

OLD TOWN

PLAZA VIEJA





PLAZA DON LUIS

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OLD TOWN SUMMARY

Old Town is the historic heart of Albuquerque, with a rich mix of historic buildings, local shops, and cultural institutions. Plaza Vieja is tucked out of the way and currently suffers from lack of visibility from Rio Grande Boulevard and Central Avenue.

OLD TOWN STATION AREA

The Old Town station, which is located a block south of Plaza Vieja, provides opportunities for increased access and visibility. There are key infill opportunities that would provide a formal 'front door' entry to Old Town, connecting the station to the Plaza and formalizing that connection via transit to Downtown, EDo, and the rest of Albuquerque.

HIGHLIGHTS

- + 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.



■ O.1 Old Town Station Area Existing Conditions

STATION AREA TYPE

The Old Town Station Area is outside of the scope of this study, but it is investigated here as time permitted because of its strategic importance as the heart of the city to the connectivity of the bus rapid transit line. The area studied surrounds the Rio Grande Station, providing access to Old Town Plaza, the Tiguex Park cultural cluster, businesses along Central Avenue, and surrounding neighborhoods. The area is a Transitional Station type since there is good urban fabric but the scale is less intense than Downtown. The station area extends north to Mountain Road and south along the edge of the golf course.





■ O.2 Old Town Station Illustrative Plan

DESTINATIONS

The Old Town station area includes a rich collection of Albuquerque's cultural treasures clustered around Tiguex Park, including the Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science, the Planetarium & Astronomy Center, and Explora, the children's museum. Plaza Vieja, Albuquerque's historic downtown, is located to the west of the park, close to the ART station. Nearby to the west is the Bio Park Aquarium and access to the Rio Grande river trails, one station away from the Tiguex Park cluster. Altogether this represents a significant amount of civic infrastructure, and strong destinations for residents and visitors alike.

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STATION AREA STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

BASKET SHOP ON PLAZA VIEJA



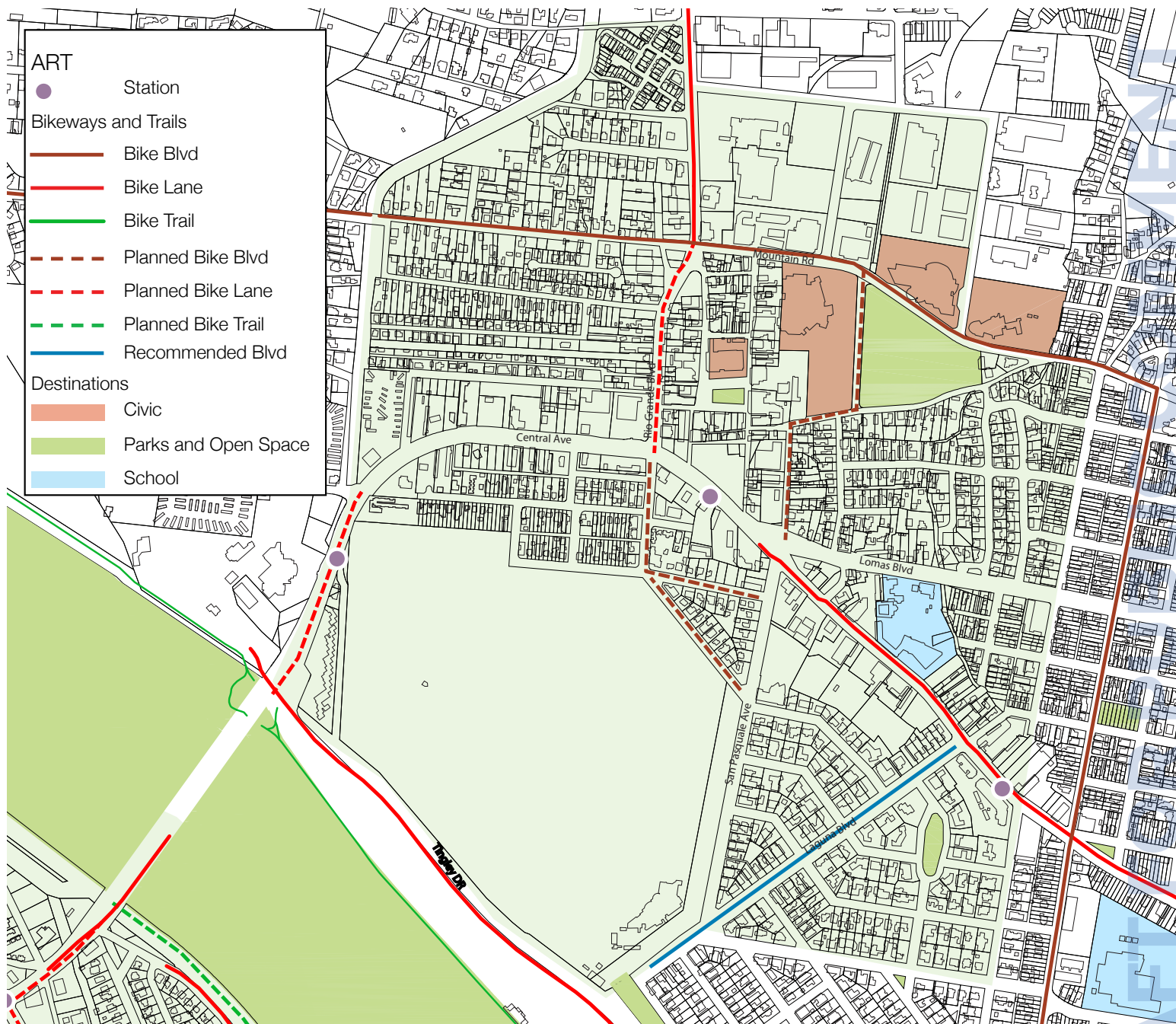
COURTYARD SHOPS TYPICAL OF OLD TOWN



EXPLORA CHILDREN'S MUSEUM



NM MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY & SCIENCE



■ O.3 Old Town Stations Bike Network Diagram

TRANSPORTATION

As a key attraction in Albuquerque, the Old Town station area has a fairly complete pedestrian network, without significant gaps where today's activity is concentrated. Numerous crosswalks across Central Avenue are planned for the eastern end of the station area, which are optimized by this illustrative plan since design of the median bus rapid transit lane prevents additional crosswalks in the western end.

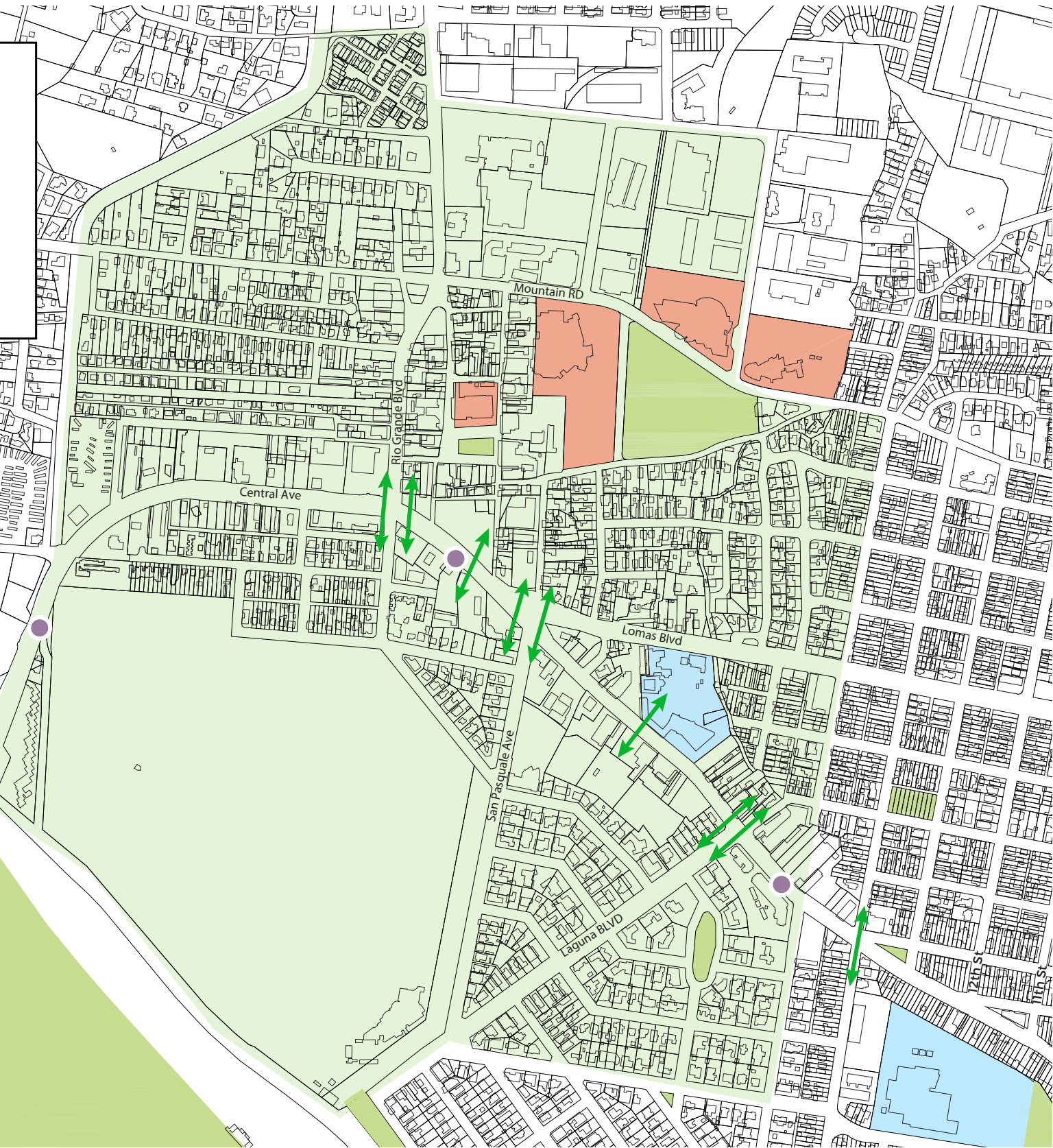
PARKING ASSESSMENT

Old Town is the one segment of the ART project where on-street parking will be reduced. There will be a net loss of 80 on-street parking spaces from San Pasquale Avenue to 10th Street. Public off-street parking near the station area is sited along Central Avenue south of the Old Town Plaza. Country Club Plaza provides an existing example of how shared parking can successfully be implemented at mixed-use sites along the Central Avenue Corridor in this area.

Parking concerns in Old Town and West Downtown related to TOD and ART are the loss of on-street spaces and removal of left in/out movements for businesses along Central Avenue. These potential parking management strategies for the area can help:

- + Adjusted Meter Times
- + Communications & Wayfinding
- + Demand-based Pricing
- + Shared Parking





■ 0.4 Old Town Station Crosswalk Diagram

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT



OLD TOWN SIGNAGE

PHOTO AMBER AVALONA

OPPORTUNITIES



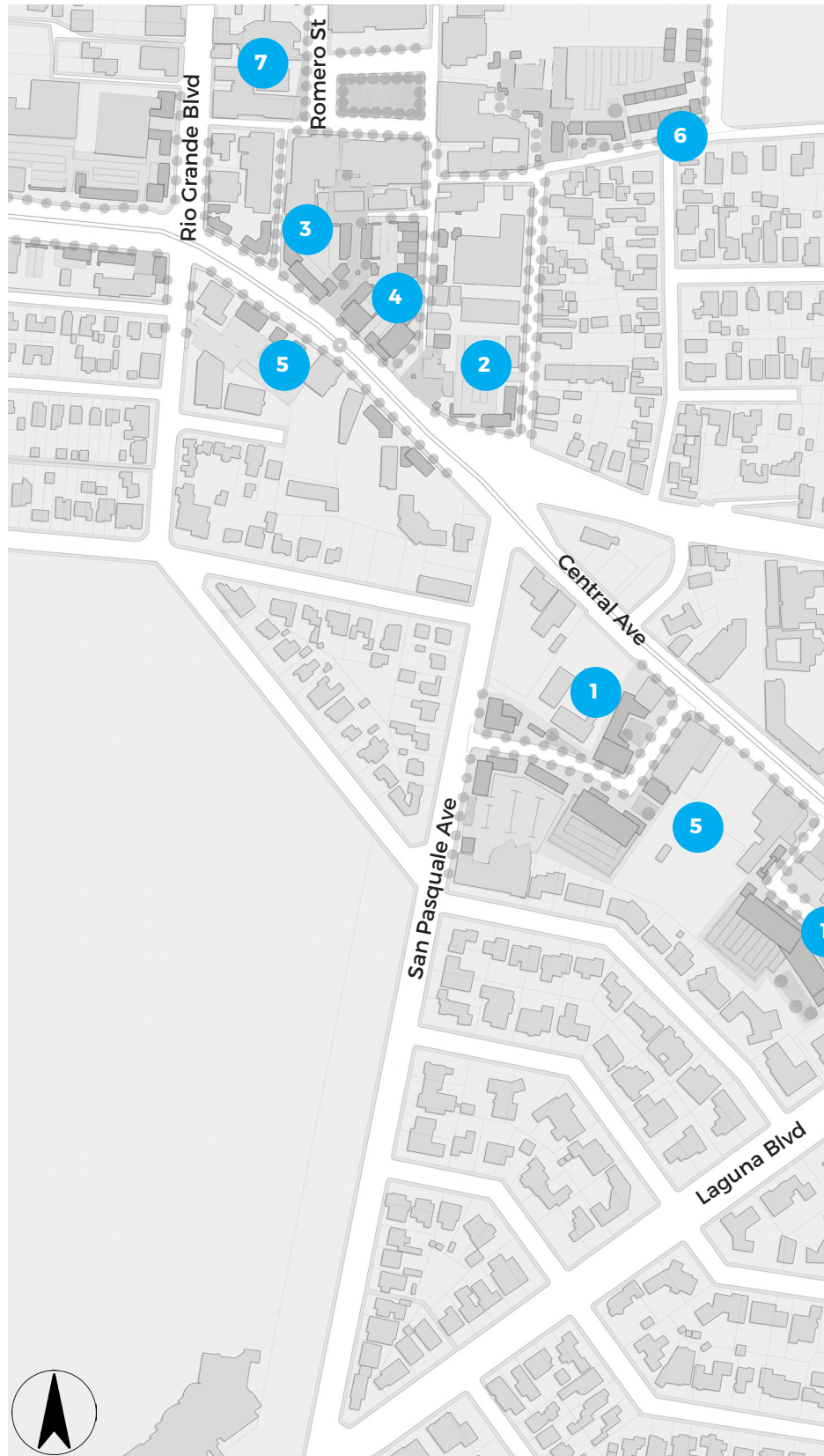
The ART station is located at a large, City-owned surface parking lot that provides parking for Old Town. The City-owned site is a significant development opportunity that can be quickly made available.

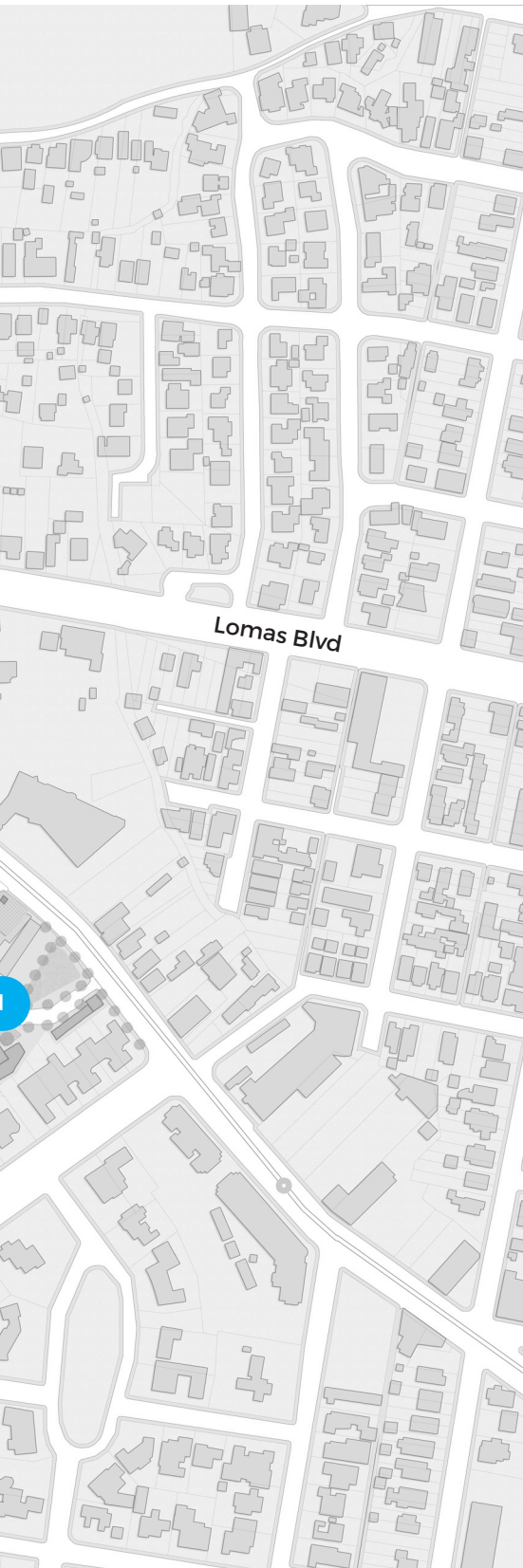
OLD TOWN

Most of the properties across Central Avenue from the parking lot are underdeveloped, providing the opportunity to create a larger district supporting Old Town. A number of properties along Central to the east of the parking lot are in the process of redevelopment. The Rio Grande station has the potential to reinforce Old Town with needed housing and physical connections.

Physical connections to Plaza Vieja are lacking, primarily due to lack of visibility and signage. From Central, Plaza Vieja should have a formal entry, not through a large parking lot that currently renders the plaza invisible from Central. Redevelopment of the parking lot could provide more direct and celebrated connections to the historic heart of Albuquerque.

Because Old Town is very tightly built, strategic parking solutions will be required to support redevelopment around the Rio Grande Station. The existing parking in the City-owned lot will need to be replaced, along with parking for new development. Shared parking techniques would be particularly effective between residential, retail, and tourist parking for Plaza Vieja.





■ 0.5 Old Town Station Annotated Plan

KEY ELEMENTS

- 1 Reduce parking requirements generally to support infill development around Rio Grande Station.
- 2 Permit shared parking between multiple compatible uses, to make more effective use of parking and increase residential density in the station area. Shield surface and structured parking from view with small buildings and walls.
- 3 Offer the City-owned parking lot site for infill development, requiring the developer to provide public parking and increased connections to the Plaza.



- 4 Ceremonially connect to Plaza Vieja from Central Avenue. This should be a direct and visually appealing connection, and could be pedestrian or vehicular. An example would be a shared space street, arcaded buildings on both sides of a street, or other means of reinforcing the entry and providing a visual allusion to the plaza.

The shared street option is illustrated in the plan.



- 5 Collectively brand Old Town along with new developments east of Old Town, refreshing the image.

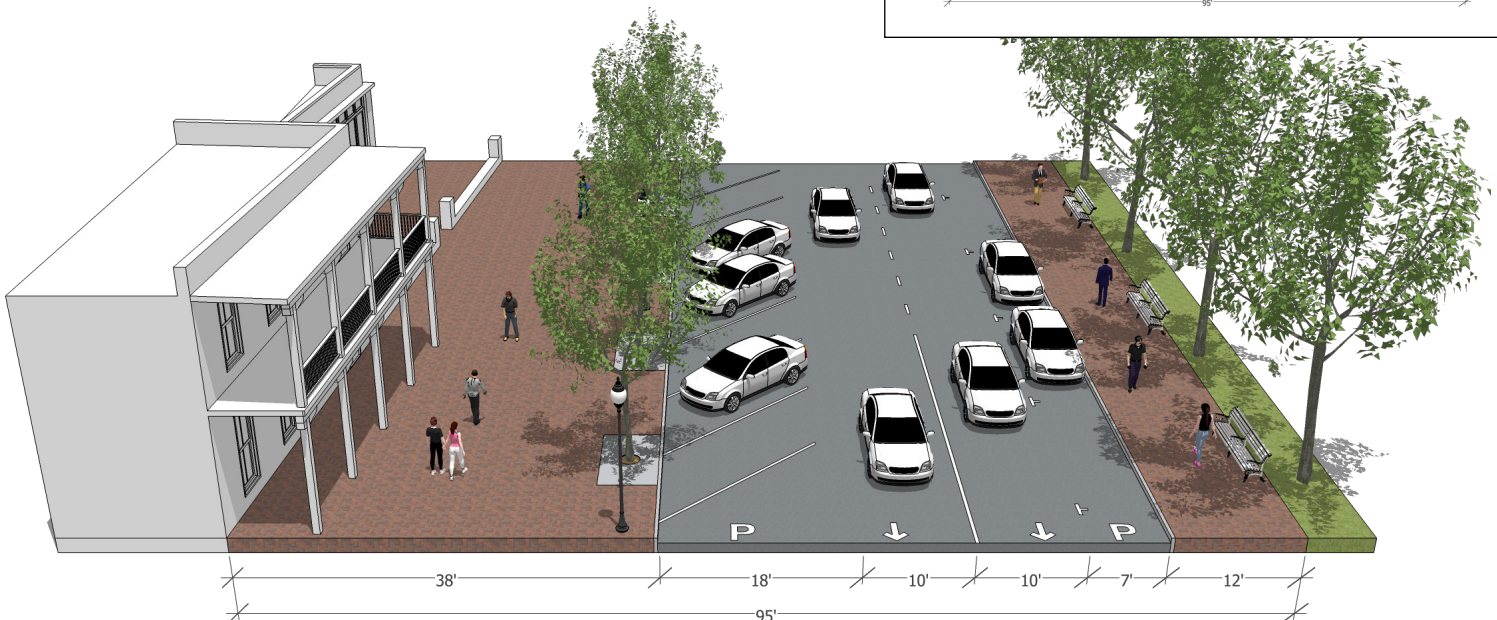
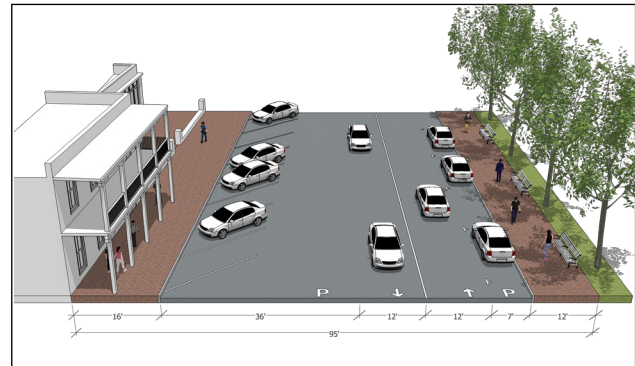


6 Develop the south edge of the parking lot on Old Town Road, east of the Plaza to signal arrival from the cultural center at Tiguex Park. This illustration shows townhouses to the east and a small courtyard mixed use composition augmenting Patio Market.



Old Town is an international attraction because of its historic significance and timeless charm.

7 Reconfigure Romero Street at Old Town Plaza. The current condition allocates too much space to cars and is inconsistent, ranging from 50' to 80'. The east side curb can be extended up to 22 feet, creating space for pedestrians, street trees, street vendors, and events, without sacrificing parking or vehicular movement. This underscores the freshening of the brand of Old Town as a "people place," while protecting the return on investment of one of the City's best amenities.



0.6 Romero Street Proposed Redesign

BARRIERS

Old Town is tucked away, off the beaten path and often by-passed for Downtown and EDo. An overly large amount of surface area is currently committed to the movement and storage of cars surrounding the City's largest concentration of cultural and historic destinations.

■ 0.6 Old Town Vacancies



Action Key

BARRIER



ACTION



BIKEABILITY



DESTINATIONS



RETAIL



B.01



VISIBILITY IS A CHALLENGE FOR OLD TOWN.

Those unfamiliar with the immediate area would have no idea that the charm of Old Town was just a block away from Central Avenue or Rio Grande Boulevard. The disconnection of the Plaza from surrounding major streets also creates difficulties in maintaining successful businesses within Old Town.



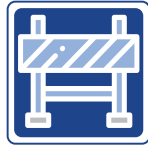
A.01



- + Prioritize connections to the Plaza from routes that surround Old Town, particularly Mountain Road, Old Town Road, and Central Avenue.
- + Develop a loop connecting EDo, Downtown, and Old Town. Support this loop with branding and signage. Consider a tram for the loop.
- + Incentivize cross block pedestrian passages that strengthen connections to the Plaza.
- + Promote redevelopment along Old Town Road and create a secondary, more formal access to the Plaza from the museums and Tiguex Park. This could help revitalize shops around Backstreet Grill and Old Town Olive with informal gathering spaces. The current connection is an alley that could become a charming shared space.
- + Add consistent branding and signage throughout the district.



B.02



THE EXISTING BICYCLE NETWORK IS INCONSISTENT AND DISCONTINUOUS THROUGHOUT THE STATION AREA.

Dedicated facilities often start and stop at locations that are not connected to destinations. Due to the small historic streets in the district, there is not enough space to dedicate facilities for all users. Currently this often results in pedestrian and bicycle space being sacrificed for the ease of automobile movement. ■



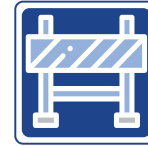
A.02



- + Prioritize bicycle connectivity through Old Town. Doing so may require re-routing bikes to calmer streets that may be used as bike routes.
- + Consider converting some of the narrow historic streets to shared space streets.
- + Add bicycle facilities along Mountain, Central, and San Felipe.



B.03



Central Avenue and Rio Grande Boulevard have no on-street parking. This contributes to poor commercial performance and a lack of safe walking and biking facilities. Parked cars and street trees shield pedestrians from the danger of adjacent moving vehicles, both physically and psychologically. The presence of moving vehicles directly adjacent to walking paths discourages pedestrians.

The lack of on-street parking also contributes to higher vehicle speeds, further distancing the Plaza from the surrounding streets. When vehicles move quickly through an area, the drivers and passengers are unlikely to pay attention to their surroundings, especially signage. This decreases the likelihood that people will visit Old Town and the Plaza. ■



A.03



- + Re-stripe Central Avenue to provide on-street parking.
- + Re-stripe Rio Grande Boulevard to provide on-street parking.
- + Move the eastern curb on Romero Street to reduce excessive paving. See Annotated Plan #7 and Diagram O.6.