

ABQ Active Transportation

Active transportation refers to human-powered transportation modes including walking and bicycling. Public transit is often included in conversations about active transportation because many transit users walk or bike to and from transit connections. Improving the active transportation network increases safety, economic opportunities, and social interaction and helps preserve the environment. Less automobile traffic yields less pollution and adequate active transportation infrastructure encourages less car usage.

An increase of pedestrians and bicyclists leads to increased commercial activity. Integrating bike lanes into streets can maintain property values and attract business investment—additionally, the infrastructure requires smaller financial investments compared to other transportation infrastructure. Improved active transportation infrastructure also helps create welcoming streets and neighborhoods with increased opportunities for social interaction and exercise opportunities -- contributing to a healthier community and decreasing strain on the local healthcare system. Most importantly for Albuquerque, it helps improve safety for all travel modes.

Since WWII, the local transportation system was primarily designed to serve automobile needs, which resulted in a spread-out city with a culture of automobile usage. This overreliance on the automobile has led to limited opportunities for active transportation, as current options are often reported as insufficient. The regional household travel survey conducted in 2014 showed 2% of respondents use bicycles, 8% walk, and 3% take transit, while the remaining use automobiles, usually alone.

As a result of a sprawled transportation network with inadequate active transportation infrastructure, Albuquerque has been identified as a location in need of funding to reduce pedestrian and bicycle crashes and fatalities. In 2018, New Mexico had the highest rate of pedestrian fatalities per 100,000 people among all states and ranked 9th in the U.S. in total traffic fatality rates (per vehicle miles traveled). The Federal Highways Administration designated New Mexico and Albuquerque as a focus state and city based on these kinds of statistics. Currently, many parts of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County have reported disconnected bike and trail networks, and in some locations, sidewalks are inadequate, poorly-maintained or absent.

Accessibility, safety and connectivity with major corridors can be improved in the City's active transportation network with additional trails, wider sidewalks and dedicated bike facilities. Bicycling safety can be enhanced through the improvement and implementation of raised bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, protected bike lanes, bike boulevards, and multi-use paths. Safety, comfort and convenience are factors that influence both walkability and bikeability. Therefore, mixed-use activity centers with increased pedestrian amenities and comfortable connections encourage active transportation in addition to commercial activity and investment.

The safety, environmental, social and financial benefits of improved active transportation infrastructure can be attained through adjustments to the street pattern, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, public transit infrastructure and connectivity. Shorter blocks with redundant connections ensure bicyclists and pedestrians are more visible to cars, where drivers can expect active transportation and learn to accommodate. Other relevant considerations include pilot projects to explore safety improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as maintaining a transportation system that matches the desired character of land uses and the natural environment.

Sources and Recommended Reading:

- [ABC Comprehensive Plan -Chapter 6 City of Albuquerque, 2017](#)
- [Active Transportation Planning - Bicycle and Pedestrian MRCOG, 2020](#)
- [Vision Zero Safety Toolkit LADOT, 2019](#)
- [Why Your City Should Invest in Active Transportation: and How to Get Started Fortney, 2019](#)