

DRAFT FOR COMMENT
POTENTIAL AMENDMENT TO THE

ROUTE 66 ACTION PLAN

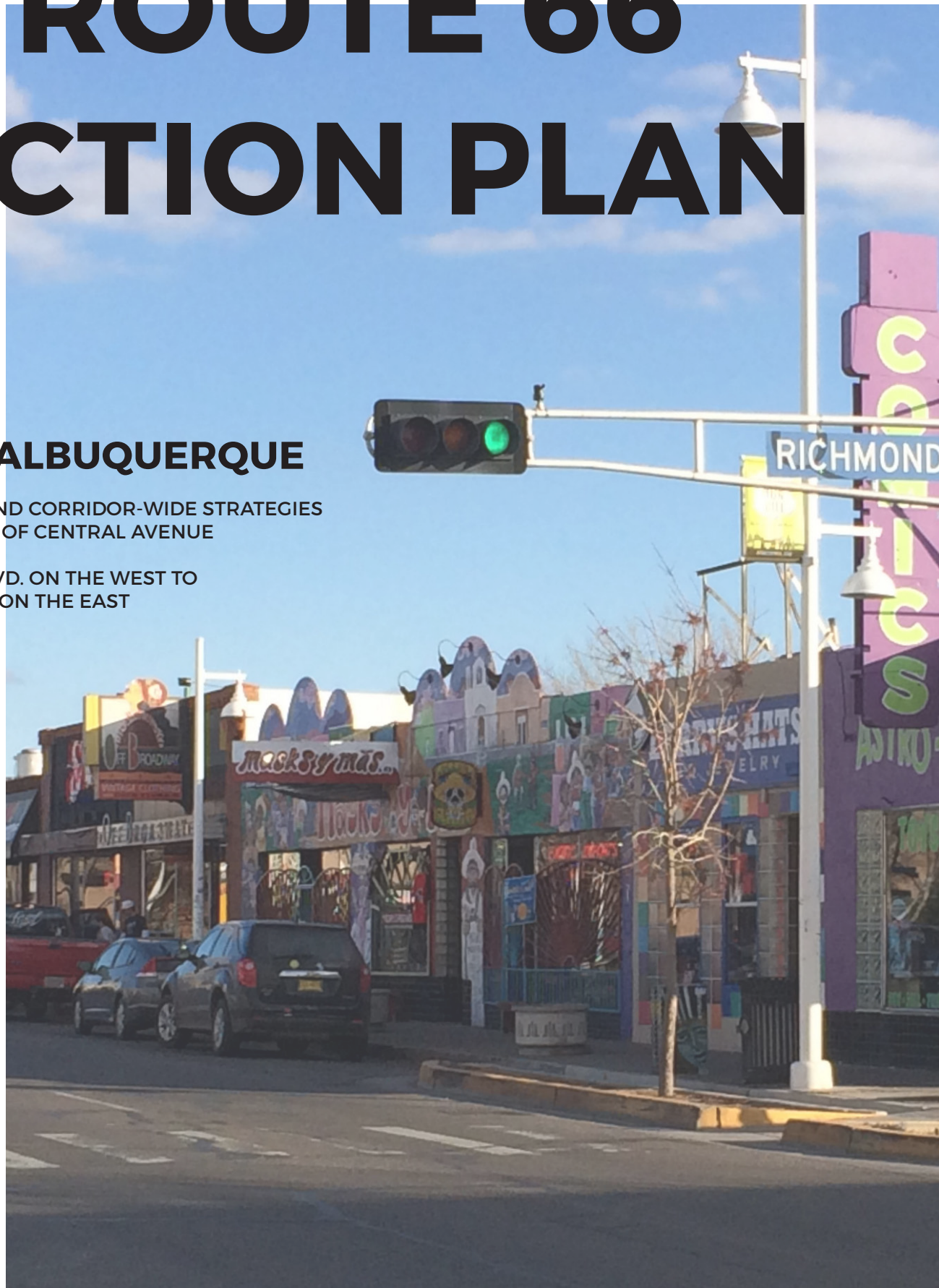
CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

STATION AREA AND CORRIDOR-WIDE STRATEGIES
17-MILE STRETCH OF CENTRAL AVENUE

FROM UNSER BLVD. ON THE WEST TO
TRAMWAY BLVD. ON THE EAST

STATION AREA
CONCEPT AND
STRATEGIES
ACTION PLAN

DRAFT
SEPTEMBER
2017





ALBUQUERQUE

CENTRAL AVENUE

TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)



The City of Albuquerque is in the midst of implementing an 18-month federal planning grant, The Corridors Initiative, to develop strategies for leveraging investments in new transit opportunities and in new growth regulations along Albuquerque's Central Avenue Corridor.

From the outset, intentions were to consolidate and build on all the work that has come before, then test ideas for guiding future growth with an intensive, week long public workshop. Held in March of 2017, the workshop was a collaboration between citizens, community leaders and a team of TOD consultants to explore opportunities ahead for those who live, work and shop along the region's most vital corridor.

Throughout the workshop week, the collaboration took the form of special topic meetings, work-in-progress reviews, exercises to test alternative strategies for strengthening capacities of communities, and for making the most of what could potentially amount to \$2 billion of new investment.

Going into the workshop, some 1,000 people had already taken part in various meetings to set the table for a more focused discussion. Coming out of that week of idea testing are recommendations embodied in this report for specific strategies that can be used anywhere along the Central Avenue Corridor to connect surrounding neighborhoods to transit, to upgrade pedestrian and cyclist amenities and to nurture community and reinforce a sense of place.

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WWW.GREATERCENTRALAVE.ORG

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

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GRIDICS

URBAN 3

OVERVIEW



OPPORTUNITY

ZONING + STREET INVESTMENT

Albuquerque is experiencing two significant changes in the way it guides future growth: a revision of the citywide zoning code and a major transportation investment along Central Avenue. This is a time to inspire – and support – dramatic, positive change for the Main Street of the greater Albuquerque Metro.



GOALS

In the 12,000-acre Central Avenue Corridor (old Route 66), the goals are to develop a range of strategies to:

- + Better align the ambitions of individual neighborhoods and businesses along the corridor with opportunities that improved transit is likely to inspire.
- + Position plans for new development to maximize the potential for an estimated \$2 billion of real estate (re)investment.
- + Assure savings (an estimated \$1 billion) from poverty reduction, improved transit access and other efficiencies that benefit everyone in Albuquerque.
- + Maximize the potential for job creation (an estimated potential of more than 9,500 jobs) along the corridor.



SUPPORT

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION GRANT

The Federal Transit Administration awarded the City of Albuquerque's Transit, Planning and Economic Development departments a \$860,000 TOD planning grant. Since mid 2016, community members along the Central Avenue Corridor participated in workshops and in-person and online exchanges about moving Central Avenue from "good to great." Together, they helped shape a 2017 Draft Work Plan aimed toward a Central Avenue that connects people, creates great places and drives opportunity.



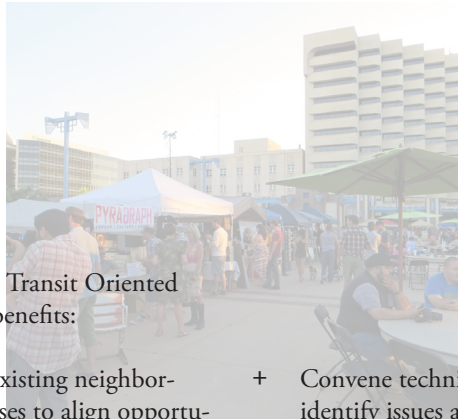
WORKSHOP WEEK

TASK FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND REPORT

For the March workshop week, a team made up of local and national planners, architects, economic analysts and engineers served as resources to community stakeholders. Making use of all the data and community conversations that came before, participants explored ideas and options for accelerating opportunities for families and businesses and for building on the existing quality of life along the 17-mile stretch of Central Avenue from Unser Boulevard on the west to Tramway Boulevard on the east.

STRATEGIES

REAPING BENEFITS



Broad strategies to reap Transit Oriented Development (TOD) benefits:

- + Collaborate with existing neighborhoods and businesses to align opportunities with vision.
- + Set the table for new investment by removing barriers and transforming systems, including financing systems.
- + Support the enhancement of existing great places that people will want to return to, and invest in them.
- + Use facilitated Action Forums to increase opportunities for people to participate in projects and programs they care about.
- + Convene technical Working Groups to identify issues and opportunities and influence agencies and organizations to act on recommendations.
- + Address systemic inequitable outcomes for the most vulnerable neighborhoods and families, and identify ways quality of life and opportunity might be improved through the built environment.
- + Optimize government spending to create value efficiently and equitably, enhancing the corridor's tax base in a way that benefits residents of the entire city. ■

THE IDEAS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT DO NOT MANDATE ANY ACTIVITY ON THE PART OF THE CITY, ANY OTHER PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS, BUSINESS OWNERS, OR RESIDENTS, BUT RATHER CLEAR THE WAY FOR ACTIONS THAT SUPPORT THE COLLECTIVE COMMUNITY VISION AND OPTIMIZE THE EXPECTED RETURNS OF THE BUS RAPID TRANSIT INVESTMENT.

WORK SHOP



PHOTO SUSAN HENDERSON

“THESE ARE CONCEPTS TO GET US ALL THINKING. THESE ARE NOT FINAL PLANS. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT DEPENDS ON US.”

**~ ALBUQUERQUE CITY COUNCIL
PRESIDENT ISAAC BENTON**

The March 2017 workshop week was organized in a way that allowed for a collaborative progression from a foundation of research and previous community conversations to identifying strategies most likely to realize key goals for families and businesses along the Central Avenue corridor.

At three points during the workshop – at the beginning, middle and end of the seven days – consulting team members presented work in progress for community review. Approaches were refined based on community response for follow-up presentations and reviews. “These are concepts to get us all thinking,” said Albuquerque City Council president Isaac Benton. “These are not final plans. What happens next depends on us.”

COMMON THEMES

A series of topics emerged that were common to all areas. These included:

- + Preservation of character
- + Concerns about the nature of density
- + Parking impacts
- + Pedestrian and cyclist safety
- + Equitable quality of life improvements

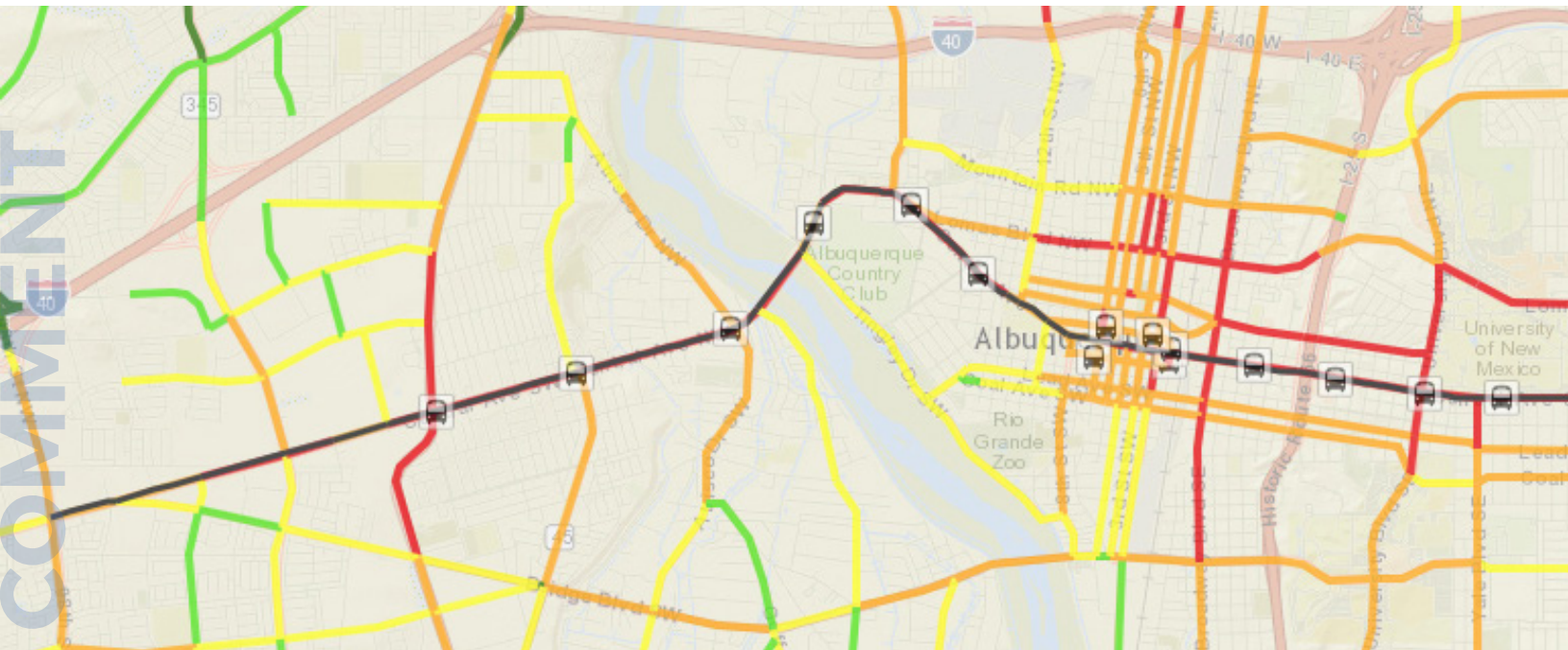
NEIGHBORHOOD SPECIFIC THEMES

In addition to common concerns, each area has issues that are specific to their needs. These are outlined on the following pages, with a subsequent chapter on each station area with proposed design and actions.

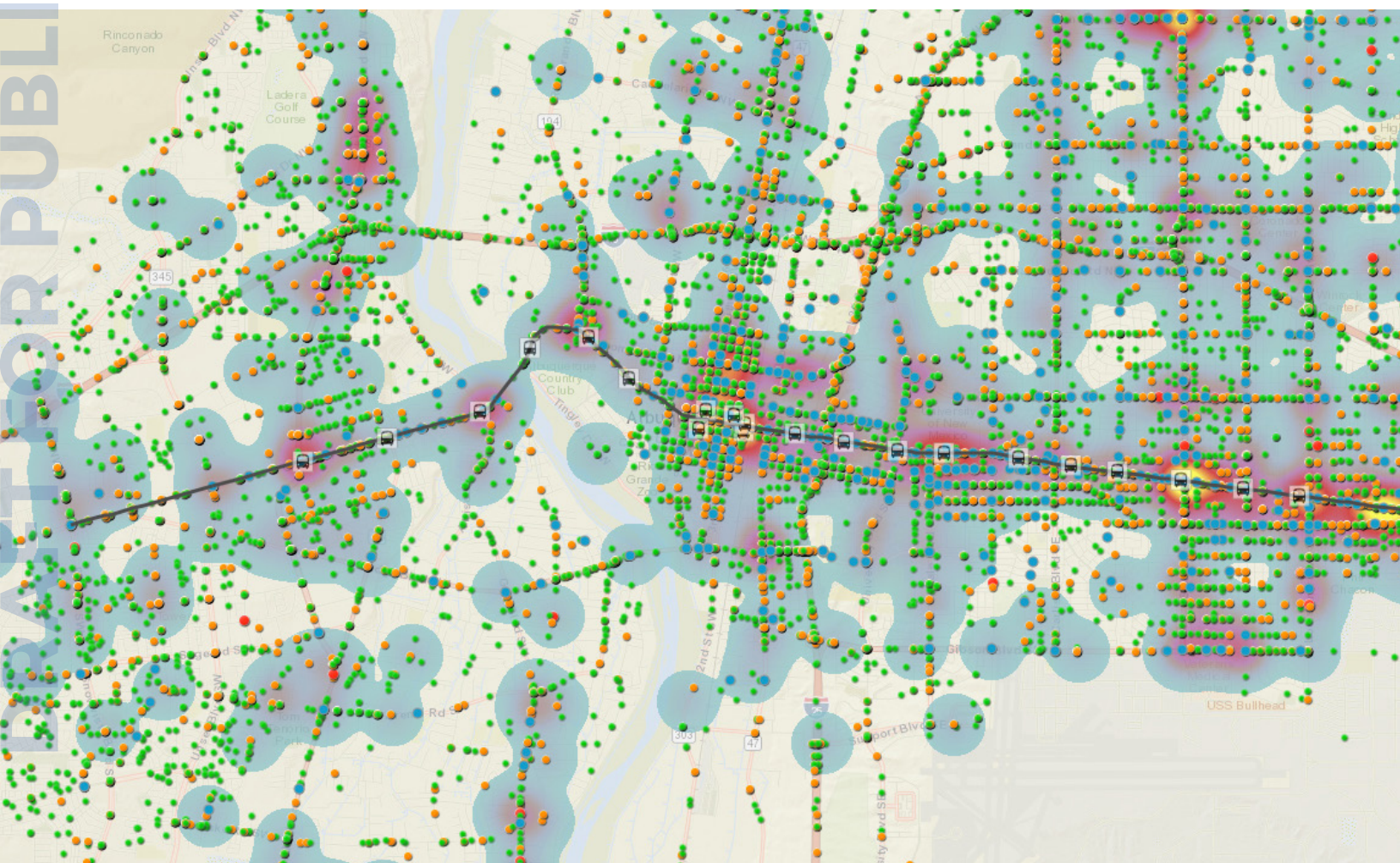


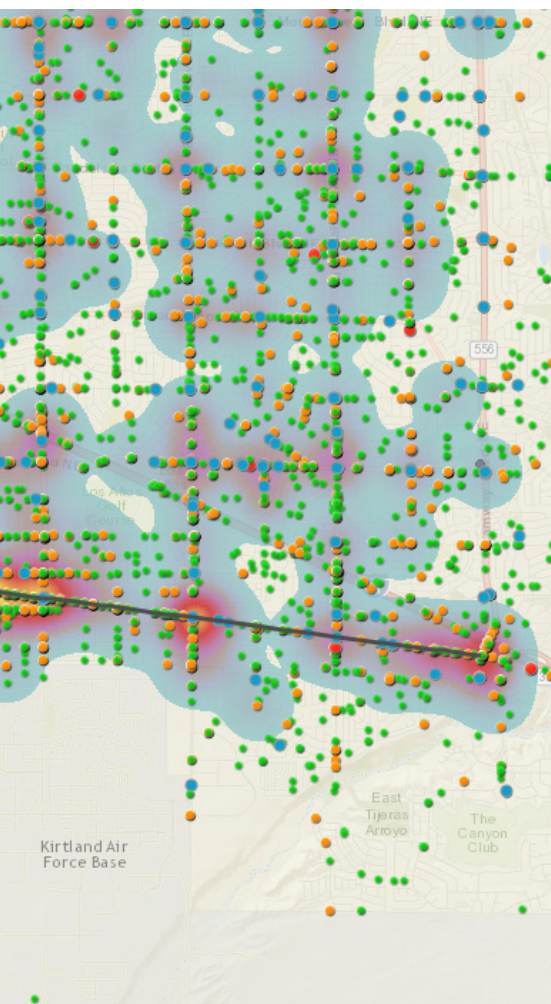
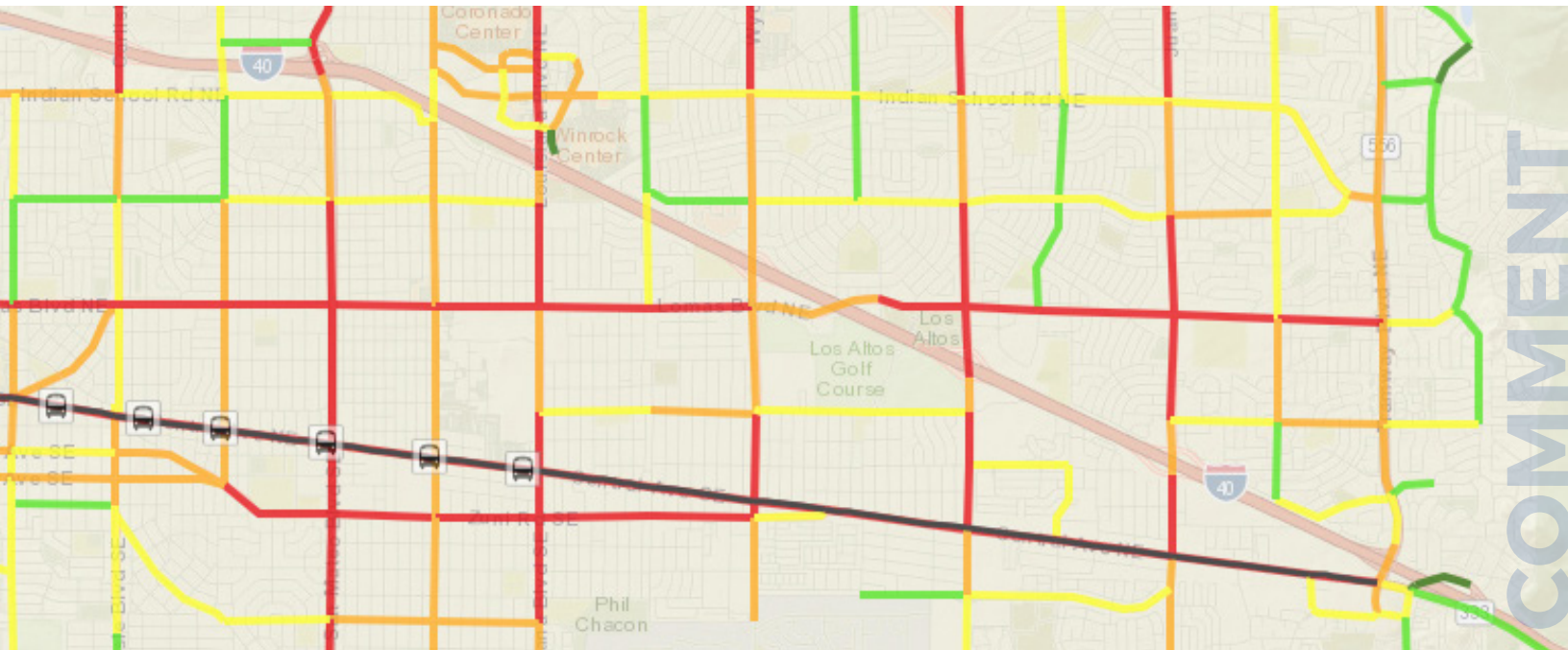
7-Day Workshop: Focus meetings were held throughout the week to concentrate on specific topics and neighborhoods.





ISSUES OF SAFETY AND EQUITY are central to this action plan. Pedestrian improvements planned by Mid-Regional Council of Governments (MRCOG) above, and the partial impetus pictured below, in crashes.





Priority Streets for Pedestrian Improvement - MRCOG

- High Regional Priority
- Moderate-high regional priority
- Moderate Regional Priority
- Low-Moderate Regional Priority
- Low Regional Priority

Pedestrian Involved Crashes, 2008-2012 (Central NM Only)



Bicyclist Involved Crashes, 2008-2012 (Central NM Only)

- Involved

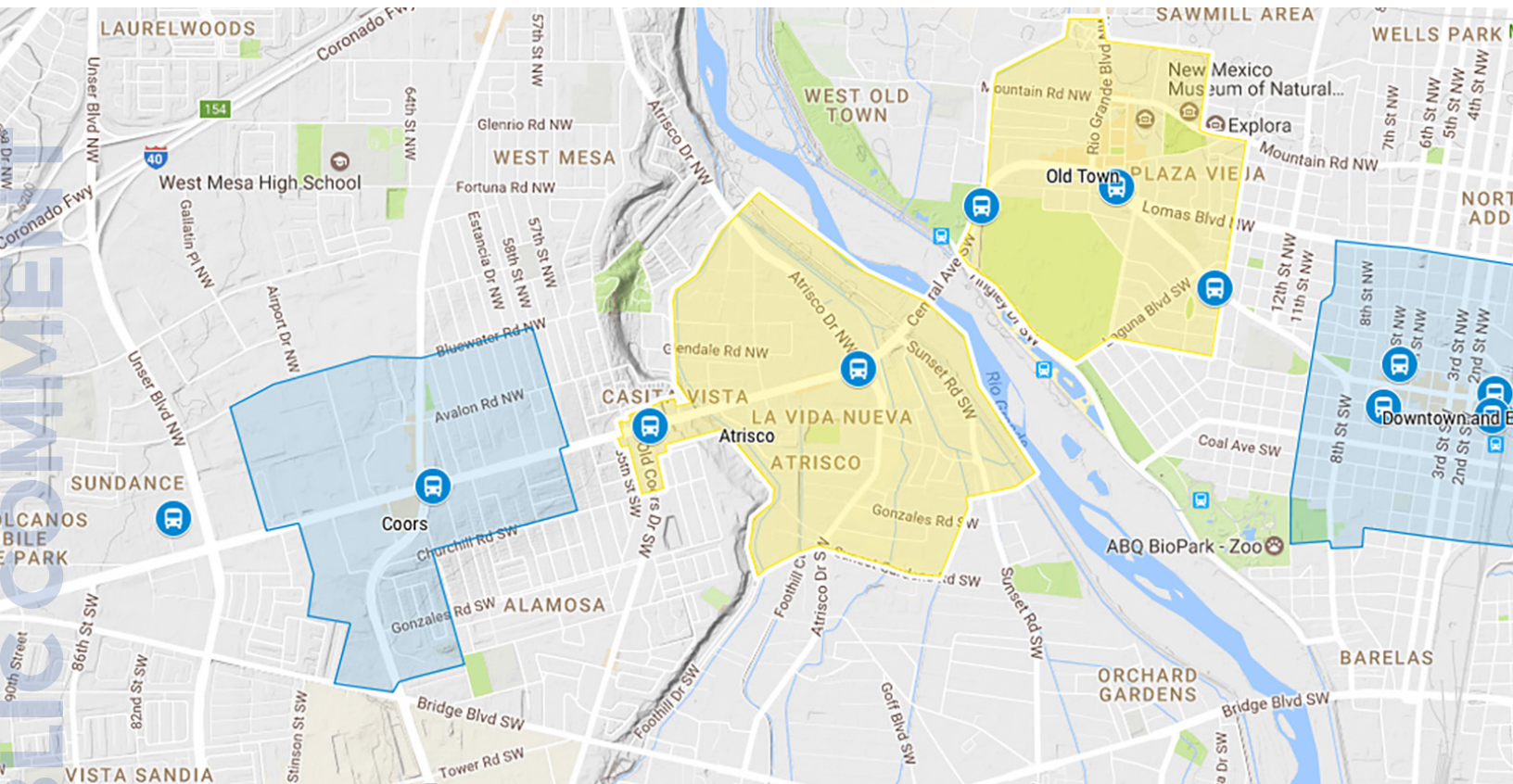
All Crashes, 2008-2012 (Central NM Only)

- Fatal Crash
- Injury Crash
- Property Damage Only Crash

Fatal Crashes, 2013, FARS

Fatal_Motor_Vehicle_Accidents

● Collisions along Central



ART Stops with Neighborhood Structure

NEIGHBORHOOD THEMES

COORS

Around the intersection of Coors and Central is many acres of vacant and under-utilized land. This land represents an opportunity to re-imagine the heart of West Central, providing a real community center west of the river.

- + Residents feel disillusioned by the suburban environment they live in as it does not fulfill their vision of cohesive neighborhoods.
- + Area residents aspire to have a sense of place, a strong center, and meaningful locations for community events.
- + Residents want to see the City active in West Central and its future.

ATRISCO

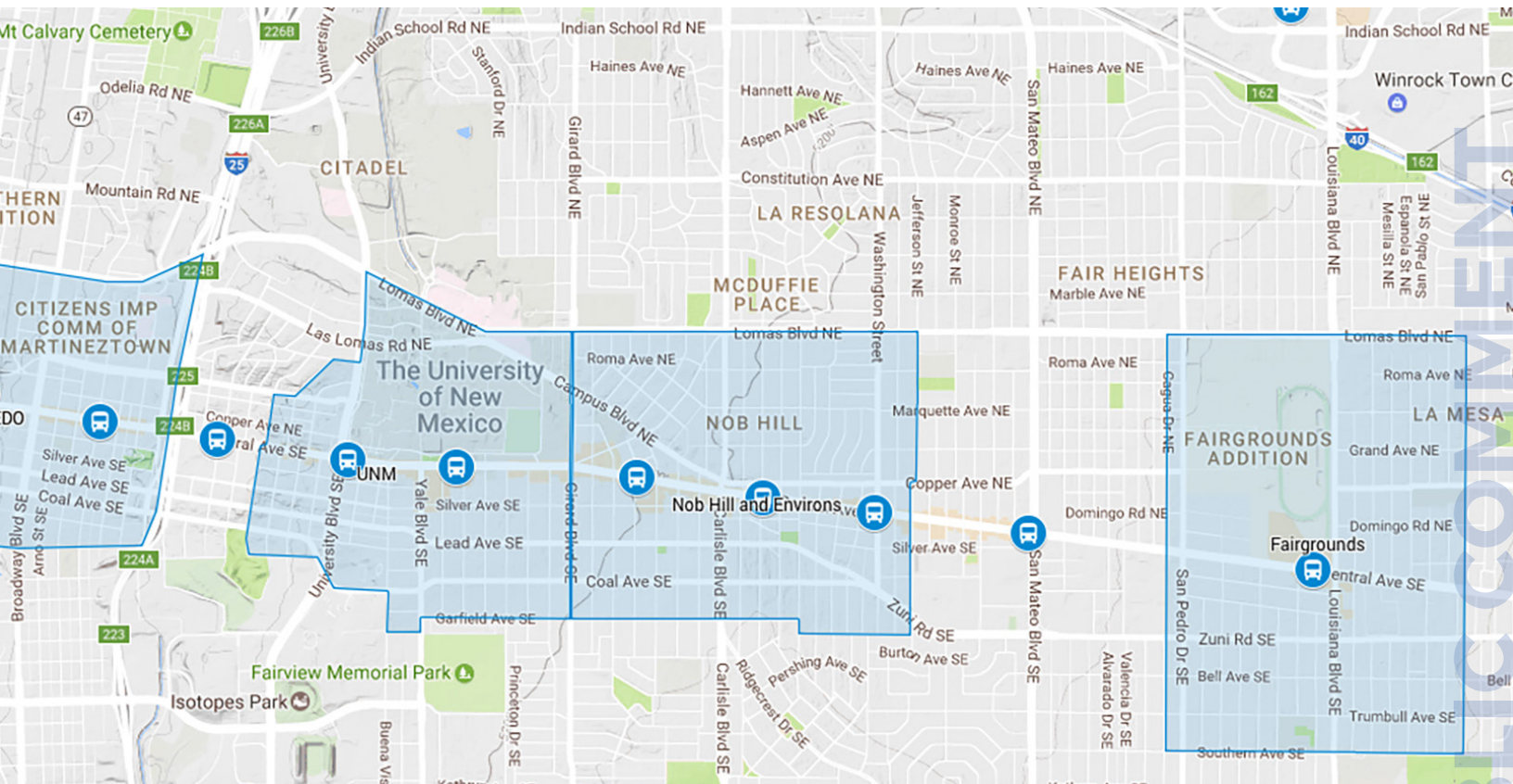
The Atrisco station area has a strong cultural history, which lacks a space for expression and gathering. It serves as a gateway to the Rio Grande, with its trails and parks. The neighborhoods need a series of activity centers along Central in the form of plazas, integrating community-scaled businesses with places of cultural expression.

- + The residents desire meaningful engagement and investment from the City.
- + Smaller and less expensive commercial spaces are needed for local business incubation and entrepreneurship.
- + Community spaces are needed for gathering and celebrating special cultural occasions.

OLD TOWN

The Old Town station, a block south of Plaza Vieja, provides opportunities for increased access and visibility. There are infill opportunities that could provide a formal 'front door' entry to Old Town, connecting the station to the Plaza.

- + Prioritize pedestrian connections and signage from Central Avenue to Old Town and from Old Town to Tiguex Park.
- + Remove parking requirements for 30' deep buildings to enable infill of the city parking lot at Central Avenue.
- + Test the Romero Street at Plaza Street section using a temporary installation.



DOWNTOWN

Downtown is filled with historic and new office buildings, hotels, cultural venues, and a growing number of dwellings. The wonderful urban street grid is the structure that can create an even more vibrant and active downtown, with redevelopment opportunities including a number of surface parking lots.

- + Prioritize implementation of the *Downtown Walkability Study*.
- + Focus on development along Central Avenue to maintain a continuous vibrant pedestrian and retail experience.
- + Residents want to see vacant parcels developed contextually.
- + Encourage a diversity of building types to ensure inclusive neighborhoods.

EDO

EDo is the new hub of innovation as well as the commercial heart of two historic neighborhoods. The neighborhoods have a stable urban character with a good mix of uses and housing types.

- + Build makerspaces along the tracks to support growing small businesses.
- + Implement shared parking across multiple sites and owners.
- + Implement the *Downtown Walkability Study* recommendations.
- + Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections between EDo and Downtown.
- + Assure the Walter Street station has a historically appropriate shade structure.
- + Assure the empty parcels at Walter develop to their highest use.

UNIVERSITY

The University neighborhood has fared relatively well through the influx of transient student populations. The area does suffer from the need for safe walking and cycling routes.

- + Residents want to preserve the character of Silver Hill and restore the character of University Heights.
- + The south edge of UNM can be developed to create safe and engaging spaces along Central Avenue.
- + Residents want access to local-serving commercial shops and eating establishments, not drive-throughs.
- + Safe pedestrian and cycling routes are needed, particularly given area population demographics.



RAILYARDS

PHOTO FREEABQIMAGES.COM



FOOD TRUCK SCENE

PHOTO FREEABQIMAGES.COM

NOB HILL

Nob Hill residents and businesses want to preserve its historic character and unique attributes, enhance its retail viability, and sensitively accommodate the anticipated new residential density as a result of ART. Nob Hill is distinguished by a variety of historic and special buildings that contribute to the character of the neighborhood. With a greater concentration of buildings worthy of retaining, Lower Nob Hill should focus on preservation goals. With more empty parcels and properties likely to develop, Upper Nob Hill should focus on redevelopment goals.

- + Residents want to preserve the character of Nob Hill, protecting historic and contributing structures from tear-downs.
- + Central and Girard should serve as a gateway to Nob Hill, active with people and reflecting community character.
- + Nob Hill's street presence along Central Avenue is inconsistent, small infill buildings along currently empty street frontages should be encouraged.

INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT

The International District is rich and diverse in culture. Yet these aspects are not fully expressed in the urban structure and form. The EXPO New Mexico site is a significantly underutilized asset that currently separates rather than connects the various neighborhoods. There are no clear neighborhood centers, despite the popularity of Talin Market.

- + Residents aspire to have a sense of place, a strong center, and meaningful locations for community events.
- + Residents feel strongly about the EXPO New Mexico site and have expressed opposition to its large-scale redevelopment and have a vision for the site as the City's "Central Park."
- + Residents support the redevelopment of Central, Louisiana, San Pedro, and Lomas to mixed use, supporting surrounding communities.