LA MESA Sector Development Plan

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November 1976 Amended May 1978

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RESOLUTION 190-1976

ADOPTING THE LA MESA SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

WHEREAS, the Council, the governing body of the City of Albuquerque, has authority to adopt master plans for physical development of areas within the planning and platting jurisdiction of the City as authorized by New Mexico Statutes, Section 14-18-5, and by the City Charter as allowed under home rule provisions of the Constitution of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes the need for sector development plans to guide the City of Albuquerque and other agencies and individuals to ensure orderly redevelopment and effective utilization of funds; and

WHEREAS, the La Mesa area, as shown on the attached maps and described in the attached text, has been designated a blighted area as defined by the Community Development Law of the State of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the City of Albuquerque has prepared a community development plan under the provisions of the Community Development Law of the State of New Mexico to guide redevelopment and improvement activities within the La Mesa area; and

WHEREAS, the La Mesa Sector Development Plan has been developed with the assistance of area residents as expressed through public meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Planning Commission, in its advisory role on all matters related to planning, zoning and environmental protection, has approved and recommended the adoption of the La Mesa Sector Development Plan.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE:

Section 1. The La Mesa Sector Development Plan and the community development plan contained within it... are hereby adopted as a guide to partial implementation of the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, the administration of U.S. Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 funds and the investment of other public and private funds.

Section 2. All redevelopment activities within the area, including housing rehabilitation, land acquisition and public improvements, shall be guided by the La Mesa Sector Development Plan.

Section 3. The La Mesa Community Development Plan, with respect to future land use, building requirements and rehabilitation requirements, shall be controlling over all other City ordinances, rules or regulations, unless specifically amended by said ordinances, rules or regulations.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 1st day of November, 1976.

Jack Kolbert, President

City Council

APPROVED this 16th day of November, 1976.

Harry E. Kinner Mayor

City of Albuquerque

ATTEST:

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PREFACE

This sector development plan for the redevelopment of the La Mesa area is within the framework established by the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan. This plan also is within the guidelines established by the Citizens Advisory Group for utilization of money available to the City of Albuquerque under Public Law 93-383, the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. This plan may be amended as provided in the Comprehensive City Zoning Code, Article XIV Chapter 7 of the Revised Ordinances of Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1974 (Ordinance 80-1975 as amended).

During the development of this plan, Planning Department staff members met with La Mesa residents five times in the area to seek the residents' views about the area's needs and plan proposals. The residents' valuable assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

¹Citizens Advisory Group, <u>Proposed Activities for the Housing and Community</u> Development Act, Title I, Application, January 1975.

AREA DESCRIPTION

A. Boundary

The following area, as shown on Map 1, has been designated by the Mayor and City Council as the La Mesa Community Development Area and is the area within which this plan is to be implemented:

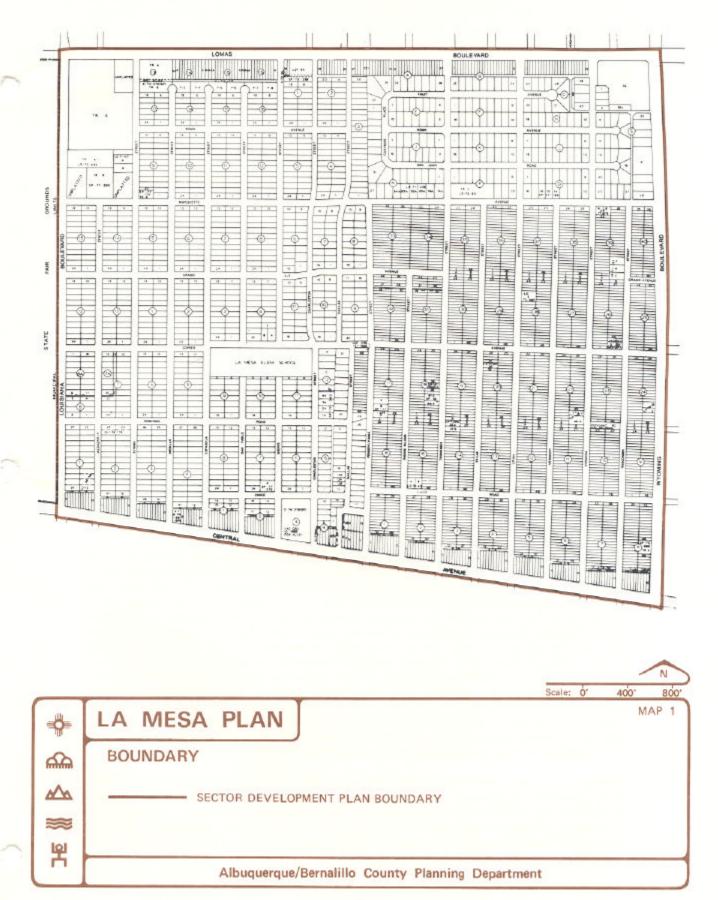
Beginning at the intersection of the north right-of-way line of Lomas Boulevard NE and the west right-of-way line of Louisiana Boulevard NE;

Thence, easterly along the north right-of-way line of Lomas Boulevard NE to the east right-of-way line of Wyoming Boulevard NE;

Thence, southerly along the east right-of-way line of Wyoming Boulevard NE and Wyoming Boulevard SE to the south right-of-way line of Central Avenue SE;

Thence, westerly along the south right-of-way line of Central Avenue SE to the west right-of-way line of Louisiana Boulevard SE;

Thence, northerly along the west right-of-way line of Louisiana Boulevard SE and Louisiana Boulevard NE to the point and place of beginning.



B. Characteristics

The La Mesa area, located immediately east of the New Mexico State Fairgrounds in the south central part of the Heights, is one of the most economically disadvantaged and most run-down neighborhoods in the Heights. The area began to develop before it was incorporated into the city and thus early development there had few controls on it. The area was annexed into the city in the late 1940s. After the area was annexed, the quality of new developments generally improved, but the area still did not attract as high a quality development as much of the rest of the Heights, mainly because of the poor quality of the earlier developments and because of the incompatibility of the Tesuque Drive-In Theatre in the middle of the area with the residential development around it.

Many of the residents of the area today are among the most economically disadvantaged in the Heights as a group. As Table 1 shows, the ethnic and racial background of the area residents in 1970 was similar to that for the city as a whole. The only significant difference from the city as a whole was the proportion of persons of Spanish heritage, about five percent more than throughout the city. The income measures in the table show that while fewer families in the area were below the poverty level in 1970 than in the city as a whole, more were receiving public assistance, fewer were earning more than \$15,000 a year and more were earning less than \$5,000. Table 1 also shows that significantly more La Mesa residents than city residents have no car available to them, walk to work and use public transit.

Most basic public facilities are in place in the La Mesa area. All the streets are paved, although about two miles of street need to be repaved. Similarly, all the water and sewer lines are in place in the area, but nearly five miles of water line needs to be replaced because it is old and corroding. Many fire hydrants and street lights also are in place, though more are needed to meet City standards. Sidewalks also are in place in most of the area, but gaps remain which make using the existing sidewalks inconvenient. The area is adequately served by bus routes and bikeways, as shown by Map 2. The bus stops, however, are poorly marked and not sufficiently provided with benches and shelters. Each bus stop should be provided with a bench and each transfer point should be provided with a shelter. The fire station in the area also needs to be refurbished.

The land use in the area remains primarily residential today, as shown on Map 3. Strips of commercial uses frame the area on the north, east and south, but the interior of the area is nearly all residential, with substantially more multi-family residences in the southern and southeastern parts of the area than elsewhere. The notable exceptions to residential use in the central part of the area are the La Mesa Elementary School, the adjacent La Mesa Park and the Tesuque Drive-In. A significant amount of land in the area also is vacant, which has a negative influence on the area. The existing zoning in the area is shown on Map 4. The same general pattern is shown. The interior is zoned for residential use and the strips on the north, east and south are zoned for commercial use. In the central part of the area, single-family zoning is found in the northern and northwestern parts of the area and multi-family residential zoning is found in the southern and southeastern areas. This area was previously zoned for single-family residential use, but in 1957 at the request of property owners in the area, the Planning Department studied the area and recommended the area be changed to multi-family residential zoning, which was subsequently enacted.

Housing in La Mesa is generally in good shape, as Table 2 shows. Eight-one percent (1,257) of the residential structures in the area were found to be standard by the windshield housing survey in August 1976 by the City Department of Housing and Development. An additional 15 percent (238 structures) were found to be slightly deteriorated, meaning the housing inspector estimated they could be brought up to standard condition by no more than \$500

worth of repairs. Two percent (54 buildings) were categorized as moderately deteriorated; five buildings were found to be extremely deteriorated, and one building was found to show maximum deterioration. The structures found to be substandard according to the City Housing Code, Commission Ordinance 136-1971, by this survey are shown on Map 5.

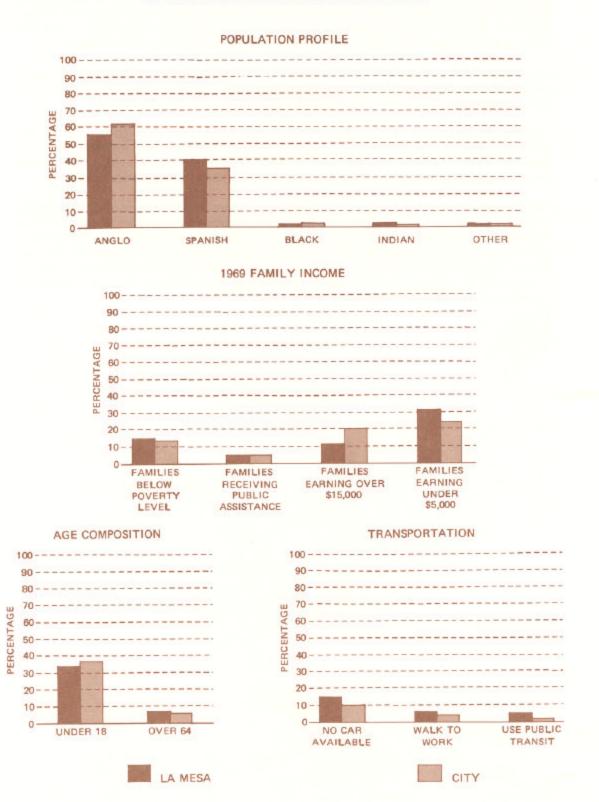
Map 6 shows the service coverage of the area by existing neighborhood parks, tennis courts and swimming pools. As can be seen, additional facilities of all three types are needed to fully provide La Mesa residents with these facilities within a reasonable distance.

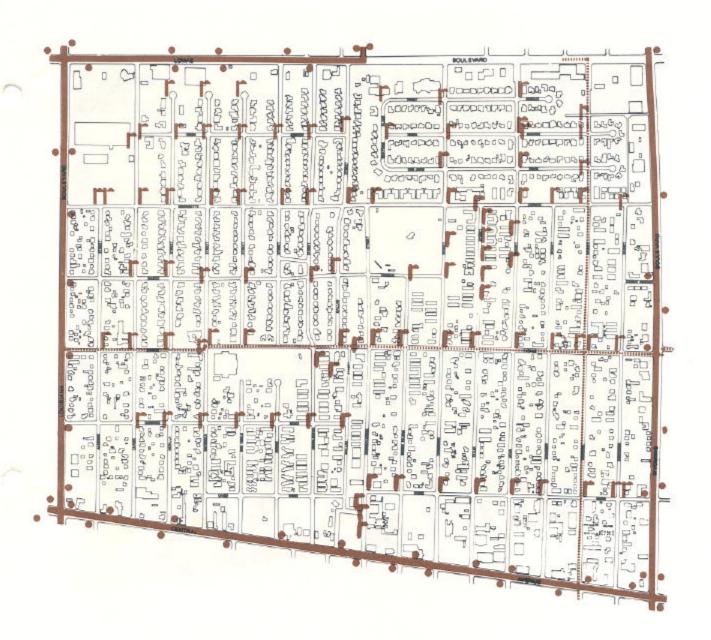
Incidents of crime and fire are more common in La Mesa than throughout the city as a whole. Residents are quite concerned about the crime and fire rates. Unsightly weeds and litter also detract from the appearance of the area and are a fire hazard. Loose animals scatter garbage, aggravating the litter problem, and are a threat to the residents' safety.

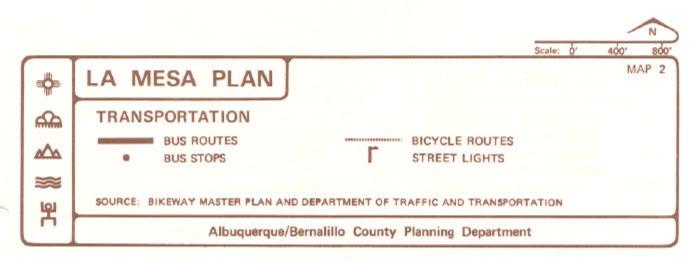
The La Mesa area residents are predominately economically disadvantaged. The average income is substantially lower than the city average; however, the number of families below poverty level also is less than the city average. As recognized by the designation of the area as a Community Development area, the area shows signs of blight and deterioration, but these are not pervasive and appear to be reversible. Massive amounts of City aid do not appear to be required to upgrade the area, and it does appear to be realistic to expect substantial upgrading as a result of City aid.

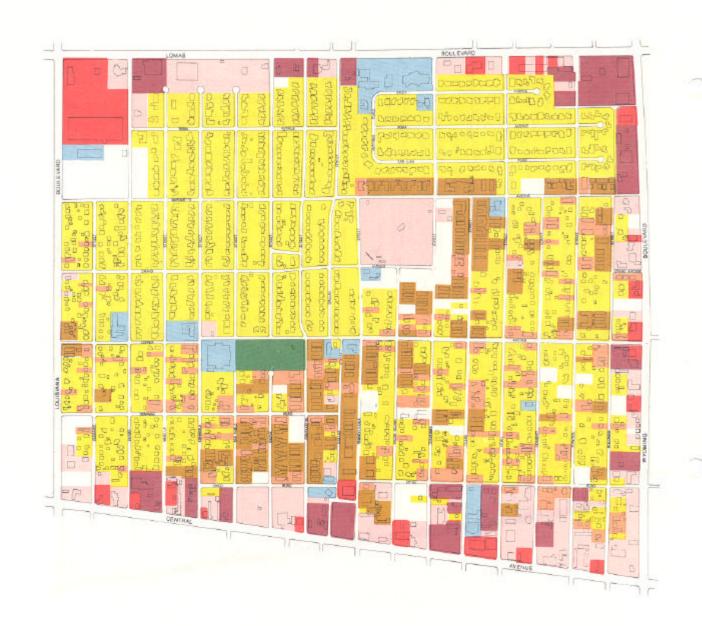
TABLE 1

LA MESA POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

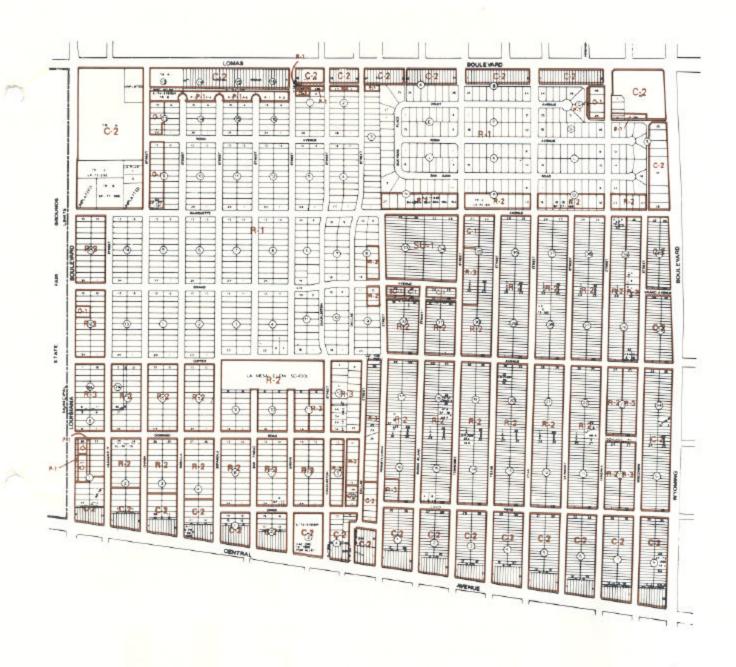


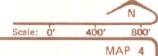














LA MESA PLAN



EXISTING ZONING



R-1 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

R-2 LOW DENSITY APARTMENTS

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R-3 MEDIUM DENSITY APARTMENTS O-1 OFFICE / INSTITUTIONAL

C-1 NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL

C-2 COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL

SU-1 SPECIAL USE

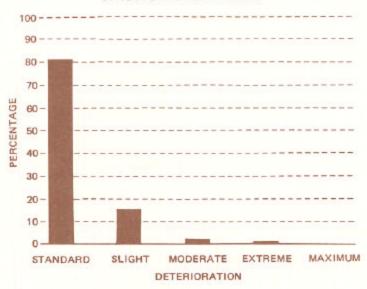
P-1 PARKING

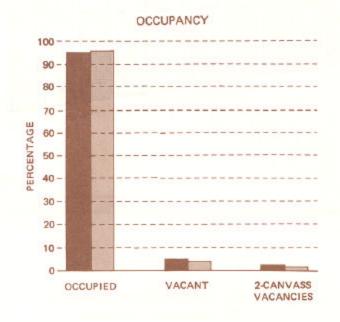
Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Planning Department

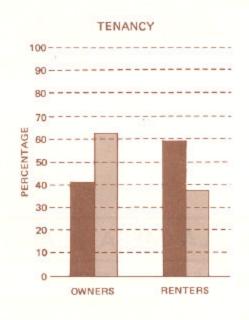
TABLE 2

LA MESA HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS





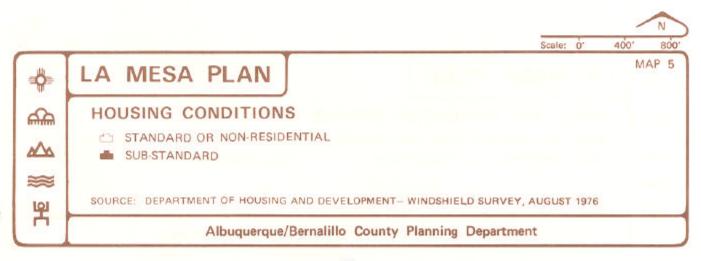


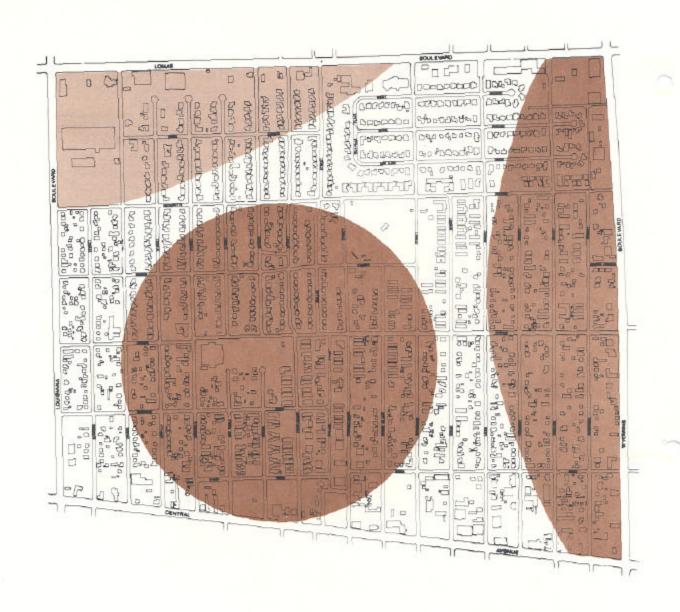


LA MESA

CITY









PLAN PURPOSES

A. General

The function of this plan is to provide an official guide to the future development of the La Mesa area for use by Albuquerque elected and appointed officials, City staff, other concerned governmental agencies, residents, property owners and citizen organizations.

The New Mexico Community Development Law and this plan have as their principal goals the conservation and renewal of neighborhoods and the improvement of living conditions of low- and moderate-income families. In additon, the <u>Policies Plan</u> of the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan has as its goal for urban areas " a quality urban environment which perpetuates the tradition of identifiable, individualistic communities within the metropolitan area and offers variety and maximum choice in housing, work areas and life styles, while creating visually pleasing architecture, landscaping and vistas to enhance the appearance of the community." The first policy adopted to attain this goal states, "Redevelopment and rehabilitation of older neighborhoods should be continued and expanded." The general purpose of this plan is to reach these objectives in the La Mesa area while guiding the renewal of the area and improvement of the living conditions of low- and moderate-income families. This will be done generally by planning for upgrading the housing, public facilities and City services in the area.

B. Specific

To achieve these goals, the following long-term objectives should be achieved in the La Mesa area:

- (1) Elimination of blight and prevention of blighting influences;
- (2) Elimination of conditions which are detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare;
- (3) Conservation, improvement and expansion of the housing available to low- and moderate-income families until all housing in the area meets City Housing Code standards;
- (4) Enhancement of the area as a primarily residential area with strips of commercial uses on the north, east and south;
- (5) Provision of needed public facilities, such as improved traffic and transportation facilities, additional park space, a community center, fire hydrants and improved storm drainage.

In the more immediate future, refinements of these long-term objectives should be set out and accomplished to begin the redevelopment of the area in accordance with the general purposes of this plan. These short-term objectives which should be achieved in the La Mesa area are:

- (1) Increased attention from the City on matters which can have a blighting effect on the area, such as weeds, litter, animal control, crime and fire prevention;
- (2) Upgrading of the housing in the area in a neighborhood-wide improvement program;
- (3) Provision of fire hydrants, street lights, storm drainage and improved traffic and transportation facilities. The Sidewalk Ordinance should be enforced;
- (4) Change of the Tesuque Drive-In Theatre site to a land use which is not disruptive to the neighborhood;
- (5) Provision of additional developed neighborhood park space and a community center.

AREA PLAN

A. Land Use

As noted in the description of the area, the zoning is generally compatible with the existing land use. Thus, no zoning changes are recommended at this time. There are two land use problems, however, which should be resolved. These are shown on Map 7. While circumstances in the future may make other zone changes desirable, the existing character of the area as a primarily single-family residential area with strips of commercial activities along Lomas Boulevard, Wyoming Boulevard and Central Avenue should not be altered.

The Tesuque Drive-In Theatre, located near the middle of the area, is incompatible with the surrounding residential development and has a detrimental effect on the neighborhood because of the traffic it generates and because many persons regard a drive-in theatre as unsightly in a residential neighborhood. The theatre should be removed from this location because of these effects. Public purchase of the theatre is recommended as the best and quickest way of removing the theatre.

Secondly only a small part of the land immediately south and east of the drive-in theatre which is zoned C-1 has been developed. This zoning was granted in the early 1960s in an effort to provide a stimulus for development of the area. That land had been red-lined by lending institutions in the city because of the presence of the drive-in theatre across the street, in effect preventing residential development on those sites. After the drive-in theatre is removed from its present location, the original reason for the change from residential zoning to the C-1 zoning will have been removed. Commercial developments on that land then would be inappropriate and incompatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood. Thus, the C-1 zoning on that part of this land which has not been developed should be changed to R-2 to be compatible with the surrounding zoning, as shown on Map 7.

The area presently zoned R-2 and R-3 should be given further study jointly by the Planning Department and the neighborhood to investigate the feasibility of returning all or part of it to R-1 zoning to protect existing viable land use.



LA MESA PLAN

LAND USE PLAN

PUBLIC ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PARK AND COMMUNITY CENTER

REZONING C-1 TO R-2 AFTER PURCHASE OF DRIVE-IN THEATRE

Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Planning Department

B. Housing and Public Improvements

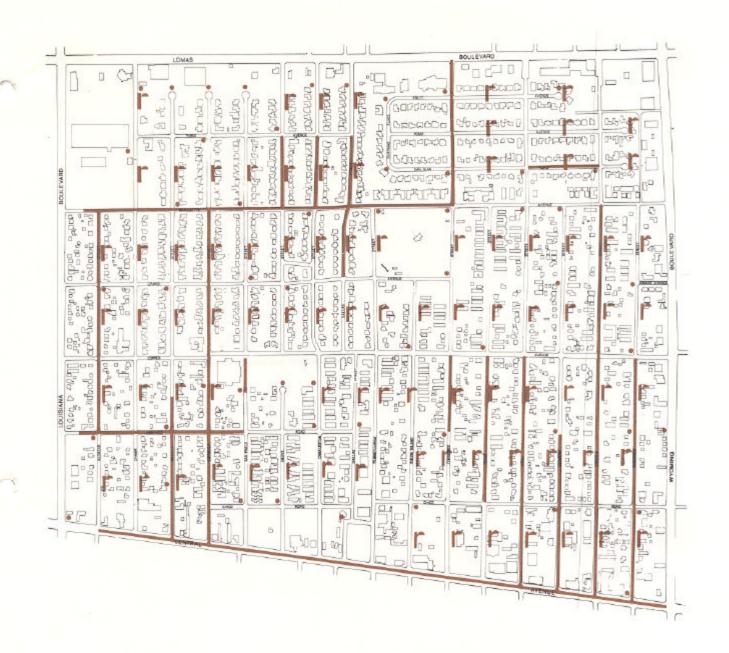
As noted in the long-term objectives for the La Mesa area, the housing goal is to upgrade the housing in the area so every unit meets City Housing Code standards. New housing in the area must meet the requirements of the City Building Code. Both public and private action will be required to achieve this objective. On the public side, many programs may be used to upgrade housing as this plan is implemented, and the programs used may change as funding opportunities change. Any housing improvement program used, however, should aim at improving the whole neighborhood and not just individual houses within the neighborhood. On the private side, it is expected that public expenditures in the area will increasingly encourage privately financed improvement of existing housing and construction of new housing.

Public improvements in the area are intended to enhance the character of the neighborhood as a primarily residential area. As noted on Map 7, the Tesuque Drive-In Theatre should be purchased and converted to a neighborhood park, both to remove a detrimental land use from the area and substitute an asset for it and to fulfill the need shown on Map 6 for additional park space in the area. The size of the site (approximately 9.3 acres) also makes it ideal for location of a recreation center, which would meet several other needs of the neighborhood. The Characteristics section noted that the crime rate in the area is higher than for the city as a whole. Provision of a recreation center might help decrease the crime rate, especially among youths. Location of a recreation center at this site also might help give a greater sense of community to neighborhood residents. The La Mesa School serves this purpose for families which have children enrolled there. For those families which do not have children attending La Mesa School, a recreation center might serve this function and make it easier for them to become involved in the community. The La Mesa Park, adjacent to La Mesa School, also needs additional trees planted for shade and beautification, and the basketball court lights should be maintained so the court may be used at night.

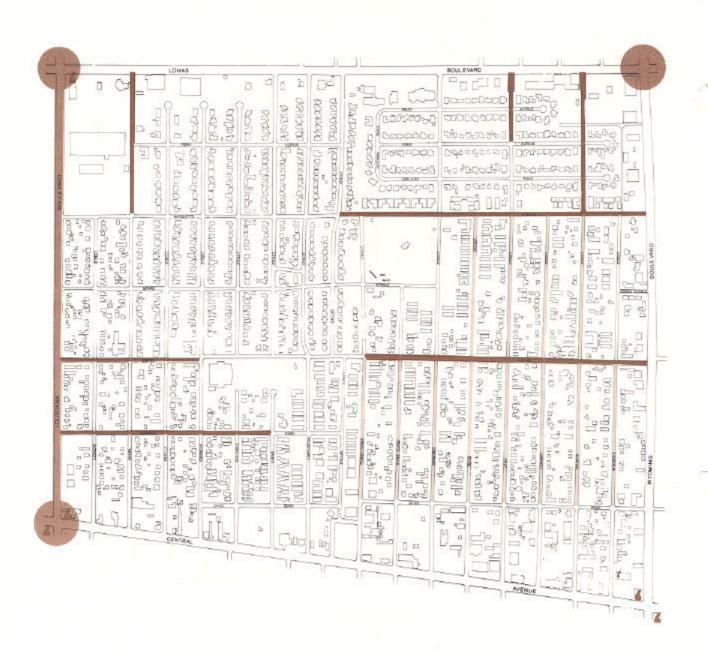
Needed utilities improvements are shown on Map 8. The needed fire hydrants shown are required to meet the City's standard of having a fire hydrant within 300 feet of every building. The street lights are needed also to meet the existing City standard for street lighting. The replacement water lines are needed to replace lines which are old and corroding now. In the future, as other lines age and deteriorate, they also should be replaced.

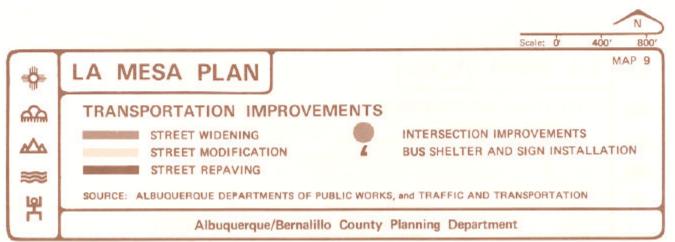
Needed street and transportation improvements are shown on Map 9. Intersection improvements are needed at the corners of Central and Louisiana, Louisiana and Lomas, and Lomas and Wyoming Boulevards. Street repaving should be done as indicated on the map to maintain the streets in good condition. Street widening is needed on Louisiana Boulevard. Street modification is needed as indicated to slow down traffic on those long, straight north-south blocks so that it is compatible with a residential neighborhood. Bus shelters and improved bus stop signs should be provided as shown. Sidewalks also should be provided by property owners where they are not already in place through concentrated enforcement of the City Sidewalk Ordinance. Storm drainage is a problem in some isolated locations. These should be given further engineering study and a solution found and implemented. Finally, a complete and detailed traffic study of the area is currently under way. This study is expected to provide possible solutions to several traffic problems. The problems are that traffic and street signs appear to be either inadequate or inappropriate at some locations in the area, that traffic speed needs to be reduced on residential streets and that access to Central Avenue is difficult between Louisiana and Wyoming Boulevards. The solutions identified by this traffic control study should be implemented.

Finally, to support the effects of these improvements on the neighborhood, the City should give additional attention to enforcing the Animal Control Ordinance and Weed and Litter Ordinance in the area; and an educational program designed to prevent crime and fires should be conducted for area residents in conjunction with community organizations. The fire station in the area also should be refurbished.









COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This community development plan is an official community development plan as defined by the New Mexico Community Development Law, enacted by the 32nd Legislature of the State of New Mexico, and has been prepared and adopted in accordance with that law. This plan is within the guidelines established by the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan. It also is within the guidelines established by the Citizens Advisory Group for utilization of money available to the City of Albuquerque under Public Law 93-383, the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

This community development plan may be amended as provided by the New Mexico Community Development Law. All City resolutions authorizing, directing or approving community development programs or activities also shall be complied with throughout any amendment process.

The area to which this community development plan applies is the same area to which this sector development plan applies, as it is defined on pages 2-3. The property standards established by this community development plan are the same as those established in this sector development plan on page 5. The residential dwellings which fail to meet these minimum standards are identified on Map 5. This community development plan's relationship to local objectives and the way in which the plan will reach those objectives is the same as for the sector development plan, as identified on pages 13-14.

Property may be acquired by the City to remove unsafe, unsanitary or unhealthful conditions, to change density, to eliminate obsolete or other land uses which are detrimental to the public welfare, to otherwise remove or prevent blight or deterioration, to provide land for needed public facilities or to make land available for development or redevelopment by private enterprise or public agencies for uses in accordance with the land use recommendations.

The date each annual program is adopted is printed at the top of the page on which it begins. The schedule of activities and estimates of work to be done are the best available at the time of submission of the programs for adoption. Some changes may be made in the activities undertaken; but nevertheless, this community development plan is to be the guiding plan for community development activities, and any changes in the activities are to conform with the overall intent and purpose of this plan.

To begin accomplishing the objectives for La Mesa in this sector development plan, the activities in this section of the community development plan will be undertaken in Fiscal Year 1977-78.

A concentrated code enforcement program will be begun to require property owners to bring their residential buildings up to City rehabilitation standards, Resolution 143-1975. Financial assistance will be provided to help those low- and moderate-income residents who cannot afford to have the required work done. Financial assistance will be offered through two programs: rehabilitation grants and loans, and acquisition and relocation.

Eligibility for the rehabilitation grant and loan program will be as established in Resolution 139-1975. Rehabilitation grants are available to owner occupants of substandard dwellings in the area to pay for the rehabilitation of their homes. Grants may not exceed \$7,500 or the cost of the rehabilitation, whichever is less, and are not repayable. Applicants who do not qualify for grants because of their incomes or because they are absentee owners may qualify for a low-interest loan to finance the rehabilitation. Loans may not exceed \$14,000 or the cost of the repairs, whichever is less. Loans also may be granted in combination with grants to accomplish rehabilitations which cost \$7,500 to \$9,500. Whether a grant, loan or combination of the two is awarded, the repairs must bring the dwelling up to the rehabilitation standards. Temporary relocation assistance also may be awarded to a family if the rehabilitation work requires that the applicant move while the work is being done. Applicants who are given temporary relocation assistance may receive reasonable moving expenses and the reasonable cost of renting temporary housing. An estimated 40 housing units will be rehabilitated.

The acquisition and relocation program is available for persons whose substandard housing cannot be rehabilitated for the amount of money available through the rehabilitation program. This program will pay fair market value for acquisition of property plus up to \$500 per household for residents' moving and dislocation expenses. It also will give homeowners a relocation payment of up to \$15,000 to purchase replacement housing, and will give renters a relocation payment of up to \$4,000 to find replacement housing. Eligible businesses are entitled to actual moving expenses or a payment for the same amount. Temporary relocation assistance, modified from the rehabilitation program to be appropriate to this program, also may be awarded to the persons being relocated if it is needed. After the housing is acquired and the occupants relocated, the land will be cleared for redevelopment. An estimated seven substandard units will be acquired.

Fire hydrants will be provided where they are needed, as shown on Map 8.

The Tesuque Drive-In Theatre will be purchased, and the site will be cleared and redeveloped as a neighborhood park and community center.

One street in the area will be modified in a study to find a way to slow traffic to be compatible with a residential neighborhood.

A wide range of social services will be provided to area residents. While these social services might not be offered at sites in the La Mesa area, they are designed to serve La Mesa residents and are expected to do so. These services are as follows:

Services to the elderly. This service will provide recreation, meals, counseling, referrals and supportive services such as transportation for low- and moderate-income elderly residents of the area.

Child care. This service will provide enriched day care for children and counseling for parents in low-income families in the area. The day care will seek to provide an environment which encourages maximum physical, educational and social growth by the children. Counseling will provide parents with nutritional, educational and social information they need to allow maximum development by their children.

Youth services. This service will seek to prevent juvenile delinquency by focusing community resources on and providing a range of services to non-delinquent troubled youths and their families.

Recreation. This service will provide additional hours of operation for City recreation centers, after school recreation programs at schools and library-oriented programs at school libraries after hours.

Women's crisis services. This service will provide counseling and other services to women who have been victims of sexual assault and will provide other services which are not available in the community for women facing other crises.

Dental clinics. This service will provide a wide range of dental services for the medically indigent residents of the area. Care will include examinations, fillings, cleanings, X rays, simple extractions, root canal therapy, stainless steel crowns and other procedures.

High risk infant care. This service will provide comprehensive medical, nutritional and social services for medically indigent mothers and their infants during the babies' first year of life.

Services for the severely disabled. This service will provide mobility instruction for the blind and similar services for other severely disabled area residents to bring them to job readiness so they can be self-sufficient.

The following are first-priority needs of the La Mesa area based on the advice of area residents and the technical analysis of the area undertaken in this sector development plan. It is recommended that any community development activities in the La Mesa area in the near future be consistent with the following:

The concentrated code enforcement program should be completed with full code compliance of all residential structures. Financial assistance should be provided to help those low- and moderate-income residents who cannot afford to have the required work done.

La Mesa Park should be provided with additional trees, and the basketball court lights should be repaired.

At the conclusion of the study of street modifications to slow traffic in the residential part of the neighborhood, that solution should be implemented where appropriate throughout the area.

The storm drainage problems in the area should be solved.