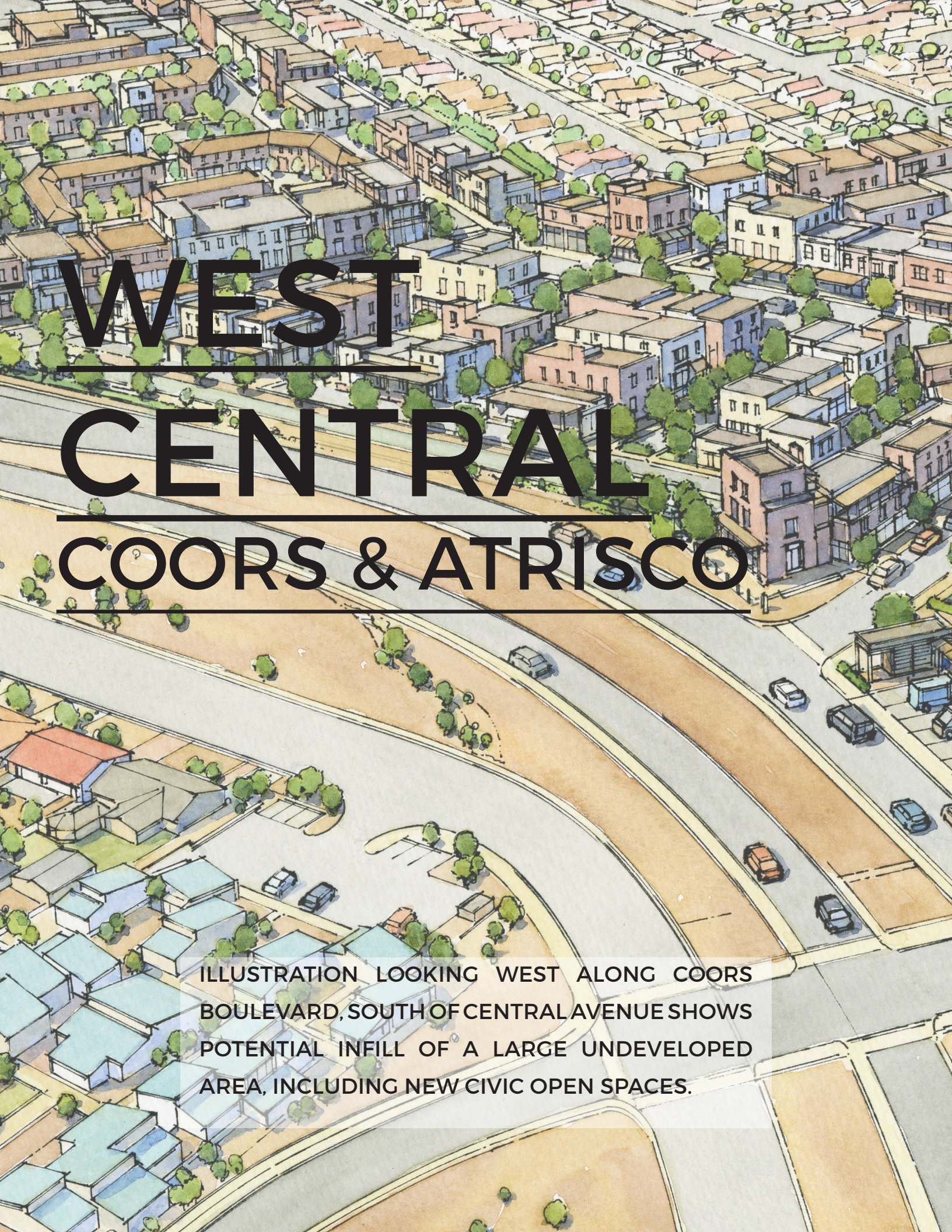




WEST CENTRAL COORS & ATRISCO

ILLUSTRATION LOOKING WEST ALONG COORS
BOULEVARD, SOUTH OF CENTRAL AVENUE SHOWS
POTENTIAL INFILL OF A LARGE UNDEVELOPED
AREA, INCLUDING NEW CIVIC OPEN SPACES.





RIO GRANDE

PHOTO FREEABQIMAGES.COM

WEST CENTRAL SUMMARY

West Central generally progresses from more informally developed neighborhoods towards the Rio Grande to conventional suburban development west of Coors Boulevard. The area is rich in culture but the physical structure of place does not reflect this. There are no neighborhood centers and little neighborhood structure. Though it requires substantial work, West Central deserves more focused study. Implementing the recommendations from this effort alone requires commitment and coordination between the City and the community.

COORS BOULEVARD STATION AREA

Coors Boulevard divides the informally planned eastern area from the suburban, segregated-use west area. Around the intersection with Central Avenue sits many acres of vacant and under-utilized land. This land represents an opportunity to re-imagine the heart of West Central. Doing so requires cooperation between the City, institutions, property owners, and the community. Together a grand vision can be realized.

HIGHLIGHTS

- + 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, strong center, and meaningful locations for community events.
- + Residents want to see the City active in West Central and its future.

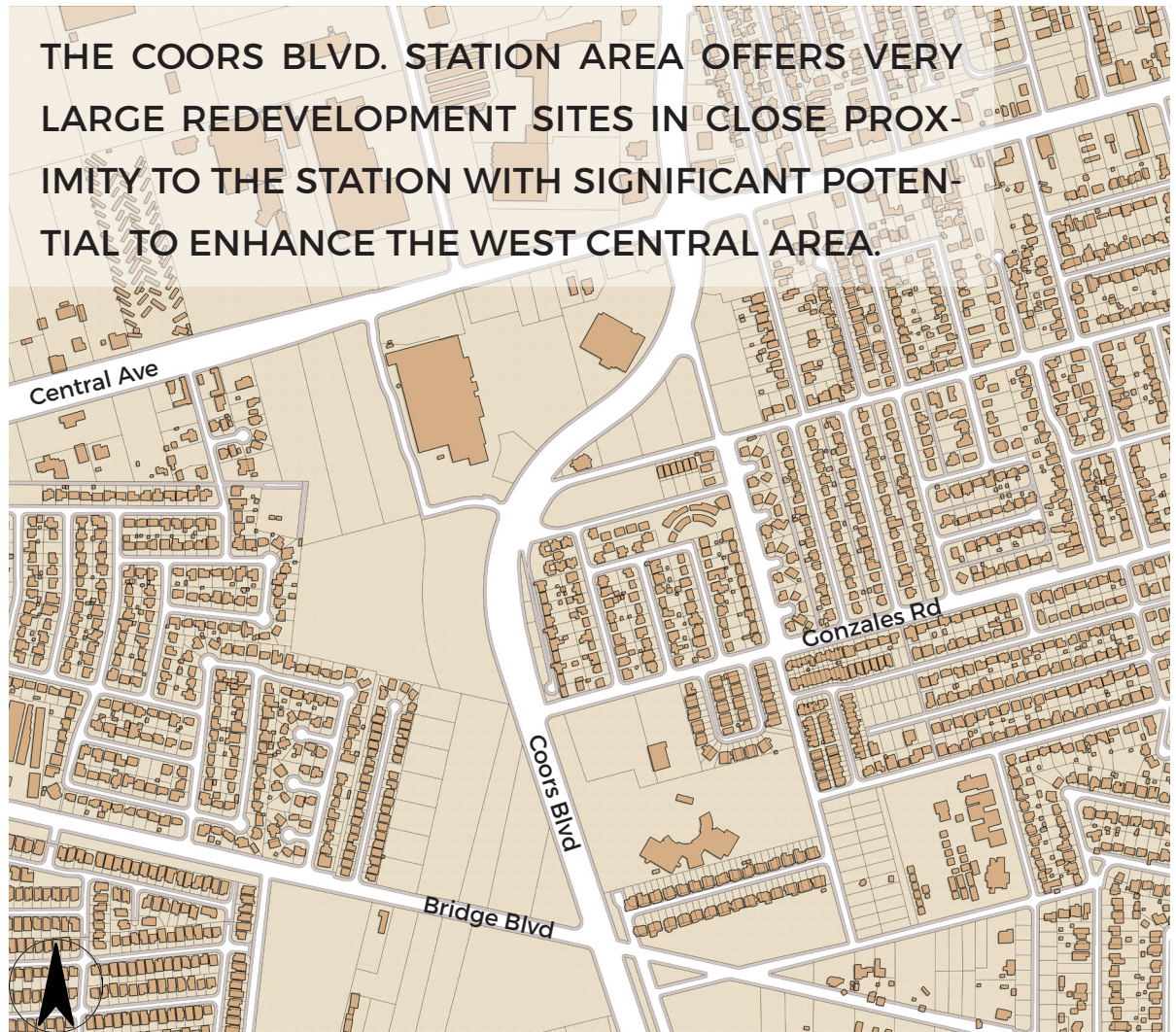
ATRISCO DRIVE STATION AREA

The Atrisco Drive area has a strong cultural history, which lacks a space for expression and gathering. It also serves as a gateway to the Rio Grande, with its history and system of trails and parks. A gateway is needed to signify the neighborhood and place in the City. The neighborhoods also need a series of cultural and activity centers along Central Avenue in the traditional New Mexican form of plazas, integrating community scaled businesses with places of cultural expression.

HIGHLIGHTS

- + The area wants 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.

THE COORS BLVD. STATION AREA OFFERS VERY LARGE REDEVELOPMENT SITES IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE STATION WITH SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL TO ENHANCE THE WEST CENTRAL AREA.

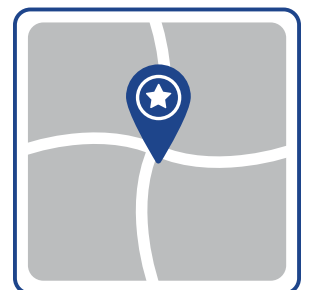


■ W.1 Coors Station Existing Conditions

STATION AREA TYPE

The Coors Station area is a perfect example of a Suburban Town Center Station. These stations are usually located at a major intersection of large arterial roads, surrounded by land uses such as shopping centers and subdivisions. This station area matches these criteria and includes significant undeveloped land as well.

Local studies affirm suburban stations offer the greatest potential return on the investment along the transit corridor. This is due to their assets of large areas of underdeveloped or undeveloped land. The Coors Station area illustrative plan demonstrates this potential transformation of underdeveloped and undeveloped land into a significant asset to the surrounding community as well as to the City.





■ W.2 Coors Station Illustrative Plan

DESTINATIONS

EMPLOYMENT

The Coors Station area is anchored by the Verizon Call Center at Central Avenue and Coors Boulevard, which is anticipated to expand in the future. To the north of Central Avenue, a number of business and industrial parks house logistics operations.

RETAIL

The station area includes two large grocery anchors, Smith's to the north of Central and Albertsons to the south. Smith's is surrounded by an active suburban retail center, the only one of its size along West Central.

SUBURBAN PATTERN

Due to the suburban development pattern in this station area, few destinations are walkable from the station, and fewer from surrounding neighborhoods. To the east of Coors Boulevard, the neighborhoods are generally connected but lack meaningful destinations or civic infrastructure. To the west of Coors Boulevard, neighborhoods are increasingly disconnected from each other by a branching pattern of streets that make access to any destination automobile-dependent.

STATION AREA STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

CULTURAL

The area generally lacks civic open spaces and institutions in close proximity to Central Avenue, with the exception of Legacy Church, which is a very large congregation located near the Coors Boulevard station.

The Alamosa Community Center and Public Library is located along Coors Boulevard a little over one-half mile from the Coors Boulevard station. However, this is not a walkable destination from transit.

LEGACY CHURCH PHOTO LELAND GRAY ARCHITECTS



ALAMOSA COMMUNITY CENTER
PHOTO KELLS AND CRAIG ARCHITECTS





TRANSPORTATION

THE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK ALONG WEST CENTRAL IS BISECTED BY COORS BOULEVARD. COORS IS A CLEAR CHANGE IN DEVELOPMENT PATTERN FROM A GRID TO SUBURBAN.

TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS

The transportation network along West Central is bisected by Coors Boulevard. To the east of Coors, the predominant development pattern is informal and incremental. To the west of Coors, the predominant pattern is of segregated suburban development pods, following a strict system of branching roadways. Neither system forms a predictable structure. Few streets continue for long distances, rather the system is designed to push traffic to the larger arterials like Coors and Central. This results in relatively lightly travelled local roads where houses are located and highly travelled arterials with congested intersections. Speeds along both types tends to be high due to the nature of the system, which is not conducive to pedestrians and cyclists. The topography also poses challenges, limiting many potential street connections to the east. The largely underdeveloped industrial and business parks north of Central are automobile-oriented. The transportation networks in the station area lead to a lack of potential walkability. The station area's potential lies primarily in the undeveloped and underdeveloped parcels along or near Central Avenue.



Little neighborhood structure exists west of Coors Boulevard. Central Avenue can be pivotal in providing civic and cultural space to strengthen neighborhoods.

NEIGHBORHOODS

There is little neighborhood structure surrounding Coors Boulevard. Largely developed in the latter part of the 20th Century, the urban fabric west of Coors Boulevard is a suburban matrix of arterial roadways with shopping centers surrounded by housing subdivisions. Civic facilities are often not visibly located and there are no clear centers to the community. Although there are some attached and multi-family housing clusters, most of the residential buildings in the area consists of detached single-family houses. The scale is predominantly single story.

given the street structure. This area has the opportunity to form neighborhood centers along Central, if the street improvements focus on pedestrian and bicycle safety with neighborhood centers and integrated parks or civic institutions.

West of Coors, there is no opportunity to augment neighborhood connections. However, infill development of areas like that south of the Coors ART station has the potential to reduce driving needs and to provide community space and character.

The area east of Coors Boulevard follows a different, more organic pattern of development. This area has a relatively well connected network of streets and blocks. However, this network was not pre-planned and offsets in the network occur. This area does have the opportunity to be enhanced

■ W.4 Coors Station
Aerial Photograph



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS

PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS ALONG CENTRAL

Pedestrian connectivity is a key tenant of improving multi-modal connectivity. One of the main challenges along Central Avenue as ART comes on line will be crossing opportunities for pedestrians, as the center running median limits opportunities to install crosswalks.

For ART station areas, engineering plans were reviewed to identify pedestrian crossings that are planned for installation, and

to identify gaps between crossings that would provide a hindrance for pedestrian connectivity. Short term (0-5 year) and long term (5+ years) recommendations are identified in the map to the right, based on the feasibility of installing a crossing

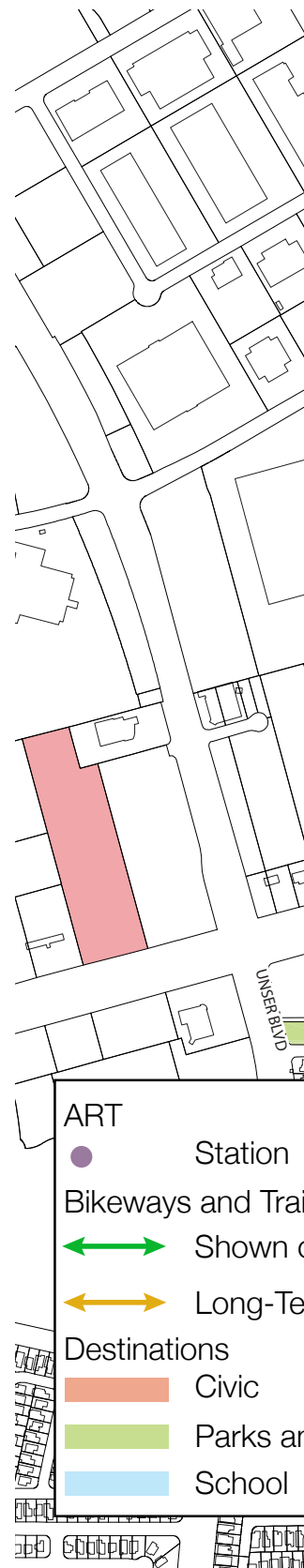
where pedestrian activity would not conflict with ART facilities.

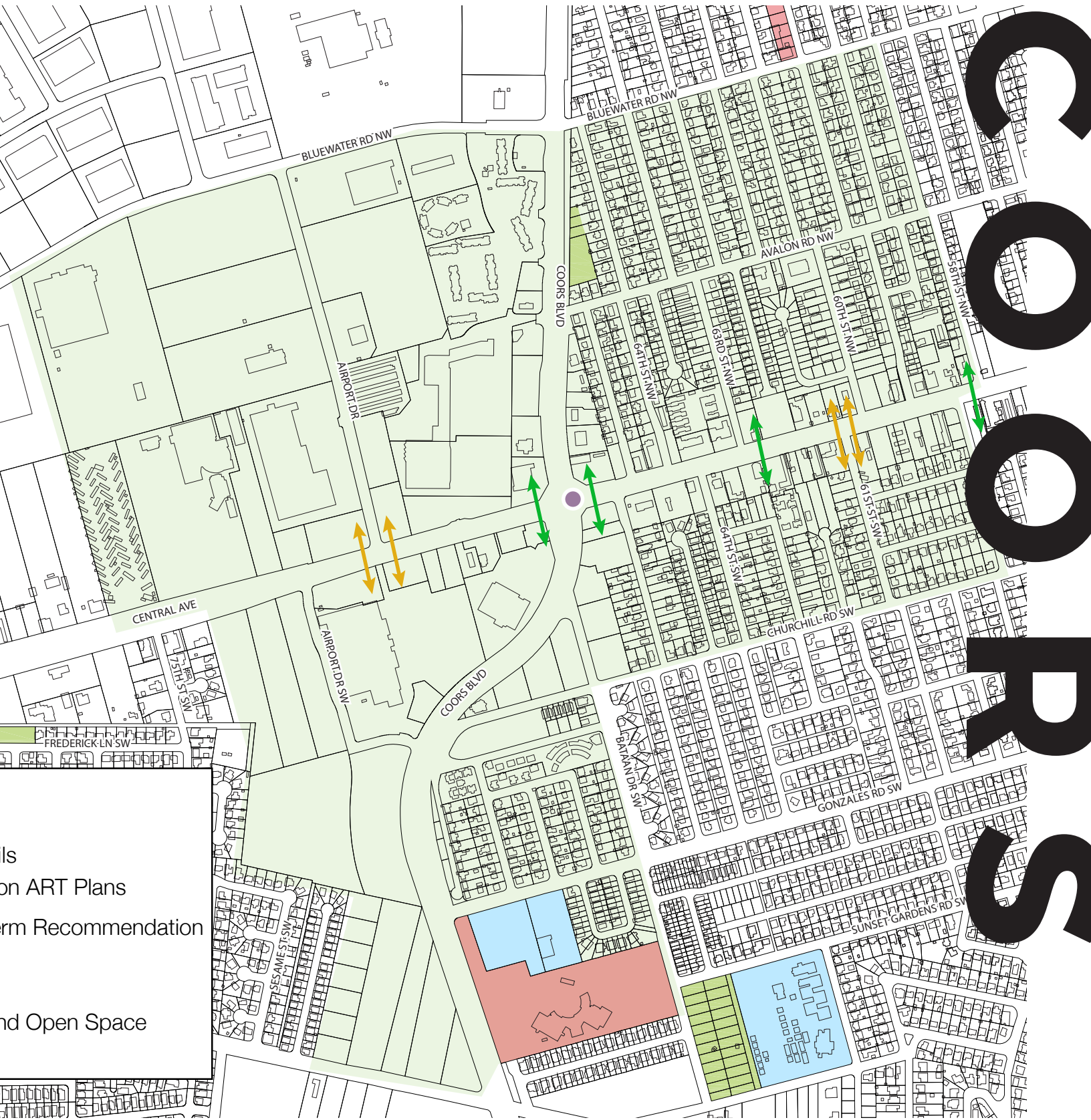
Short-term crossing recommendations are meant to improve conditions in areas that already exhibit characteristics that would foster high pedestrian activity, while long-term recommendations are meant to be implemented as growth and development emerges along the ART corridor.

COORS

East of 63rd Street, the next planned pedestrian crossing is over a quarter mile away at 59th Street. Due to the suburban character of the Coors district, a long-term recommendation is made for a crosswalk at 61st Street to make crossing opportunities more accessible. Crosswalks are also recommended just east of Airport Drive, under the assumption that there will be increased development that brings a more walkable context to the community as seen in the proposed development for the district.

PEDESTRIAN
CONNECTIVITY
IS A KEY TENANT
OF IMPROVING
MULTI-MODAL
CONNECTIVITY



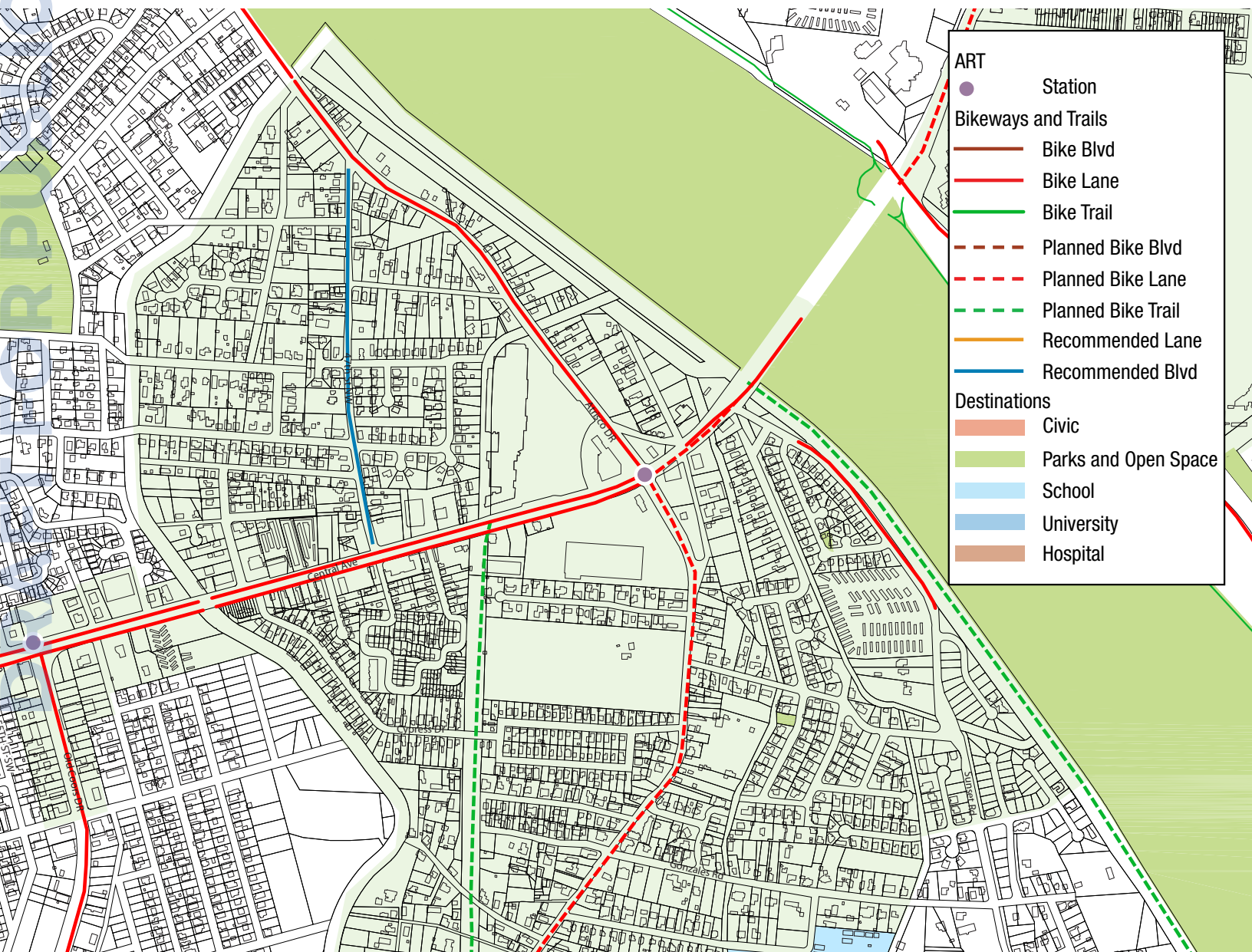


W.5 Coors Station Pedestrian Improvements

ATRISCO TRANSPORTATION

As with the Coors station area, recommendations for additional crosswalks are for long-term implementation, contingent on future development that would bring a more walkable context to the community. The proposed crosswalks addresses a 1,000 foot gap in the pedestrian network. The design of the median running ART lane prevents additional crosswalks in the western end of the area.

W.6 Atrisco Bicycle Network





■ W.7 Atrisco Pedestrian Improvements

STATION PARKING ASSESSMENT

The Coors station area is largely suburban residential in nature without priced on-street parking or public off-street parking facilities. Commercial uses to the west of Coors Boulevard feature large off-street parking lots. On-street parking does not exist along Central Avenue in this area.

The Atrisco station area is characterized by suburban style retail development with free

and ample off-street parking. Surrounding residential neighborhoods are of low density with unregulated on-street parking. Neither on-street parking nor public off-street parking facilities exist along Central Avenue in this area. Compared to other areas of the city, most residential streets in this area appear to meet parking demand through private driveways.

Parking concerns in Coors/Atrisco related to TOD will likely be limited to residential spillover. Potential parking management strategies for the area include the following:

- Updated Residential Parking Permit (RPP) Program



ROUTE 66 SIGN CROSSING CENTRAL AVENUE

PHOTO TRAILERGYPSIES.COM

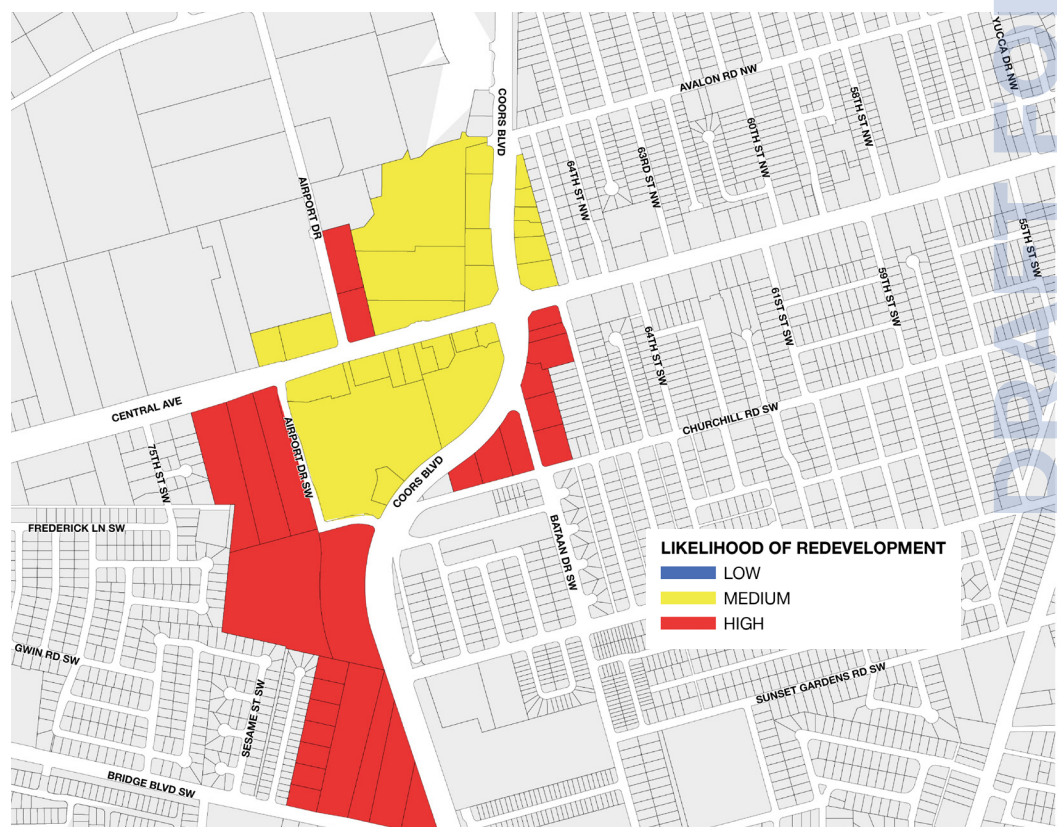
OPPORTUNITIES



The West Central Avenue neighborhoods are in need of physical manifestations of their community's history, cultural identity, and social bonds – an identifiable sense of place.

The Coors station area presents a unique opportunity to create spaces for community.

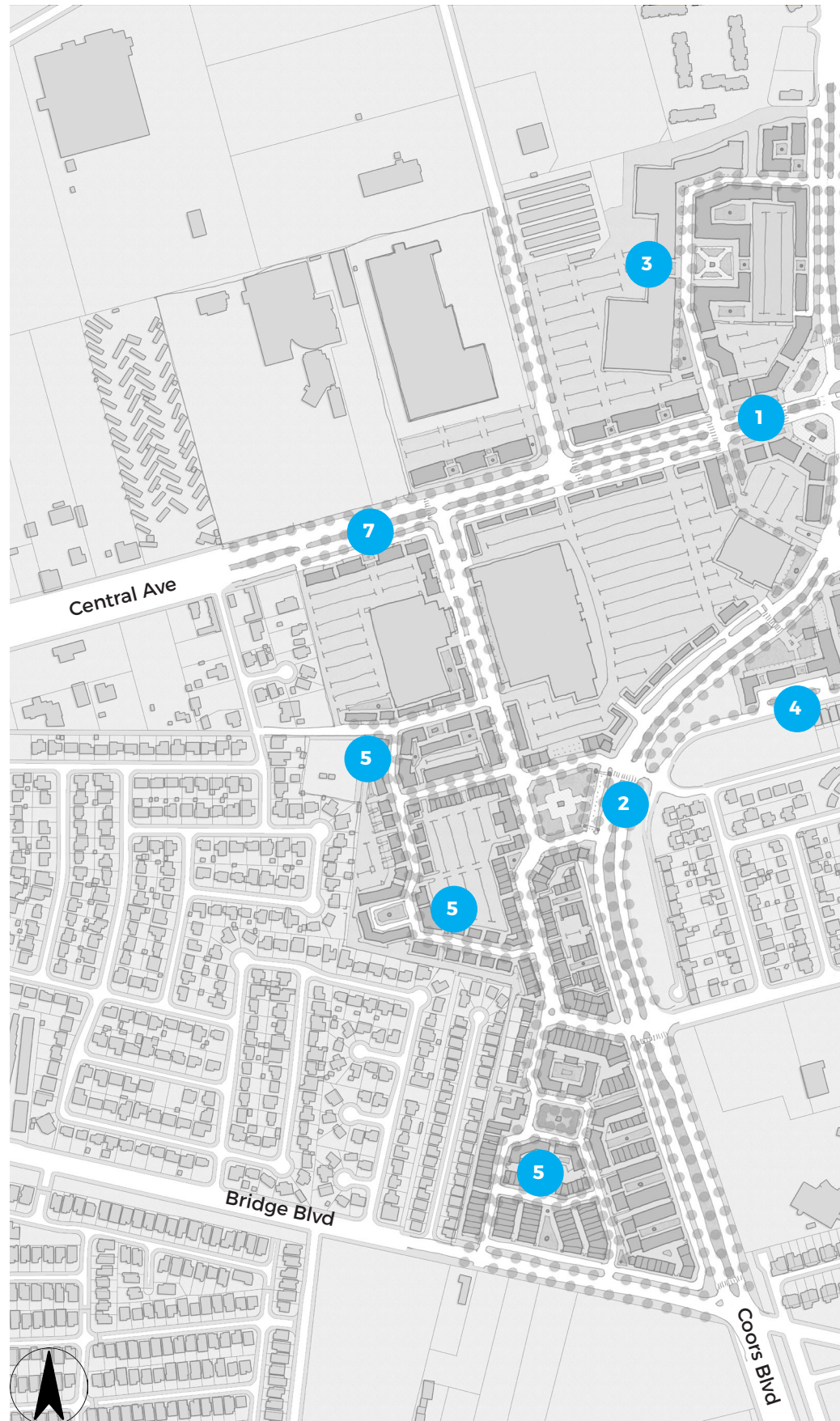
The intersection of Coors and Central occupies a key geographic location along ART, as it offers large undeveloped empty lots and underdeveloped parking lots. The Likelihood



of Redevelopment diagram identifies large areas of high and moderate development pressure in close proximity to the ART station. Unique to the ART corridor, these redevelopment sites present the opportunity to imagine and direct significant change. A new town center for the West Central neighborhoods is a vision for large scale change. This vision includes new residential and commercial development, shaped by civic squares and plazas to enhance community identity.

Current market studies show limited demand for new retail uses, however the community has an interest in additional retail and services. In order to supply this demand, a significant increase in housing is necessary. Thinking big allows for the creation of meaningful places that can express the community's character. This will not occur as the result of small development moves.

As prior studies for ART suggest, suburban station areas have the greatest potential for realizing returns on ART investment. Doing so is not always simple, however. Because the City owns a significant amount of land near the intersection, it can lead the redevelopment process. A strong first phase can prove demand and establish vision so the adjacent privately owned parcels follow suit. The City should work closely with the community to create a proactive vision for the larger town center, and actively pursue its realization.

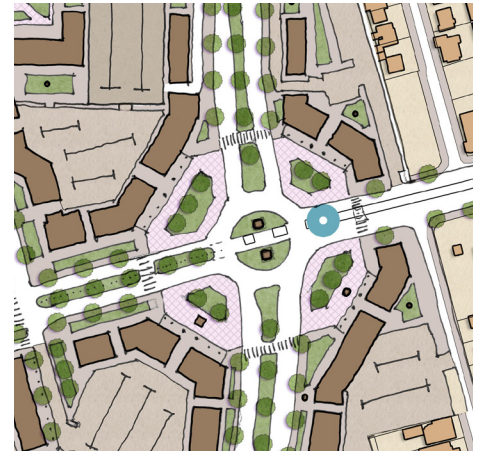


KEY ELEMENTS

1

URBAN PLAZA AT THE INTERSECTION OF COORS AND CENTRAL

A plaza framed by retail and commercial buildings that define a focal point: a green roundabout through which the ART bus way traverses, with gateway sculptures and neon signage celebrating the historic and iconic Route 66 trajectory along Central Avenue. At the four corners, office buildings define small plazas with ground floor shops and restaurants that occupy a variety of portals. These would be the tallest mixed-use structures in the area.



2

A LARGE PUBLIC SQUARE EVOKING PLAZA VIEJA

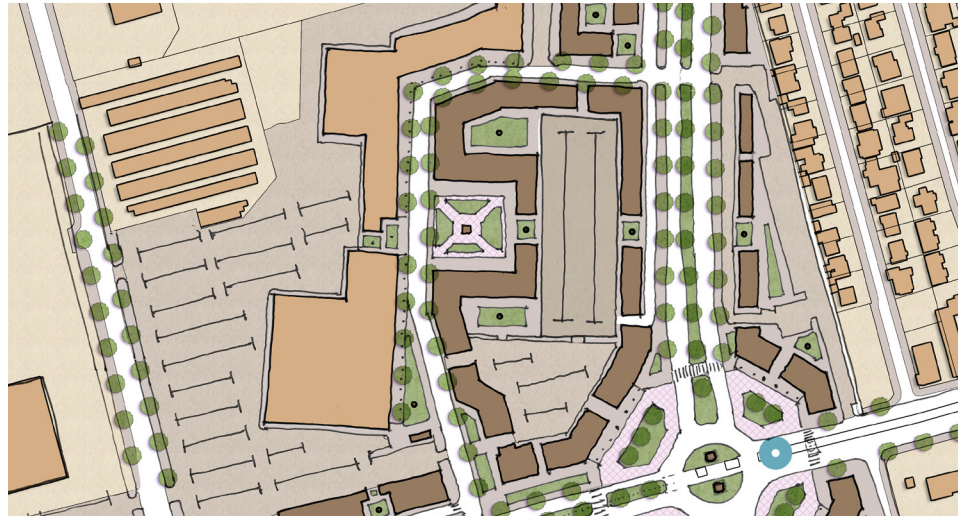
A large plaza along Coors, south of Central, is based on Plaza Vieja in Old Town. This plaza is a focal center for community culture. It serves as a formal gathering place for festivals, farmers markets, and other events. It celebrates the traditions and the identity of West Central. Fronting the plaza could be a community resource center with day care and other services along with live-work units and small retail spaces for local business.



Gonzales Rd

3 SHOPPING CENTER RETROFIT AND PARK & RIDE

The shopping center at the northwest corner of Coors and Central opens with its parking lot towards the intersection. This large parking area is a redevelopment opportunity that could add housing and other uses to intensify the center. A large parking structure would serve the park-and-ride needs of the surrounding area and allow for the redevelopment of the shopping center site. Park-and-ride areas are necessary in suburban contexts where walking to ART is not practical. The site is advantageous as the shopping center retrofit that would not otherwise merit the cost of structured parking.



4 WEST ALBUQUERQUE MUNICIPAL COMPLEX

An ABQ-West municipal complex could be sited to be very visible just south of Central. The complex would affirm to the community that the City is interested in and committed to local West Central issues and concerns, especially public safety. The proposed complex might include a police substation, firehouse, and community services, coordinated with the existing program at the Alamosa Community Center.

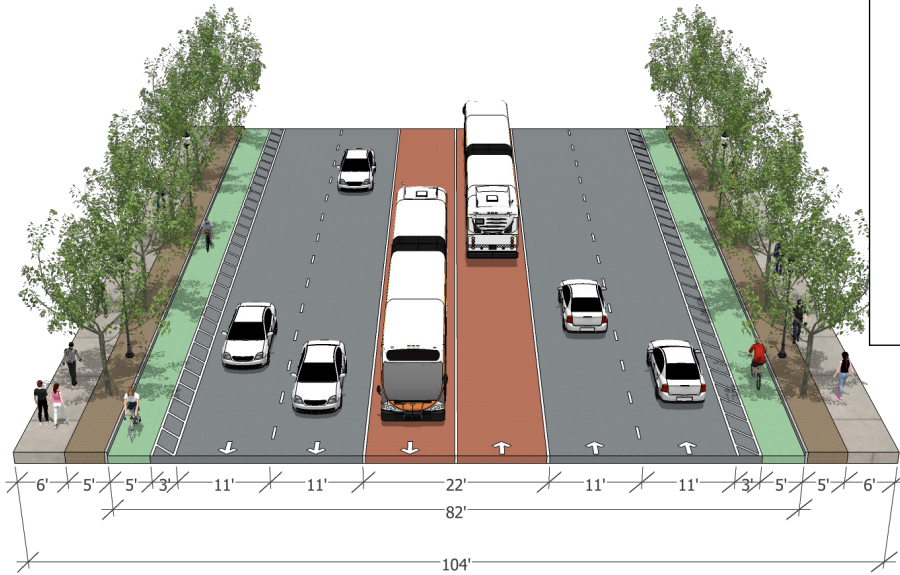


5 SPACES AND BUILDINGS EXPRESS COMMUNITY IDENTITY

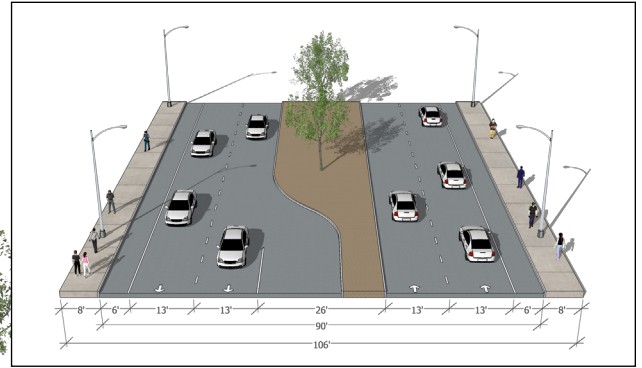
New residential development should be provided in the form of village-like neighborhoods centered around small public plazas and greens. The goal of this design approach is to make sure that infill developments add shared public spaces, underscoring a sense of community. Community buildings are honored with key locations at plazas and greens, presenting opportunities to express community identity.

A mix of building types should be included: apartment courts, townhouses, and courtyard houses that have historic, local traditions, and broaden the residential options in West Central. The architecture should be responsive to the Albuquerque climate and history, with details such as deep portales for both shade and character.





■ W.10 Central Streetscape East of Coors



6 MAKING CENTRAL COMFORTABLE FOR WALKING AND CYCLING

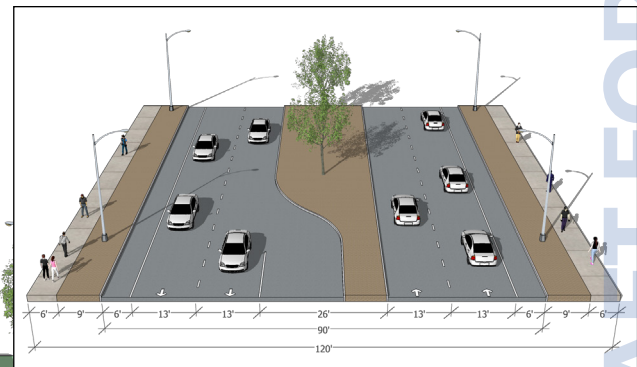
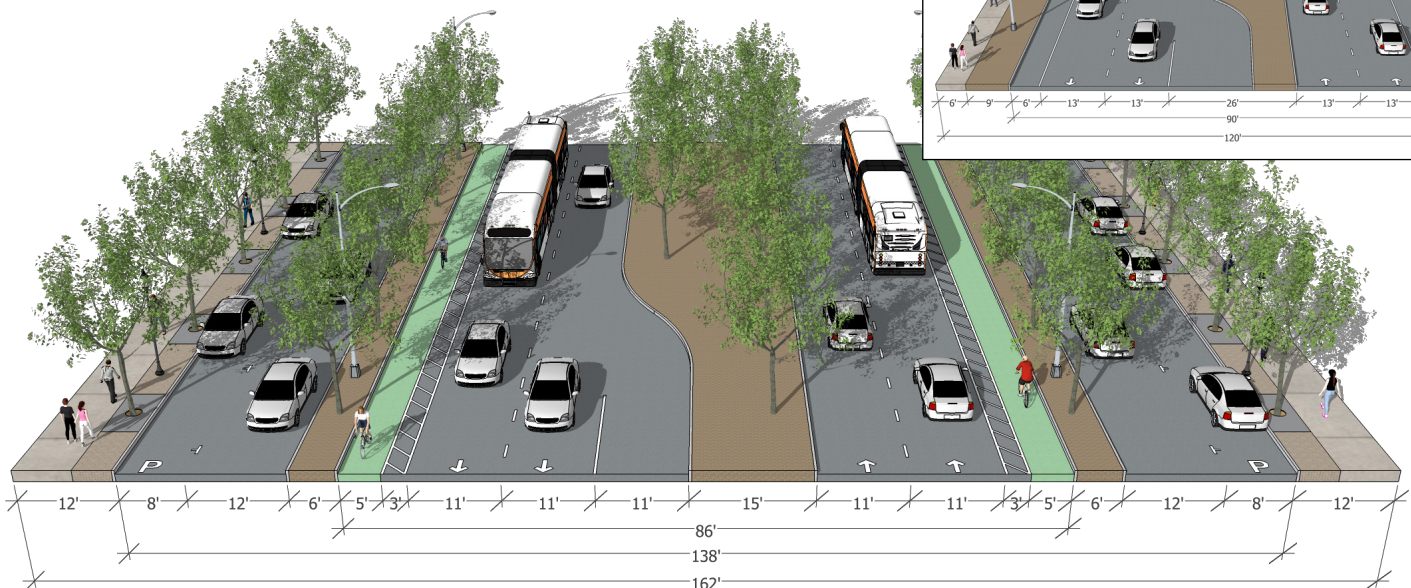
The existing design of Central, east of Coors, is convenient for cars but dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians. With the ART redevelopment there is an opportunity to provide safer spaces for cyclists and provide shading and lighting to pedestrians.

7 CALMING CENTRAL WEST OF COORS

Along with the large redevelopment sites west of Coors, bold thinking can be applied to the design of Central Avenue. As Central proceeds west, the adjacent land uses become more suburban, meaning that there are few buildings near the street and fewer streets are permitted to connect with Central. The extra space available allows Central to become a multi-way boulevard.

Where parking lots line Central, small slip lanes may be introduced which provide space for slower traffic and on-street parking, without interrupting the longer-distance and higher speed through lanes in the center. Slip lanes also allow for more street connections from adjacent land uses without directly impacting the through lanes in the center.

■ W.11 Central Streetscape West of Coors

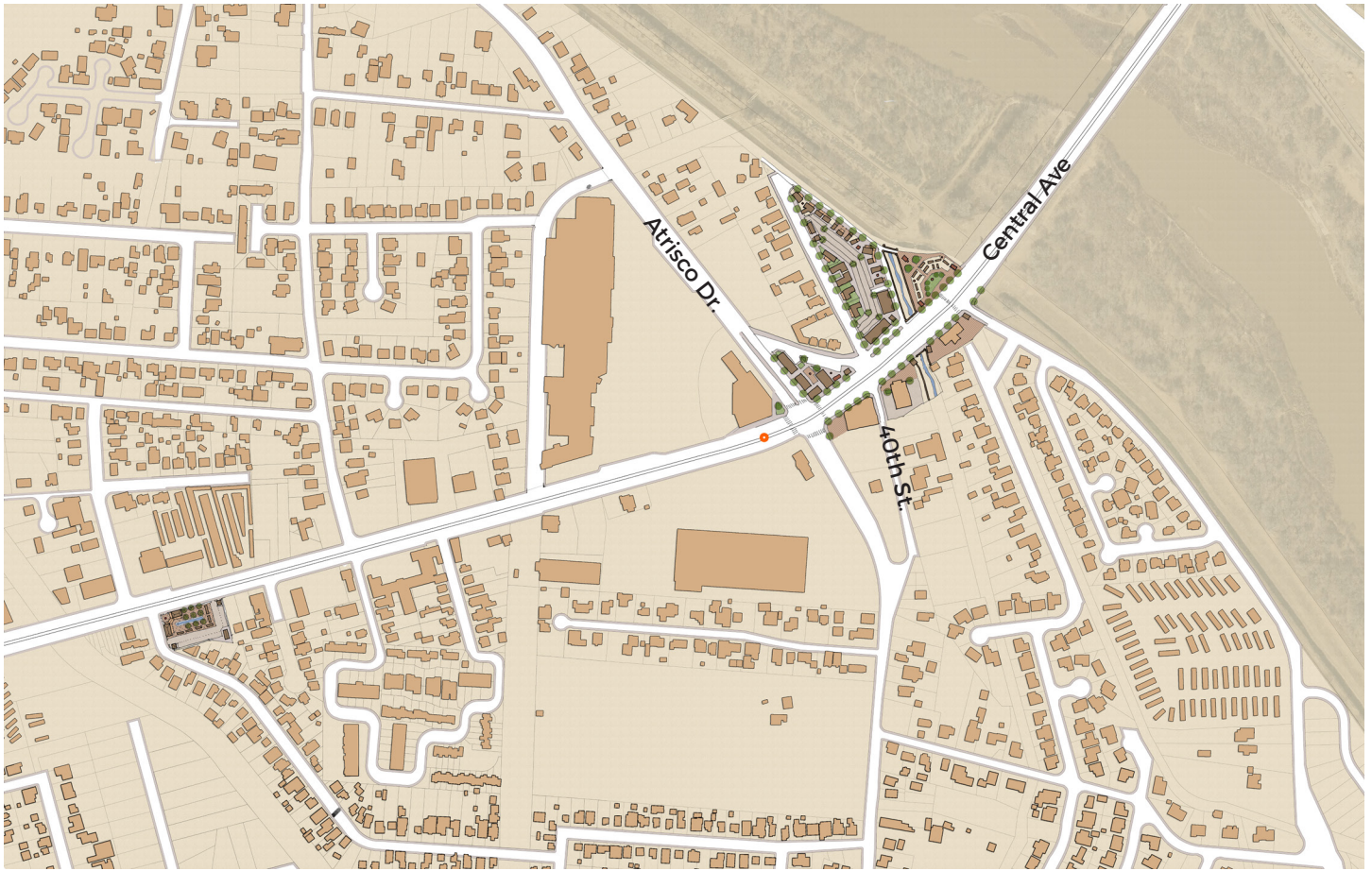


STATION AREA TYPE

The Atrisco / West Mesa station is unique in the City. It has the potential to take on the form of a neighborhood center, however the surrounding neighborhoods are relatively informal in their development, making the prospect more difficult than in the urban neighborhoods east of the river. The relationship between Atrisco and the Rio Grande can be leveraged to make the station area a gateway to West Central. Because of the organic network of streets in proximity to the station, and the smaller parcels along Central Avenue in comparison to those around the Coors station, this transitional station area is considered a neighborhood center.



■ W.12 Atrisco Station Existing Conditions



■ W.13 Atrisco Illustrative Plan, above

DESTINATIONS

Though one of Albuquerque's most historic locations given the history of the Atrisco Land Grant from the Spanish Colonial period, this neighborhood has not been well served by 20th century development. Central Avenue offers no clues to the history that the community treasures. There are no major destinations that help tell the history of Atrisco and, other than some nearby recreational facilities, there are no formal parks or places for public gatherings. The ART station is likely to be neighborhood-serving only.

NEIGHBORHOOD STRUCTURE

There is limited neighborhood structure. The area around Atrisco has been informally developed piece-by-piece in an uncoordinated manner. The result is an organic pattern of streets and uses. There are no clear community centers. Although there are some attached and multi-family housing clusters, most of the residential buildings in the area consist of detached single-family houses. The scale is predominantly single story.

The West Central Avenue neighborhoods are in need of physical manifestations of

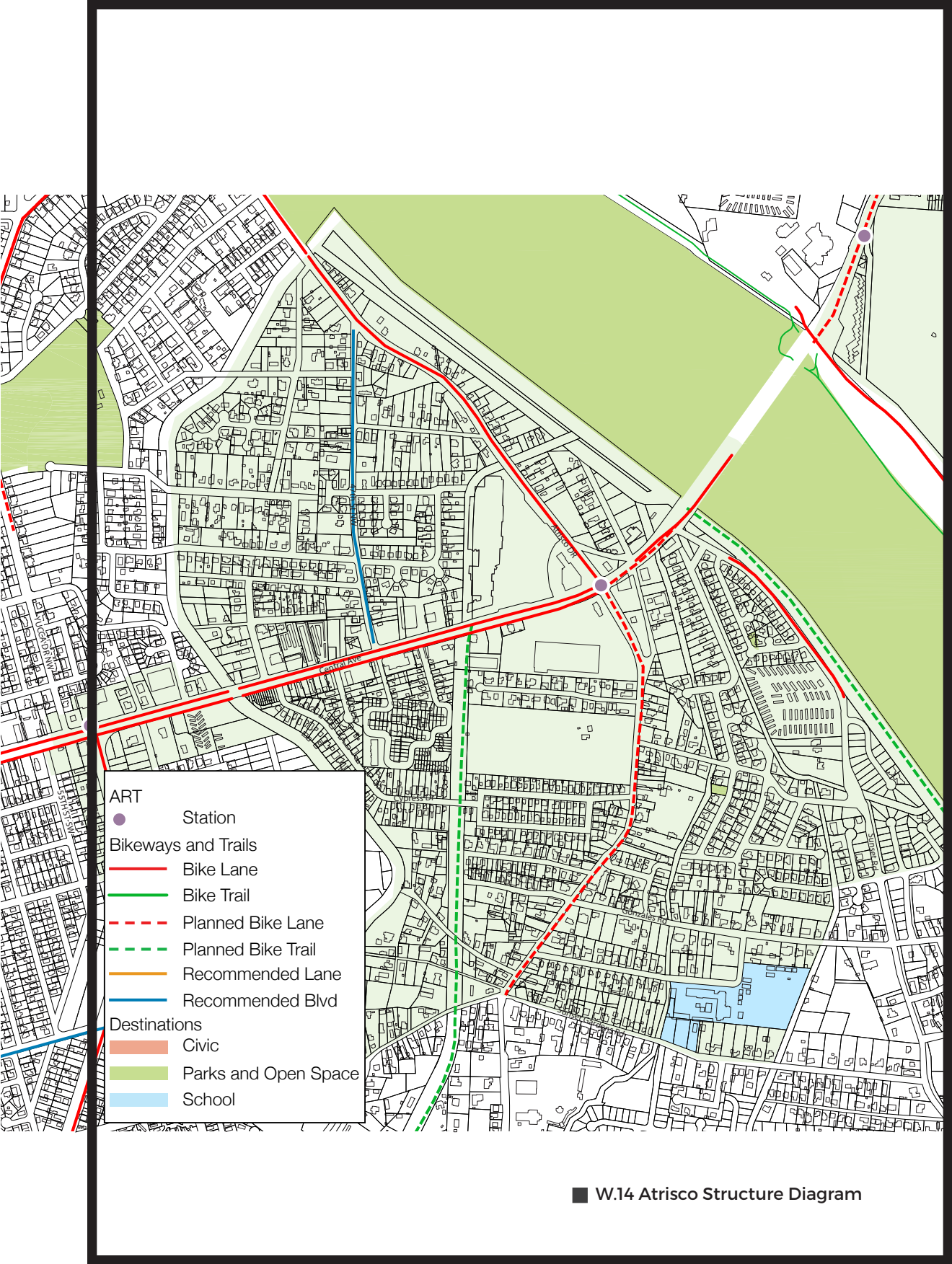
STATION AREA STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

VEHICULAR AND BICYCLE NETWORKS

Atrisco and West Mesa are very underserved areas for walking and bicycling. Lack of connectivity is due to the informal development pattern with blocks at a variety of scales and sequentially developed streets. While most streets have multiple connections, the network created is indirect and difficult to navigate. The topography also poses challenges.

As with the Coors District, recommendations for additional crosswalks are for long-term implementation, contingent on future development that would bring a more walkable context to the community. The proposed crosswalk addresses a 1,000 foot gap in the pedestrian network. The design of the median running bus rapid transit lane prevents additional crosswalks in the western end of the area.

their community's history, cultural identity, and social bonds. The Atrisco Station area occupies a key geographic location adjacent to the Rio Grande Valley State Park in proximity to the Paseo del Bosque Trail, and therefore is the gateway to West Central as one crosses the river from the east.



■ W.14 Atrisco Structure Diagram

OPPORTUNITIES



TINGLEY BEACH

PHOTO BEACHTREASURESANDTREASUREBEACHES.COM

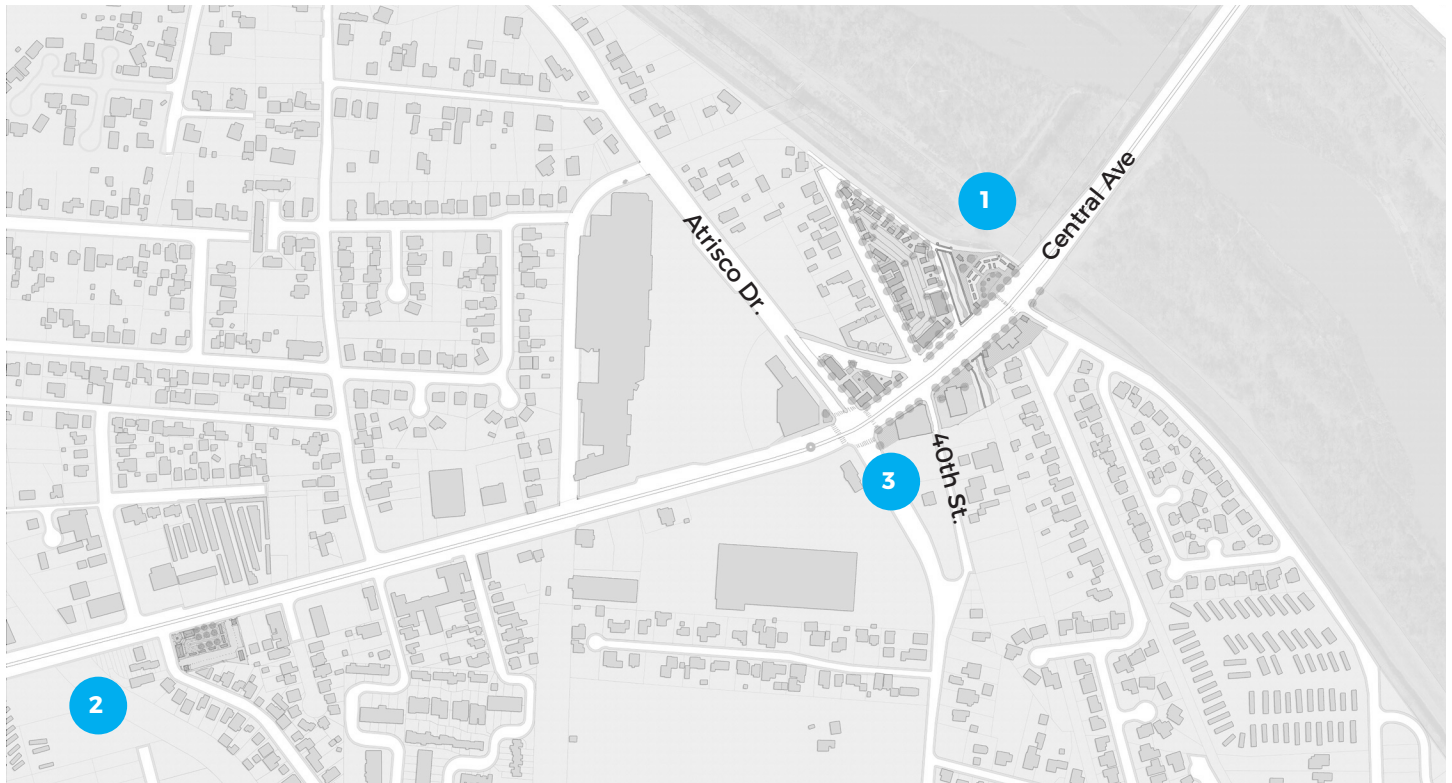
1 THE ATRISCO STATION AREA COULD SERVE AS A GATEWAY TO WEST CENTRAL AND LEVERAGE THE PROXIMITY TO THE RIO GRANDE.

A future Atrisco Gateway Park located at the City-owned MR lots at Central and the Atrisco Lateral Drainway could create an important entrance to the West Mesa community. The new park could serve as a marker to explain the area's settlement history and strong regional connections.

Entering Albuquerque from the west, the idea of a literal gateway has been embraced, but the crossing of the Rio Grande and historic assets of the area are not clearly identified or expressed. In fact, just across the river, the Bio Park Aquarium site has been fenced off from Central Avenue, with no pedestrian entrances provided.

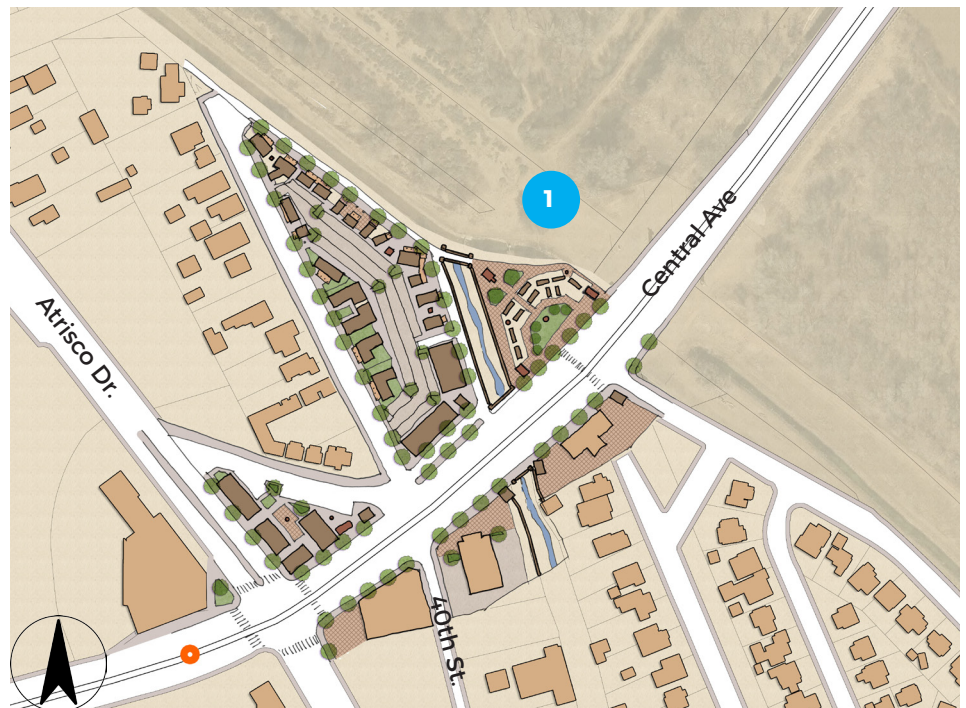
On the west side of the river, there is an opportunity to celebrate this river relationship directly from historic Route 66 with a number of actions:

- + Clean up the MR lots on the north side of Central and Atrisco and program community events and festivals to begin identifying the setting as a gathering place.
- + Design and install gateway elements to mark the area along Central Avenue. This does not have to cross the road like the gateway east of Coors, but should clearly identify the area.
- + Construct a trail head for access to the Rio Grande trails, in coordination with the community space.



■ W.15 Atrisco Annotated Plan, below

- + Improve the facades and public spaces of the buildings south of Central and east of Atrisco.
- + Add small scale incubator retail cottages as a riverside walk including shops and restaurants on the one-acre MR lot, serving as a permanent celebration of Atrisco history and culture.
- + Along 40th Street pilot infill affordable and attainable housing.



■ W.16 Atrisco Gateway Detail Plan

2 THE STATION AREA IS RICH WITH CULTURE, LOOKING FOR PLACES WHERE IT CAN BE EXPRESSED.

While there is not a clear physical expression of the community's rich heritage, the communities are close-knit and culturally rich. The built environment should provide more spaces for cultural expression.

A culinary plaza could be established by cleaning up the vacant lot on the southeast corner of Central at Cypress. The City or the local merchants group could sponsor community food-related events where local eateries and neighborhood food vendors operate out of food trucks or informal stands. Additional retail vendors in the community could sell from kiosks and local musicians be given a place to perform. As the events become more popular, the plaza could acquire a permanent community kitchen and rest room facilities to provide food service incubation.

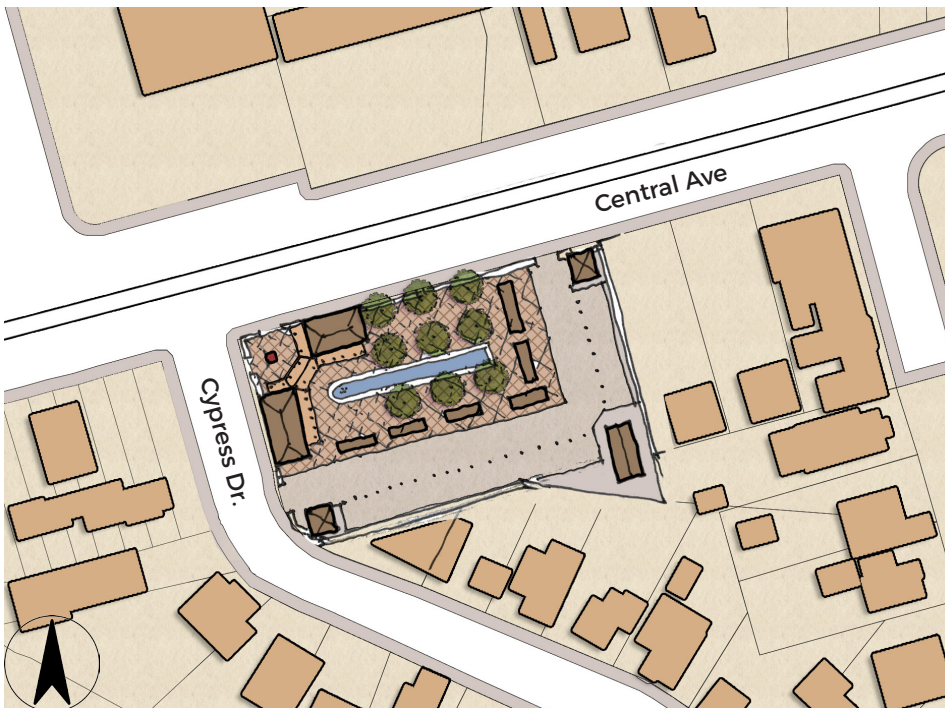
- + The City or community leaders should work with the property owner to secure use of the Cypress lot for community events.
- + Pilot a community event featuring food and music, possibly associated with a holiday.
- + Schedule regular events focused on local culture, vendors and music, marketed city-wide.

3 MOST PARCELS ALONG CENTRAL HAVE LOCALLY-OWNED BUSINESSES WHO MAY BE WILLING TO MAKE INCREMENTAL CHANGES TO THEIR PROPERTIES.

Unlike the state of Central Avenue around Coors, at Atrisco the scale of property ownership and percentage of locally-owned retailers makes incremental, community-driven improvements more likely. Currently most businesses along this portion of the corridor are set back from the street surrounded with surface parking lots, many of which are underutilized. Without significant new demand for retail in the area, redevelopment is unlikely to occur, and when it does it will be incremental. To assist in making the area more vibrant and to help spur interest in infill, community-led action could highlight local culture around existing facilities.

Existing retailers and restaurateurs can be encouraged or assisted to re-pave, landscape, and utilize their parking areas to further activate Central Avenue and their businesses. Smaller incubator retail pop-up liners could be installed on the edges of underutilized parking lots that could screen vehicles and help promote the culture of the Atrisco Station area. Incubator liners could be built inexpensively and provide business startup space for the surrounding community.

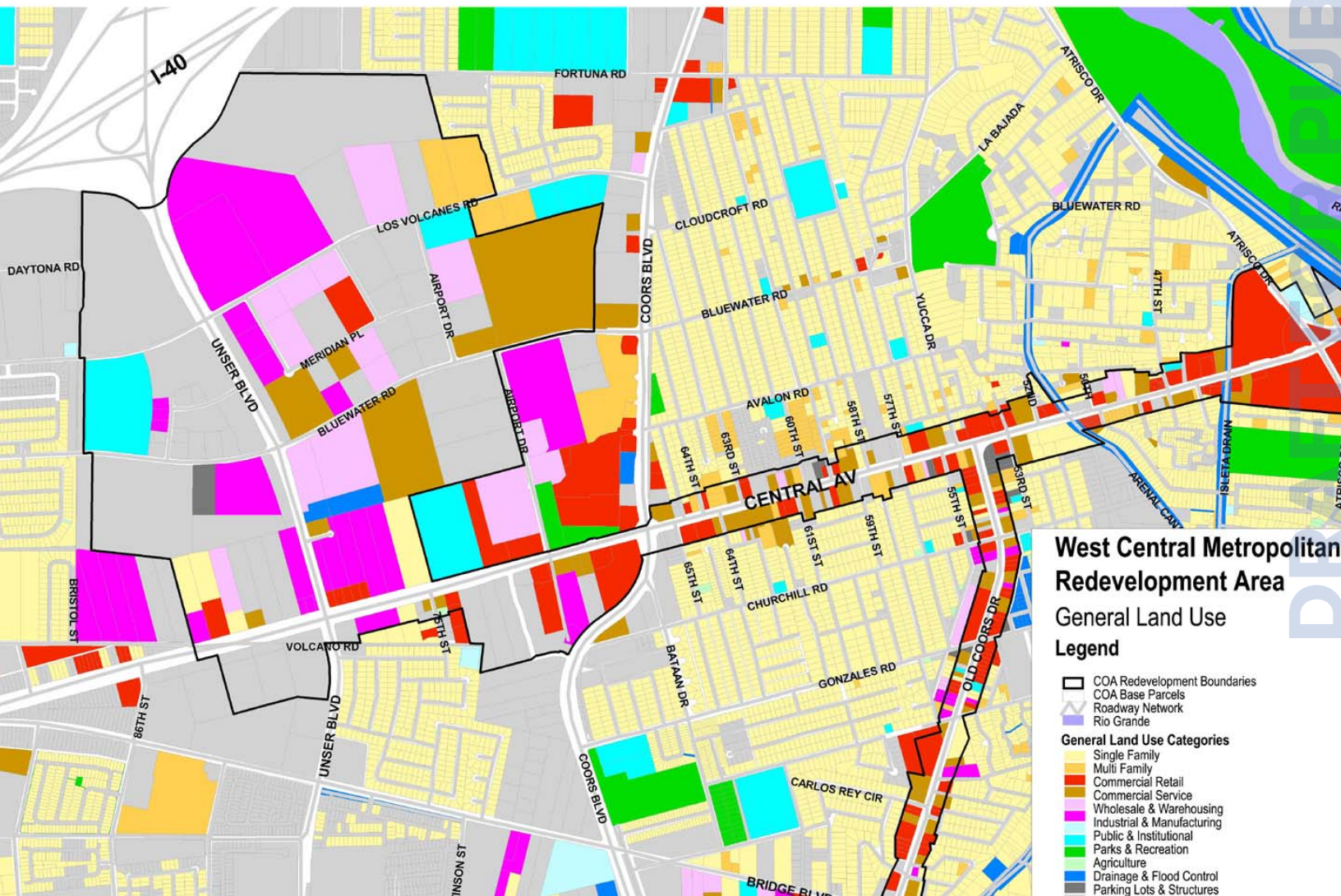
- + Create a grant program to provide Central Avenue frontage, similar to main street facade improvement programs.
- + Promote shared parking and shared outdoor activity areas between properties. This could be encouraged in the grant program by increasing funding for grants that include multiple properties.
- + Develop a West Central activation manual, providing recommended strategies and treatments.



West Central combines informal and suburban growth types, and struggles where incompatible patterns intersect,

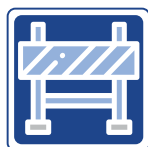
BARRIERS

■ W.16 West Central Existing Land Use (2004)





B.01



20TH CENTURY LAND USE PRACTICES AND COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR ZONING HAVE CAUSED THE PROLIFERATION OF SMALL RETAIL AND AUTOMOBILE-DEPENDENT SITE PLANNING.

Similar to many other cities, Albuquerque zoned the entire Central Avenue corridor for commercial uses along its full length decades ago. The excessive amount of commercial property has resulted in the proliferation of low value retail in buildings that are dependent on automobiles. The current development still follows this older segregated-use planning model. ■



A.01



- + Encourage mixed-use development for this area by incentivizing landowners and developers to think incrementally and increase housing in close proximity to commercial uses.
- + Focus incentives to discrete, limited areas so that active centers are created along Central with distinct identities, rather than a continuous commercial corridor.
- + Do not require commercial uses along Central.



B.02



SMALL-SCALE ENTREPRENEURS HAVE DIFFICULTY FINDING PLACES TO INCUBATE NEW BUSINESSES.

There is limited demand for additional larger-format retail in the area, however, smaller businesses may have an opportunity to thrive. Unfortunately, most existing leasable space is too large for small businesses. ■



A.02



- + Encourage smaller footprint commercial space.
- + Clearly communicate the criteria and restrictions for home-based businesses to the community.
- + Food trucks can be supported by grouping them at the Coors and Cypress plazas and with events at the Atrisco Gateway Park.
- + Encourage micro-mixing of multiple small businesses within a single space, for business incubation, acceleration, and economic gardening.
- + Infill parking lot frontages with small or temporary buildings.



B.03



AUTOMOBILE-DEPENDENT DESIGN DISCOURAGES WALKABILITY AND SMALL BUSINESSES.

Central Avenue west of the Rio Grande is designed primarily for automobiles and is dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists. While sidewalks exist, they are often located next to high-speed travel lanes and interrupted by light poles and other utilities. Bicycling along this portion of Central Avenue is not safely possible. The automobile-dominated pattern of development results in every business having its own parking lot.

Main streets in other parts of the City support multiple small businesses by increasing incidental foot-traffic. When people park once and walk past multiple businesses, exposure to businesses increases. The development pattern and street design are incompatible with the community's culture and character. Without changes to this situation, business viability will remain limited. ■



A.03



- + Encourage small infill buildings on existing parking lots along the edge of Central.
- + Encourage residential infill between centers along Central to increase pedestrian activity.
- + Provide buffered or protected bicycle lanes to allow for bicycle access to businesses and through the area.



B.04



RETURN-ON-INVESTMENT (ROI) IS UNDERESTIMATED IN WEST CENTRAL COMMUNITIES.

Because West Central communities have generally had lower average incomes than other neighborhoods in the City, they have been seen as less effective targets for public investments. This is often exacerbated by lower participation in formal public processes. In many places significant public returns have been seen from investments in under-served communities. However they require a different process of engagement and evaluation than typically applied in other places. ■



A.04



- + Establish a minimum percentage of community investment in West Central out of overall City-wide community investment.
- + Establish a West Central Civic League of community leaders that meets regularly and advises the City on community investments and the effects of investment as seen from their perspectives.