

6 October 2006

John McElroy
District Engineer, Dist 5
NM Dept of Transportation
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Dear Mr. McElroy,

The Northern NM Group of the Sierra Club, the Bicycle Coalition of NM, and others concerned about the quality of life in Santa Fe are pleased that a comprehensive corridor study for NM 599, I-25 and US 84/285 has been undertaken. As a coalition, we have provided below our concerns and suggestions and would like to be included in the process.

As a Main Street through our City, we envision a future US 84/285 transformed into a vital, safe and accessible corridor that can adequately serve as the major artery in our central city for all modes of travel. By developing St Francis on a human scale with a focus on pedestrians, the City and State can enhance life and commerce not only along the corridor, but in a spillover effect to all the neighborhoods that abut the corridor. To that end we recommend the following:

ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

The physical streetscape of St. Francis Drive requires the following revisions:

- No more than two lanes in each direction plus turn lanes and parking lanes
- Speeds under 35 mph
- Well-synchronized light controls to allow traffic to move calmly and steadily along the length of the corridor
- Superior bicycle and pedestrian facilities that promote non-motorized travel along and across the corridor, including aesthetic enhancements and facilities for the disabled community
- Squared-up intersections to create safe and controlled stops and allow for all users to feel comfortable at intersections; this would include removal of all free-right turns
- Roundabouts as appropriate
- Grade-separated intersection at Cerrillos/ St. Francis, with St. Francis below grade.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

St. Francis Drive from the southern terminus to the intersection with Guadalupe Street should be an urban thoroughfare. The characteristics of an urban thoroughfare include:

- Transit accommodations to rapidly connect sites along the corridor, including bus pullouts and comfortable and information-laden transit stops
- Intercity and intracity transit to serve rush hour traffic needs
- Trolley and shuttle feeders
- Completion of trail systems into downtown, including Rail Trail, Acequia Trail and River Trail
- Enhancements to serve the disabled community, especially the NM School for the Deaf

LAND USE IMPROVEMENTS

While land use is not often considered in transportation corridor studies, along this particular corridor it is important to optimize land use. In particular, with an eye towards future multimodal transportation at the NM DOT General Office site on Alta Vista and Cordova and with train service into the Santa Fe Railyard, it is incumbent upon us all to simultaneously approach necessary land use improvements that make these multimodal facilities viable. Such land use changes should include:

- Densified and mixed uses within 0.5 miles of the corridor
- Re-zoning appropriate to foster 'Urban Thoroughfare' mixed use and commercial development that serves local needs
- Disallowing the placement of parking lots along road frontages, and closing many curb cuts.
- Increased commercial activity in the St. Francis and Cerrillos intersection area designed for pedestrians

SUCCESS STORIES

Great Street programs are discovering the benefits that come with returning roads to more human and functional scales. Removing traffic lanes and improving traffic flow have been proven to increase mobility and decrease congestion. Additionally, decreasing on-street parking while increasing walkability, bikability and transit results in increased commerce and a more attractive and safer environment for residents and tourists alike. The NMDOT's Context Sensitive Solutions initiative is well positioned to achieve these goals.

CONCLUSIONS

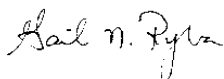
Because it is a road which serves so many residents and tourists in Santa Fe on a daily basis, it is important that the Corridor Study process deeply engage many partners interested in the design of our city. These partners should include, at a minimum, the State, the City, neighborhoods, the disabled community, walking, bicycling and transit groups, and business groups. The benefits in commerce, safety, and environment cannot be understated. Vibrant, walkable, and accessible streets define cities and foster community. Revitalizing St. Francis Drive as a sustainable and lively streetscape is not incompatible with its role as a major thoroughfare in our community. Rather, by expanding the accessibility of St. Francis Drive to pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit, we will be expanding its function in our community.

The successful transformation of St. Francis Drive is of crucial concern to our membership. We would like to participate in the corridor study in partnership with the project team to ensure that the best interests of the community are met. We look forward to meeting with you to discuss our participation in more detail.

Sincerely,



Ken Hughes
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cc: Rhonda Faught, DOT Secretary
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David Coss, Mayor of Santa Fe
Diane Quarles, Director of Planning, City of Santa Fe
U.S. Representative Tom Udall
State Representative Peter Wirth
State Representative Lucky Varela
State Representative Jim Trujillo
State Senator Nancy Rodriguez
State Senator John Grubestic