



Goal 5: Environmental Protection and Enhancement

Desired Community Condition: Open Space, bosque, the river, and mountains are preserved and protected.



Indicator: City-owned and Managed Open Space Acreage Compared with the Total Land Area in the City

Progress Rating: Local Trend: POSITIVE National Comparison: NOT KNOWN

Indicator Description

The Open Space indicator is the ratio between City-owned or managed Public Open Space within and outside the City limits and the total number of acres of land for all uses within the City Limits. The Open Space Network consists of undeveloped lands that the City has been acquiring (or taking responsibility for managing) since 1965 for the purposes of conservation, preservation, and outdoor education. About half of this acreage is within and about half is outside City boundaries. The City provides facilities, including parking areas and trails, at most of the Open Space parcels to accommodate low impact recreationists such as walkers, runners, cyclists, and horseback riders. The 1988 Comprehensive Plan provided a guideline for future public Open space purchases to assure the protection of Albuquerque's scenery and natural features. A 1997 quarter-cent tax provided funds to purchase additional Open Space lands. The amount of Open Space acreage does not include the 37,877 acres of the Sandia Wilderness on the east side of the City contiguous to the Open Space in the foothills.

Why is this indicator important?

With the Sandia Mountains to the east and the volcanoes, basalt escarpment and Mount Taylor in the distance to the West, the natural environment of the City of Albuquerque is spectacular and a main attraction to residents. Running through the heart of the City is the Rio Grande, with its cottonwood and willow bosque where residents can hike, bike, watch wildlife or just sit and watch the river flowing. Open Space lands provide habitat for native vegetation and wildlife and a refuge from the pressures of urban life for people. They provide visual relief to the urban setting by defining the edges of the city and preserving its outstanding natural landmarks. They can limit development in areas where providing infrastructure is difficult and costly for the City. Open Space also serves as a natural outdoor laboratory for education and research close to schools, universities, and other institutions. Open Space areas serve valuable watershed functions, promoting groundwater recharge and reducing siltation and runoff. The City's public open space provides an opportunity to enjoy nature and engage in recreational opportunities in a natural setting not commonly found in large cities. As the City continues to grow, the open space will be even more important. Monitoring the Open Space Network acreage can help insure provision of the appropriate amount of open space.

Data Sources

City of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation Department

What can we tell from the data?

- The ratio of Open Space acreage to City acreage continues to improve; indicating that the City continues to purchase land for Open Space as it grows.
- The City is planning to purchase more acreage in the Bosque. The parcels, though very expensive, will not add much to the total Open Space acreage, but will add significantly to the preservation of the area and connect current parcels of Open Space.

Comparison of Open Space Acreage with Total City Land Area by Year

Year	Open Space Acreage	City Acreage	City-owned Open Space as a Ratio of Open Space to Total City Land Area
1970	8214	52653	1:6.4
1975	8849	57569	1:6.5
1980	17181	63896	1:3.7
1985	23313	85415	1:3.7
1990	23941	88006	1:3.7
1995	25775	103905	1:4.0
2000	26939	116288	1:4.3
2001	29013	117120	1:4.0
2002	30515	117120	1:3.8

Map of Existing, Proposed and Funded Open Space in the Albuquerque Area

