



**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE UNM/CNM/SUNPORT TRANSIT STUDY:**  
**OVERALL VISION**

**December 2012**

This is a summary of the public input received in September, October, and November relating to the study's overall vision and will inform the direction and priorities of the study. These responses identified what is most important to local stakeholders regarding this scope of this study. The data were collected through focus groups and small group discussions, including:

- UNM student focus group
- Loma Linda Community Center public meeting
- CNM public meeting
- UNM Residence Hall Association
- UNM public meeting

In addition to these events, the project team also met with neighborhood associations and other stakeholder groups earlier in the year. These comments are also reflected in this summary. The results of these input activities have been summarized here and grouped into four general categories.

**What do you like about this area?**

Overwhelmingly, people said they like the area's convenient central location, with lots of destinations within easy walking, biking, bus, or driving distance. In particular, the area has good access to UNM, restaurants, grocery stores, Nob Hill, Old Town, the YMCA, sports facilities, and cultural institutions such as Popejoy Hall and local museums. Many people also said that the neighborhoods have character and variation, unlike the "cookie cutter" neighborhoods in other parts of the city.

Respondents also expressed a preference for pedestrian- and bike-friendly areas with lots of activity, such as Nob Hill and the businesses along Central opposite UNM. Others like the parks and open space, including the North Golf Course, Hyder Park, and the UNM campus. These locations are good for socializing, exercising, and playing. Some people also mentioned the Sunport because of its convenience for travelers, and Ernie Pyle Library because of its quaint neighborhood appeal.

There is some disagreement over whether transit should run through the neighborhoods on more pedestrian-friendly streets, or whether it should be confined to large arterials that are outside the neighborhoods but are not as pedestrian-friendly. Regardless, both sides agreed that the area's walkability is a major asset and should be protected.

## **UNM/CNM/Sunport Transit Study**

### **12.5.12**

#### **MRCOG**

#### **What sorts of services/development would you like to see in the area?**

Many people talked about a need for more businesses and day-to-day services in the area, such as clothing stores, large retailers, grocery stores, hardware stores, and neighborhood businesses. Some expressed a desire for national retail chains and big box stores, while others wanted smaller local businesses such as coffee shops, dry cleaners, and bike shops. Some people also want to see multi-story mixed-use development and “park once and walk” areas where destinations are clustered in one area with parking around the edges. Others want to preserve the area’s residential character.

The CNM area in particular needs more commercial development, particularly restaurants, because there are few nearby services or destinations. CNM students, faculty, and staff must either stay on campus all day or make rushed trips to eat or run errands. Some people think the area near the sports facilities should be developed so that people going to the stadiums would have something to do before or after games.

As the area continues to develop, many said that it is important to preserve or improve the existing green space and create pedestrian-friendly areas, including a better pedestrian connection between UNM and Nob Hill.

#### **What is the value of transit service?**

Enhanced transit service would allow CNM students, staff, and faculty in particular to access more destinations, since right now their transportation options are fairly limited. The CNM area does not have many commercial services or restaurants, so people must either stay on campus all day or travel a significant distance to eat lunch or run errands. It would also improve the connectivity between UNM and CNM, which would be helpful for students in the “consortium” who take classes at both campuses, as well as faculty who teach at both institutions. Currently, there is a half-mile gap between the two campuses, and many people feel that the walk is either inconvenient or unsafe. Transit service could also provide people with better access and mobility during evenings and weekends. Right now, bus service to CNM stops several hours before the campus closes in the evening, and weekend service to destinations in the area, including the Sunport, is poor or nonexistent. Most CNM buildings are on University, not Yale, so University may provide better transit access to the campus.

Transit is especially useful for students, who can receive “free” bus passes if they are registered for classes. [The bus passes are partially paid for by student fees.] This allows students to travel within the area at no cost and walk to and from the nearest bus stop. Parking, on the other hand, is perceived to be expensive and inconvenient due to its remote locations. This creates a strong incentive for students to use transit.

Transit could also provide better connections between UNM Main Campus and UNM North [the medical facilities and law school], which are relatively isolated from one another despite their proximity, and could make it easier for UNM students to leave campus to eat or run errands. Right now, most students have to stay on campus all day because it takes too long to walk elsewhere (sometimes 20-25 minutes one-way).

## **UNM/CNM/Sunport Transit Study**

### **12.5.12**

#### **MRCOG**

Transit is also beneficial to people who have no cars or live in shared-car households. Some people also prefer to take transit rather than drive because it is more environmentally friendly. Transit makes it much easier for these individuals to run errands, shop, and visit friends or family. However, deciding whether or not to take transit requires balancing price and convenience; if transit service is inconvenient, people are much less likely to use it and instead will drive, take a taxi, or rely on other people to drop them off.

Most people agree that the Rapid Ride is a major asset, and they perceive it to be much higher quality than local buses such as #66 because it is faster, more frequent, and cleaner. The Rapid Ride makes it particularly easy to access major destinations such as Nob Hill, Downtown, and Uptown.

#### **Is there anything else we should keep in mind as the study progresses?**

Many people said that the study should connect transportation and land use, because they are both important in the area. Home values in particular should be protected, and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure should also be included in the study. The study should also pay attention to the unique needs of disabled people, the elderly, and children. There should be more collaboration between UNM and the surrounding neighborhoods. It is important to get public input through a variety of ways, including conventional public meetings, smaller meetings, and social media. This will allow the study to reach the largest possible audience, since different groups of people rely on different communication methods.