designed, and constructed in the future. With assistance from the Advisory Group, the MPO expects to develop regional Complete Streets guidelines and policies. Once developed, these guidelines will be turned over to the local entities for them to use as an implementation tool when a new road is constructed or an existing roadway is retrofitted.

HEALTH & ECONOMIC BENEFIT STATISTICS

Mr. Wakan stated that Staff had researched some health statistics and compared New Mexico to other states nationwide and, more specifically, to the western region of the United States.

A 2012 report of bicycle friendly states compiled by the League of American Bicyclists listed New Mexico at #45. Mr. Wakan stated that Staff also wanted to review active lifestyles and their relationship to an individual's overall health.

Mr. Wakan discussed some of the information and statistics that were gathered:

- New Mexico is 3rd in the West Region in percent of children (10-17) who are overweight or obese (32.7%);
- In looking at obese adults with a body mass index (BMI) of 30+, San Juan County is at 29% compared to the State of New Mexico at 25.6% and a nationwide percentage of 28.35%;
- The prevalence of overweight/obese adults is 71% in San Juan County compared to 60.7% for New Mexico and 66.9% nationwide;
- In comparing the percent of adults who have ever been told by a doctor that they have diabetes, New Mexico is #2 in the West Region (10%).

Mr. Wakan stated that these high numbers of obesity and diabetes impact not only an individual but also an entire community. He commented that there are social consequences to poor health and everyone is affected by the statistics. Mr. Wakan researched some of the rising health care costs:

- New Mexico is 5th in the nation (7.7%) in the average annual percent growth in health care expenditures;
- New Mexico ranks 3rd in the west (6.2%) in the average annual percent growth in health care expenditures per capita;

- New Mexico residents are the category of individuals with the least amount of health insurance coverage of the total population (38-47%);

Ms. Westerling asked if this number took into account the number of unemployed individuals in the state who do not work and thus are uninsurable. She added it is very difficult to get health insurance if not through an employer. Mr. Wakan said he would look into this to see if this factored into the information.

Mr. Wakan said that one-third of regular transit users meet the minimum daily requirement for physical activity during their commute. New Mexico ranks 13th in the west region in the percent of adults (52.3%) who participate in moderate or vigorous physical activities.

Mr. Wakan discussed a slide that showed FHWA's numbers on how New Mexico is doing in terms of pedestrian safety. In 2006, the New Mexico pedestrian fatality rate per capita was the highest in the United States (3.53 per 100,000), more than twice the national rate of 1.60 per 100,000. In terms of auto insurance premium rates, New Mexico ranked 11th in the nation in 2010 for the most expensive annual insurance premiums.

Mr. Wakan said Staff had also looked at transportation financing and how New Mexico fared in terms of raising money through the motor fuel tax for needed transportation projects. He noted that New Mexico charges 18.88 cents per gallon of gasoline to fund transportation projects which ranks 36th in the nation. Other states charge from 18 cents in California where the population is much larger than New Mexico, to 37.5 cents in Washington. Additionally, New Mexico is 15th in the nation in fuel consumption per capita spending.

Mr. Ashmore asked if these numbers took into consideration commercial vehicles as well as personal vehicles. He added that New Mexico is sparsely populated so motorists travel further to get to their destination. Mr. Wakan said the data included all types of vehicles.

Mr. Wakan concluded that there are costs associated with the overall health of a community. He said funding projects to improve the livability of a community was important to its future.

BRAINSTORMING SESSION - COMPLETE STREETS VISION, VALUES AND GOALS

Mr. Delmagori said the upcoming steps for the Advisory Group were to develop a vision, values, and goals for Complete Streets on a regional scale. Furthermore, Mr. Delmagori referenced the need to understand land use context and street types. He said there were three guidebooks staff is using to assist with these activities.

Mr. Delmagori mentioned the street design guideline books from both Charlotte, North Carolina and Roanoke, Virginia. Another valuable resource is the Pennsylvania DOT (PennDOT) Smart Transportation Guidebook. Mr. Delmagori said each of these provides good recommendations for how the MPO might create a vision, identify values and goals, and develop guidelines.

Referring to handouts that summarize the three guideline books, Mr. Delmagori described how land use context and street types work together. He explained that Roanoke and PennDOT define several broad-based land use context areas that are based on various characteristics - is the area residential/commercial/retail; does the area have low or high density; is the area urban or rural. For the street classifications, the guidebooks define new street types that go beyond the conventional classifications for arterials, collectors, and local streets. Mr. Delmagori said streets take on different looks and functions as they interact with land use areas - for example, a principal arterial will change its characteristics and its function as it travels from a rural setting to an urban community. He cited NM 516 as a local example. Mr. Delmagori said this flexibility is why Complete Streets could provide so many options for the area. Mr. Delmagori commented that PennDOT has identified seven land use areas stretching from a rural area to the dense urban core. The MPO might want to consider developing its own land use context areas using the PennDOT guidebook as a reference.

Mr. Delmagori asked the Advisory Group to consider how this table could be filled in for San Juan County with definitions that are more applicable to the land use areas here.

Ms. McCulloch asked Mr. Delmagori to report on the reception to Complete Streets that has been received from the different communities. Mr. Delmagori said the Complete Streets concepts have been well received by all. He said they understood the importance of Complete Streets and all appeared to be onboard. Ms. Holton asked Mr. Delmagori to list the groups and governments that had received overview presentations. Mr. Delmagori reported that Staff had met with all four local councils/commissions, the San Juan County Homebuilders Association, San Juan County Bar Association, City of Farmington Planning and Zoning Commission, Mr. Dave Eppich with San Juan College, and the college's Student Senate. Staff also had a radio interview with Mr. Jim Baker on KNMI. Upcoming presentations include: New Mexico Society for Professional Engineers, Aztec Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, and possibly the San Juan County Board of Realtors. Mr. Delmagori said if there were other interested groups to please let Staff know and presentations could be scheduled.

Mr. Delmagori then asked the Advisory Group to begin thinking of goals and a vision for the FMPO. He referred the Group to the example vision from Charlotte. The Charlotte example gives their Complete Streets vision and their goals and principles for achieving Complete Streets. Mr. Delmagori also explained the strategic initiative for Complete Streets developed by Roanoke along with their goals and principles.

Ms. Holton commented that what she believed the MPO is seeking the basic framework from which the guiding principles would then be developed. The MPO is working on a regional set of guidelines which will then be presented to their Technical and Policy Committees for review and approval. Once the Complete Streets guidelines are adopted by the MPO Committees, it would be up to each local entity to utilize the guidelines, incorporate their individual community values and standards, and develop what would eventually be adopted by their municipality.

Mr. Wakan showed some local examples of different land use context areas throughout the MPO. He commented that the MPO is vast and classifications will be very diverse, making development of these land use contexts and road classifications challenging. Ms. Holton added that when the Advisory Group tries to define a rural context area,

one size will not fit all and that there could be many unique rural settings. She said this process to set up classifications that fit most of the regional area may be difficult and could require developing something totally unique for the area. Ms. Lopez added that the land use definitions would then need to be correlated to road classifications. Additionally, a single land use area could have multiple road classifications and the designs could be different for each of those depending on the traffic being moved through that area. Ms. Lopez added that the land use context definitions needed to be elaborated on based on road classifications. She noted that a local rural designation could be very different from a rural arterial.

Mr. David Eppich commented that the efforts to educate San Juan County were critical. He noted that San Juan Regional Medical would have a vested interest in the health aspects of Complete Streets and recommended making a presentation to their board, as well as the San Juan County Partnership. Mr. Eppich believed it was also important to include NMDOT in the discussions as they are integral in any planning process. Any Complete Streets designs and future construction would need to work with and tie into existing roadways. In addition, NMDOT brings the connection to FHWA. Mr. Delmagori agreed that any retrofits to a state highway would require NMDOT involvement. Mr. Eppich added that they might have funding available for some projects and expertise that could be valuable to this preliminary planning process. Ms. Holton noted that the MPO has an ongoing dialogue with NMDOT and they are aware of the work being done by the MPO on Complete Streets. She stated that the Advisory Group also has a representative from San Juan Regional Medical Center. Ms. Holton said a new NMDOT planner was expected to be assigned shortly as the MPO liaison and would make a good addition to the Advisory Group.

Mr. Joe Kozimor commented that as a developer he often feels as if the planners are working against the developers and not with them. He said he is one of only two developers in the local area who develop 100+ acres at a time which is in sharp contrast to the number of these types of developments that occur in a larger metropolitan area. He believed that Complete Streets application would work with a larger development but, in this area, people frequently develop only 10 lots in a three-to-five acre area. Mr. Kozimor added that often times the infrastructure is not there to provide the developer with needed information on where the streets should be constructed. He commented, too, that there appeared to be no coordination between the city and the developers. He thought the corridors should be firmly defined and allow for no deviation. He believed that strict, solid guidelines on local roads should be developed and then the developers can determine how to fit the land use to the roads.

Ms. Holton said the city and the MPO have major thoroughfare plans. She noted that developers are often mainly concerned with selling their building lots and ensuring utilities and access are available to each site. These interior roadway patterns are what the Public Works Department gets involved in and there are certain requirements for those roads as well as the trail system. Ms. Holton commented that the trail system Mr. Kozimor was referring to was constructed as a private amenity. She said the city needed to look at projects from a business perspective and was unable to do everything for everyone. The city must look ahead to see if the resources will be available in the future. The trail system was constructed as a private amenity and it would have to be continued as such.

Mr. Kozimor added that he believed the Parks & Recreation Department should provide more input and be more willing to work together. Ms. Holton said this concern had been discussed with them and she thought the new director coming on board soon would bring a different perspective. She added that she believed everyone was working together as best as they can at the present time.

Mr. Ashmore asked if a developer wanted to construct walkways within their development and have them connect to a public park or future public area, would they have this discussion with the Parks & Rec Department. Ms. Holton said this was currently how the process was handled. Mr. Kozimor said he can put in a bike path in a development, but then he becomes responsible for maintaining it. Ms. Holton recommended meeting on this issue outside of this Complete Streets Advisory Group meeting. Ms. Westerling commented that part of the Complete Streets discussion was to facilitate a mechanism to assist with the type of development Mr. Kozimor was asking about.

Mr. Kozimor was concerned that these guidelines could actually tie the hands of the developer. Ms. Holton said the plan is to provide more flexibility and to have narrower streets, but to plan for the bicyclists and pedestrians and all other users. She added the plan is to look at ways to work more closely with the developers in achieving Complete Streets so their development looks exciting and is more marketable because more amenities are provided. Ms. Holton said the goal is not to add more rules, but to open things up so there is more flexibility. Ms. Moojen said the hope is to expand the toolbox for both the planner and the developer. Mr. Delmagori said the handout showing land use context areas and street types can help the Advisory Group begin creating a matrix of options. As an example, he said a residential development would fall into a particular land use context area and, based on the roads anticipated to run in and through the development, would link to options for Complete Streets. Mr. Kozimor said he preferred separate walking and biking paths. Mr. Delmagori said this could be an option that could be factored into the design guidelines.

Mr. Kozimor said he was part of the Advisory Group because he wanted to participate in developing Complete Streets and believed his input was valued. Ms. Holton agreed and noted that Mr. Kozimor is innovative in his developments and that he was identified as someone who would be willing to look at something new and different.

Mr. Delmagori showed some recent photos taken of our area to help begin identifying the land use contexts:

- 20th Street - a minor arterial primarily in a commercial/retail corridor;
- 30th Street - classified as an arterial that intersects with several residential neighborhoods;
- Apache Street - a minor arterial serving a retail/commercial corridor with bike lanes and transit service
- Auburn Avenue - a collector south of downtown with missing sidewalks, but it has bike lanes in both directions and on-street parking;
- Downtown areas - slower speeds, retail and pedestrian-friendly areas that take on their own look with unique characteristics;
- Browning Parkway and NM 516 - principal arterials with moderate speeds that serve regional traffic - varying use of medians and turn lanes with no bike lanes

- College Blvd. - a minor arterial with bike lanes and buffers between sidewalks and the street; uses a two-way left turn lane.

Mr. Delmagori stated these were examples of some of the varying land uses and road classifications we have in this area and Staff thought they could be used to begin creating the MPO matrices of land use context areas and street types.

Mr. Ashmore said he would like to see an actual bikeway map of Farmington which gave suggested routes for a bicyclist to take without using major roadways in order to get from Point A to Point B. He added there could be signage along the roads to direct bicyclists on how to move around town and where to find the next bike lane. Mr. Ashmore believed a different type of bike map for the city was needed as opposed to the current bike map that shows the entire region. Mr. Krest commented that the bicyclist would need to get a city map and then take different routes to see what would work for them. Mr. Wakan added that something could be created using GIS, but believed this type of mapping could best be accomplished by the bicyclist themselves by travelling different routes. Mr. Delmagori said this level of detail could become part of Complete Streets once the road classifications were established, but way-finding signs would need to be an approach taken on by city staff. Ms. Westerling asked if Mr. Ashmore was seeking certain streets on which bike paths would be facilitated or was he requesting that every street have bike designations. Mr. Ashmore said he was recommending connectivity for bike lanes within the city. He noted that 30th Street is currently indicated as a bike route, but given that it is a curving road with no shoulder and has fast moving traffic, he feels it is not a safe bicycle route.

Mr. Eppich stated that he was also involved with the San Juan Economic Development group and these types of proposed improvements are what can provide economic benefits for a community as a whole. He noted that by adding these types of amenities, a culture of biking can be created. These amenities will then be built upon and added to and more people will be attracted to the area. Mr. Eppich said that he had noticed that people must first load their bikes onto their vehicles and then drive to the glade area before they can actually begin biking. If the plan for Complete Streets includes creating bike routes and the connectivity of those routes, biking will spread outward and help to create economic vitality and promote tourism area-wide. Ms. Wakan commented that the goals of the Charlotte plan looked like a good place to begin building the MPO Complete Streets plan. She added that it addressed many of the items discussed such as connectivity, economic development, and integrating land use and transportation.

Mr. Delmagori summarized that today's conversation established a general framework for the upcoming development of Complete Streets design guidelines. Staff will continue to work with the Advisory Group on creating a vision and developing goals for Complete Streets. Defining the land use context areas and street types will help support the guidelines process.

Mr. Delmagori said he would send the links to the three guidebooks so everyone could review the information and make notes of those items they would like to see incorporated into the MPO Complete Streets plan. Since there are numerous examples for the Advisory Group to consider, Mr. Delmagori said he did not believe it was necessary to reinvent the wheel. He added that these three guidebooks could provide a starting point for the Advisory Group to begin from. Mr. Krest asked Staff to provide

a graph or matrix of the land use/road classification recommendations for the next meeting. Ms. Holton suggested sending any information out prior to the meeting so group members could review the data beforehand. Ms. Castleberry agreed that providing a general framework from which to begin the discussion would be beneficial.

The next meeting was scheduled for April 3, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. at the MPO Office. Mr. Delmagori said this date will provide Staff with an opportunity to present the Advisory Group's ideas and discussion to both the MPO Policy and Technical Committees who meet later in April.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.