

**Workshop #1 July 10<sup>th</sup> 2014 – Summary of Group Discussions**

**Summary of Benefits, Drawbacks and Travel Patterns from the First Impressions exercise:**

<b>Emerging Lifestyles Benefits</b>	<b>Housing and Jobs Benefits</b>	<b>Allowable Uses Benefits</b>
Supports small businesses	Requires minimal amount of political leadership	Politically the easiest
Addresses market changes	May support millennials with kids	Least amount of leadership needed
Supports state of good repair	Supports vital big business centers	Starts densifying corridors
Higher tax revenue per acre	Addresses lack of jobs on west side	
Reduces water consumption	Fewer river crossings	
Develops economically vital centers	More services near residential areas on West side	
Most potential to lower emissions		
<b>Emerging Lifestyles Drawbacks</b>	<b>Housing and Jobs Drawbacks</b>	<b>Allowable Uses Drawbacks</b>
Still have to cross river to jobs	Lots of transit investment (if you provide transit)	Zone changes may not materialize
Transit costs could be high	Only supports big business	Cost of infrastructure increases
Increases density	Cost of infrastructure increases	Not enough mixed use
	Most land consumption/sprawl	
	Longer travel distances	
<b>Emerging Lifestyles Travel Patterns</b>	<b>Housing and Jobs Travel Patterns</b>	<b>Allowable Uses Travel Patterns</b>
Concentrates Transit monies (will cost less)	Reduces bridge crossing demands	People are still driving
Most multi-modal of all scenarios	Reduces trip lengths	Minimal change in travel patterns
Increases connectivity and access	Reverse commute capacity exists	
Encourages transit		

## Summary of the SWiT (Strengths, Weakness and Tweaks) exercise resulting in what people would like to see for a preferred scenario:

### Group 1

The Emerging Lifestyles was the consensus choice as a starting point for a preferred alternative. Group members indicated a need for greater concentration of activities west of the river, rather than allowing development to be dispersed across a relatively large geographic area. There was also the sense that zoning for mixed-use achieved a greater effect east of the river, but that more proactive planning would be necessary to ensure sustainable outcomes in other locations.

Is there a way to combine Emerging Lifestyles and Housing and Jobs to reflect different conditions and characteristics of each area?

- Create multiple high intensity mixed use centers on the Westside
- More structured zoning/development to west side
- More encouragement of Eastside housing
- Concentrate intensely in Rio Rancho Westside centers rather than disperse
- More residential on Eastside
- Amenity factor to attract development in the form of public investments

### Group 2

Group 2 selected Emerging Lifestyles as the best scenario, adding some emphasis on getting more jobs on the West Side. The discussion focused on the possible public investment that could anchor placemaking, catalyze private development, and leverage public dollars for the most transformative change. Beyond zoning, the Group wondered what other levers might have more impact to improve performance measures for the Emerging Lifestyles scenario.

West side/Rio Rancho should have an “Emerging Lifestyles” area with placemaking.

Emerging lifestyles is the preferred scenario but strong desire for more jobs and services on west side and Rio Rancho.

- Additional BRT Route in model for Montano/Montgomery
- Add some job focus on the West Side
- Provide transit connection between Railrunner and Lobo Village, Pit, Isotopes Park

### Group 3

In general people at the table tended not to be optimistic about the scenarios. They felt that Balancing Jobs and housing would increase sprawl, getting the funding to implement transit in Emerging Lifestyles will be challenging and doing nothing is politically easier. We went around the group and asked each individual if they have a preferred scenario. Given that our first impressions where not very positive it was surprising that they all felt that Emerging Lifestyles held the most promise. Three themes came from this – there still needs to be more jobs west of the river, there should be a focus on the scenario that involves the least energy consumed, and finally the felt schools greatly impact people’s decision where to live and the mid-region needed to improve the quality of schools.

- Overabundance of parking needs to be addressed
- North of downtown to Barelmas potential new homes for younger generations
- Add some more jobs on west side
- Densify downtown ABQ
- Add some transit to west side job center
- Group does not want to continue the trend
- Concern about bus system being too gritty

#### Group 4

The group immediately mentioned combining jobs/housing with emerging lifestyles. While there were more jobs/housing on the west side, everyone felt that people would still drive to where they needed to go even if it's more balanced in the scenario. The housing and jobs scenario may not reflect people's realities or change their choice about where to live/work. The group mentioned more infill in the existing urban core/east side of the river instead of more development on the fringe. They also felt that a better level of transit service could probably be provided with the Emerging Lifestyles scenario.

- Preferred scenario will be a blend of EL and HJ
- Need to consider water consumption, energy use, and housing and transportation costs
- Transit is a huge piece

Everyone felt that emerging lifestyles would support more transportation choices/options for people and that it would probably cost less to maintain from an infrastructure standpoint.

#### Group 5

We all had consensus that we liked the emerging lifestyles scenario the best, but the edge of the city will develop somehow and should get more special attention (that's what we liked about the jobs/housing balance, it seemed like a smarter way to develop the edge than business as usual). So we need the flexibility of mixed use to be accommodate changing employment circumstances—telecommuting for example.

- Protect agriculture and open space
- Deal with antiquated parcels better
- Give more attention to the edge development
- Jobs/Housing should be mixed use
- Provide clear roadway connectivity policies

We also thought that mixed-use would be more appropriate for new economy jobs and that we don't need new industrial parks if manufacturing is forecast to decline.

## Group 6

Table 6 felt that the Emerging trends scenario was a more realistic and economically efficient scenario. The emphasis was really on transit, and although it was agreed that there is a need for increased businesses on the west side, that in order for transit to work and to mitigate anticipated travel congestion, that it would be most efficient to invest in specific transit nodes east of the river and really get those to work.

- Lower floodplain zoning
- Add infrastructure and service costs
- Look to avoid crucial habitat areas
- More housing east and more jobs west with zoning
- Increase roadway connectivity
- Transit – focus on more capacity in the core or expand to outlying areas?
- Increase park and ride lots in outer areas
- Decrease parking requirements

Our group felt that we needed more examples of good mixed use centers in order to educate people on the benefits of financing, developing, and promoting such areas.

## Group 7

The group it seemed had chosen a preferred alternative (Emerging Lifestyles) and centered discussion on that scenario. The group recognized that alternative funding sources are critical for realizing the Emerging Lifestyles vision. A large part of the discussion focused on ideas for new funding. The group also spent quite a bit of time discussing bicycle safety. They were concerned that even if our region made these big changes and started approaching growth in different ways, will people actually get out and bicycle if conditions are unsafe? Remove Paseo del Volcan. The road is particularly incompatible with the Emerging Lifestyles scenario.

- Add/develop a grid system on the Westside
- Two (or maybe more) urban cores in the region are needed.
- Downtown should still be the heart of the region, but other urban centers throughout the region would make sense.
- Integrate Mesa del Sol with the South Valley (develop east/west connections--transit and roadway--between the two neighborhoods)
- Focus on improving certain centers in Rio Rancho. The Rust Medical Center and Cabezon Park area was mentioned as one idea.
- Our group mentioned certain corridors that could be redeveloped or could use economic development. Is it possible to show on our scenario maps select corridors where this would be recommended (i.e., East Central, Montgomery Blvd, Unser south of Cabezon)?
- Bring residential uses to the Journal Center (it already has some amenities there such as mature trees, proximity to transit, some services)
- Beef up East Central as an entrepreneurship corridor and for enhanced economic development

The [preferred] scenario really would require a paradigm shift and serious education and public information campaigns will likely be needed to support it.

## Group 8

The table immediately talked about the housing and jobs and the emerging lifestyles scenarios and seemed to just leave allowable uses out of the discussion as it didn't seem to be a worthwhile direction. There was equal discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of each of these two scenarios. There was a lot of discussion about creating what was termed "profit centers" that would be mixed use, economically viable centers with multi-modal options. It was felt that this would bring higher GRT.

- Having more green space will provide better QOL and resiliency
- Consider an intermediate growth boundary
- Develop a solid transit plan for connecting to multi-use centers
- Relax parking requirements and up parking fees in key areas
- Direct large employers to key locations
- Create better connectivity with roads and transit
- Provide flexible fringe zoning
- As a municipality ensure master plans and require a percentage of housing and jobs before development happens
- Make downtown a major hub
- Develop wildlife corridors

The emerging lifestyles scenarios seemed the best option for any of the environmental impacts that growth may have and more supportive of creating a well planned transit network.

### Other recommendations from participants:

- Address the housing and transportation affordability cost
- Condense performance measures (use indexes like accessibility index)
- Visualization of different densities