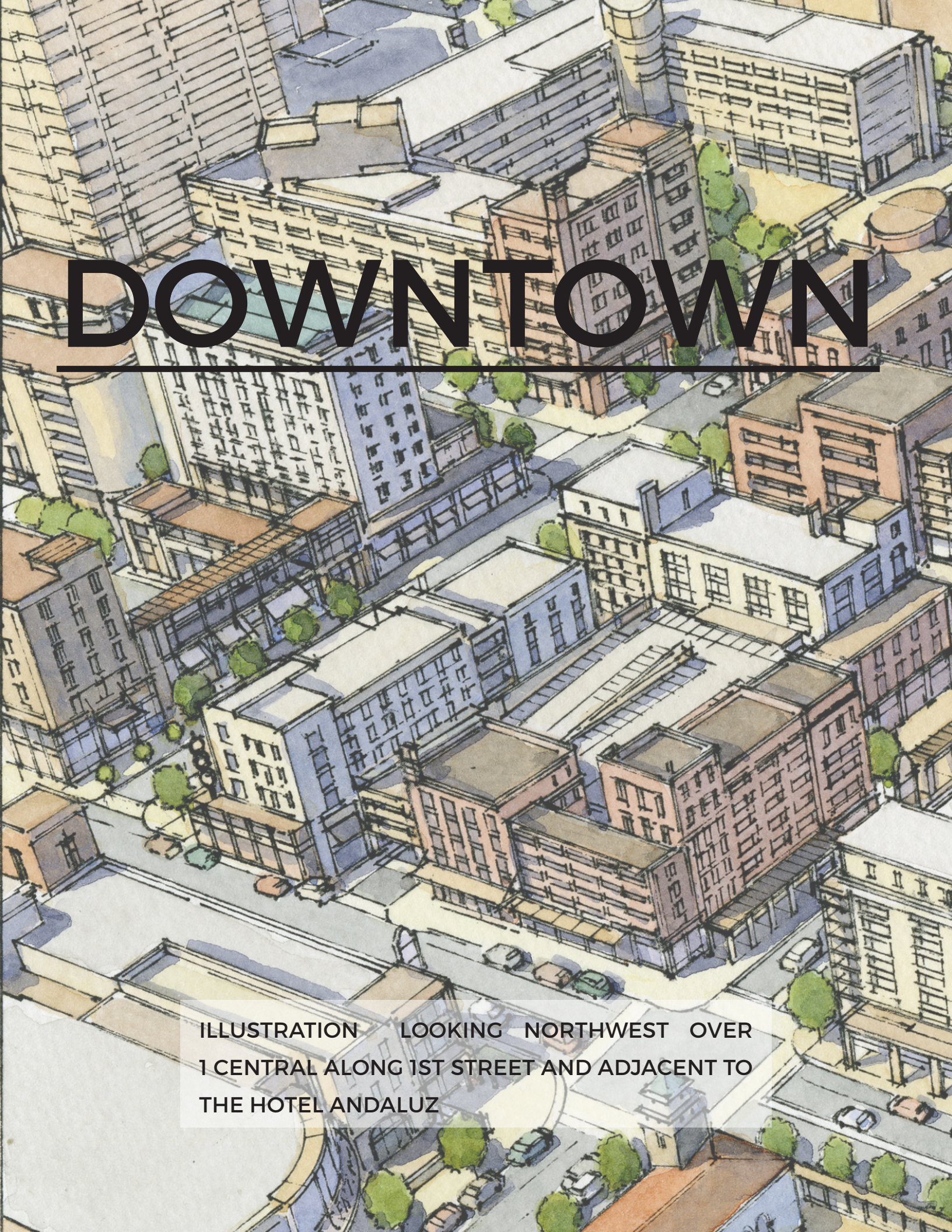
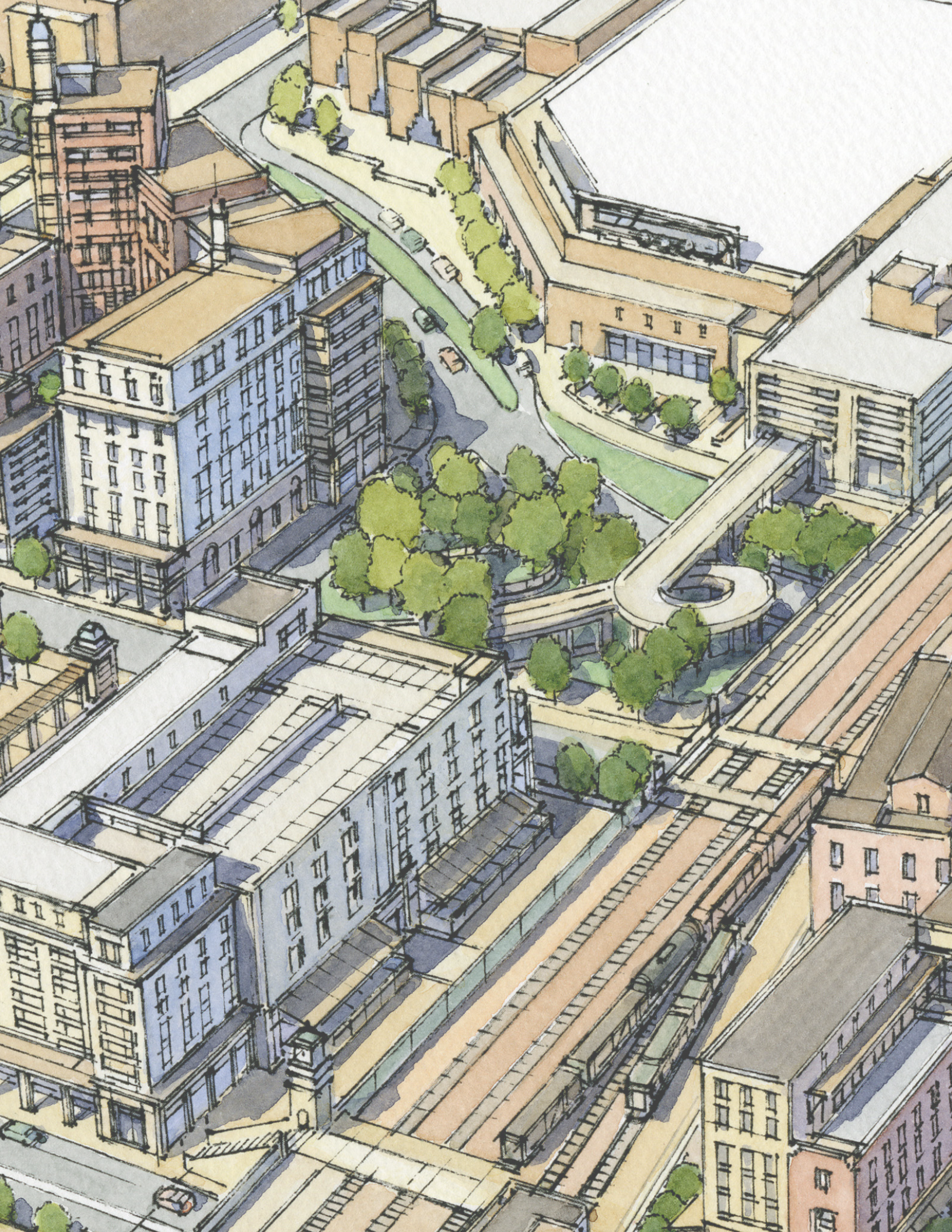




DOWNTOWN

ILLUSTRATION LOOKING NORTHWEST OVER
1 CENTRAL ALONG 1ST STREET AND ADJACENT TO
THE HOTEL ANDALUZ





CENTURY THEATRES

PHOTO FREEABQIMAGES.COM

DOWNTOWN SUMMARY

Downtown is the heart of the city. It is filled with historic and new office buildings, hotels, cultural centers, and a growing number of dwellings. The wonderful urban street grid is the structure to create a more vibrant and active downtown, with redevelopment opportunities including a number of surface parking lots. Residential is slowly coming back downtown and as a result a grocery store recently opened. The area along Central Avenue is higher intensity while just a few lots away there are historic single family homes. The neighborhood has a great urban vibe with convenient access to the rest of Albuquerque.

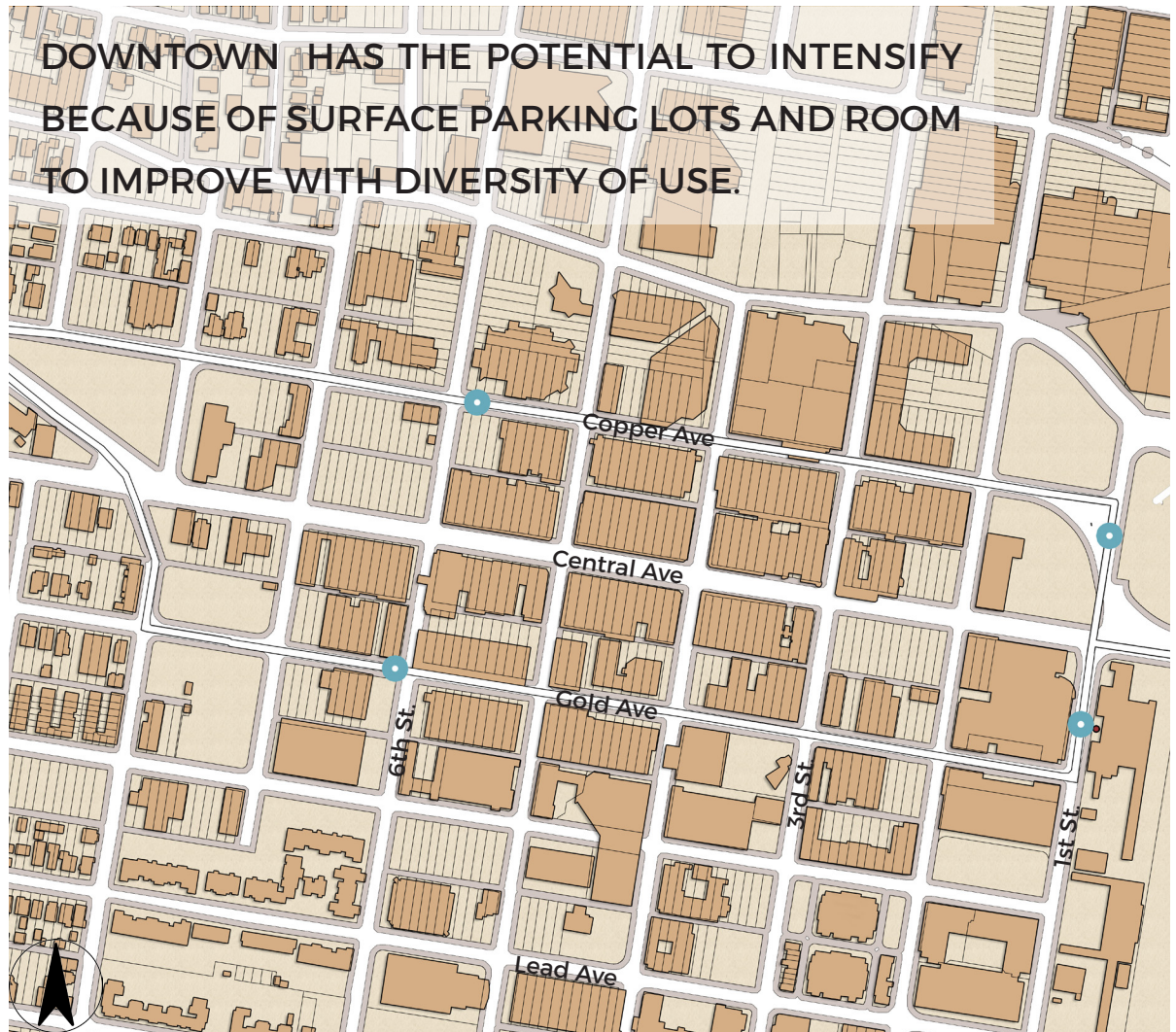
DOWNTOWN STATION AREA

Copper Avenue and Gold Avenue create a transit loop through downtown, with stops at 6th Street and 1st Street. Central Avenue is the retail and entertainment corridor and the opportunity to intensify and anchor the retail near the stations is important. Through the revitalization and infill of under-utilized sites, the downtown has the opportunity to become truly vibrant.

HIGHLIGHTS

- + Implement the *Downtown Walkability Study*.
- + Focus on development along Central Avenue to maintain a continuous vibrant pedestrian and retail experience, with strategy supporting retail anchors.
- + Residents want to see vacant parcels developed contextually.
- + Encourage a diversity of building types to ensure that we have more inclusive neighborhoods.

DOWNTOWN HAS THE POTENTIAL TO INTENSIFY BECAUSE OF SURFACE PARKING LOTS AND ROOM TO IMPROVE WITH DIVERSITY OF USE.

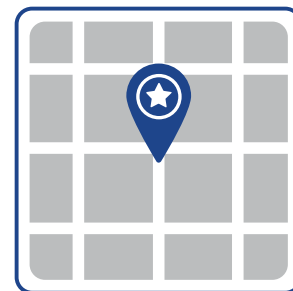


■ D.1 Downtown Existing Conditions

STATION AREA TYPE

The **DOWNTOWN** stations function as a network, unlike other station areas. This is common for downtowns because they tend to cover large land areas with intensive uses. Where transit is added to downtowns, there is often not sufficient space within street rights-of-way to accommodate dedicated lanes. The downtown ART route splits, running westbound along Copper Ave and eastbound along Gold Ave. The downtown station area includes four stops:

- + 1st & Copper, Westbound,
- + 6th & Copper, Westbound,
- + 6th & Gold, Eastbound,
- + 1st & Gold, Eastbound, at the transit center.





■ D.2 Downtown Illustrative Plan

DESTINATIONS

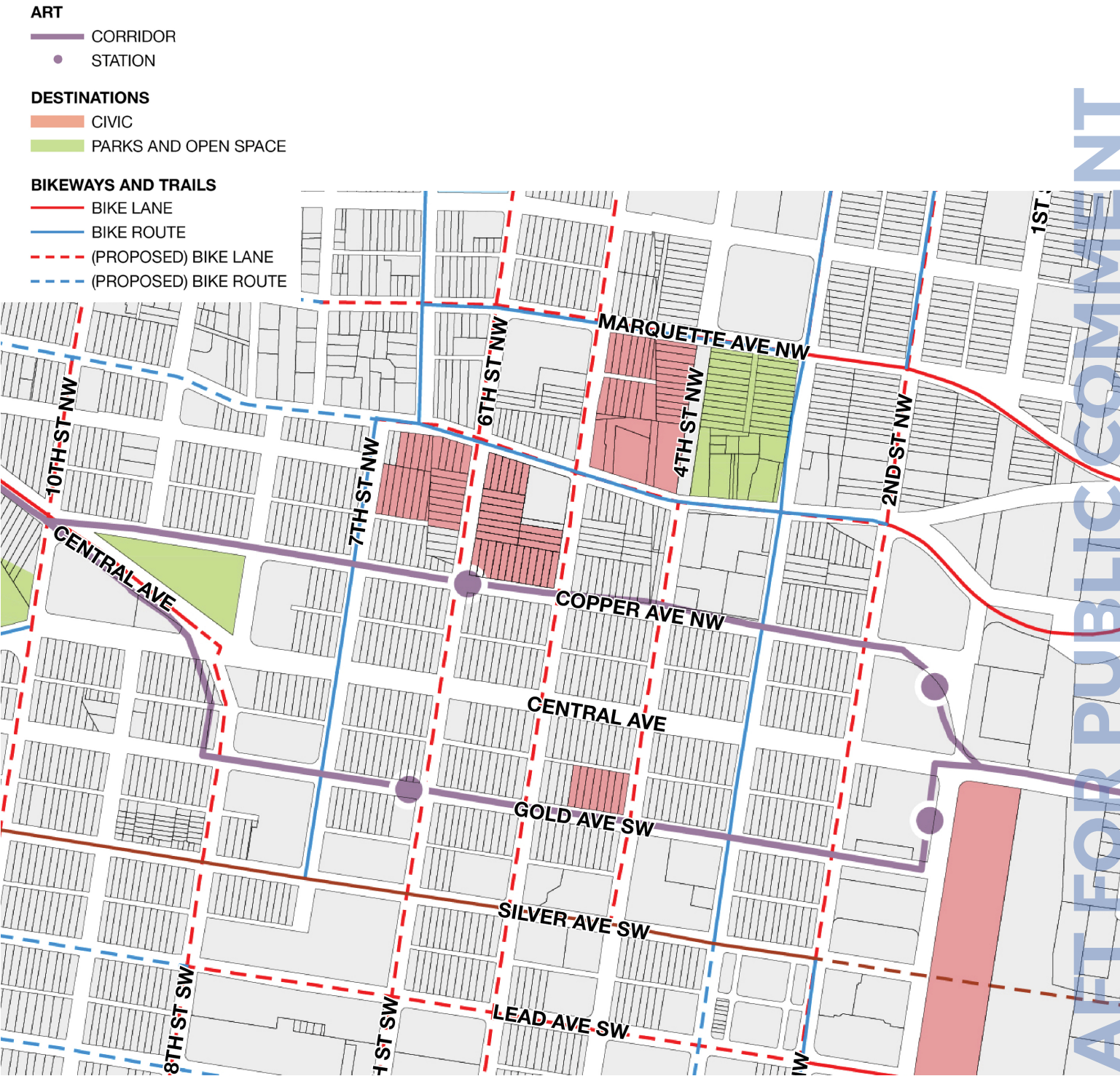
Downtown itself serves as a major destination for City, County, State, and Federal services, major businesses and offices, cultural institutions like theaters and museums, the convention center, the transit center, and the train station. As is common to downtowns, Downtown Albuquerque attracts many people from outside of the district during the daytime and at night for dining and entertainment.

STATION AREA STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

At present, downtown has a relatively small residential population, generating few trips originating from downtown to other destinations. As the residential population grows, following projections and trends, that population will generate more trips from the district to other places. The balance, however, will remain heavily weighted towards trips into the downtown as a destination. ■

HOTEL ANDALUZ
IMAGE: CAMERAFIEND





■ D.3 Downtown Structure Diagram

TRANSPORTATION

THE CONNECTED GRID OF DOWNTOWN IS COMPOSED OF WELL-SCALED BLOCKS, WITH STREETS CROSSING THE SPINE OF CENTRAL AVENUE. BOUNDED BY 10TH STREET TO THE WEST, AND THE TRACKS TO THE EAST, THERE IS LIMITED EAST ACCESS, PARTICULARLY TO EDO, DUE TO THE BROKEN NETWORK OF STREETS ACROSS THE TRACKS.

The network of streets and blocks in downtown is well established and fine-grained. The majority of connectivity problems are due to the rail lines along downtown's eastern edge. For reasons common to most urban areas in the U.S., downtown's streets have been given over to automobile accommodation at the expense of pedestrians and cyclists. Recently, the City has converted many of downtown's one-way streets to two-way, a trend key to downtown vitality initiatives seen across the country. The City's bicycle plan aims to add regular bicycle connections throughout downtown. Still outstanding is the fact that most streets remain over-capacity for vehicular needs, which could be re-captured for pedestrians.



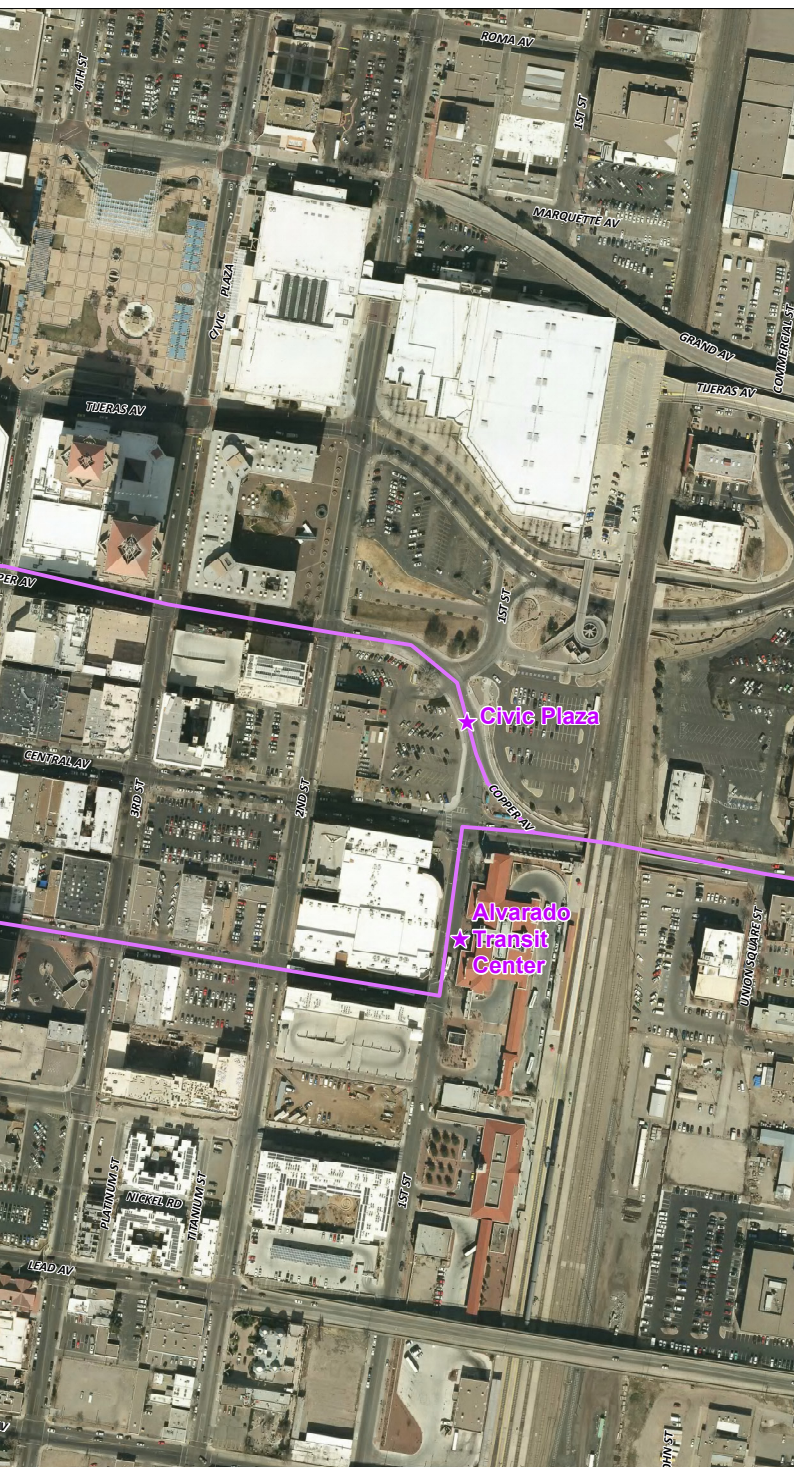
PARKING ASSESSMENT

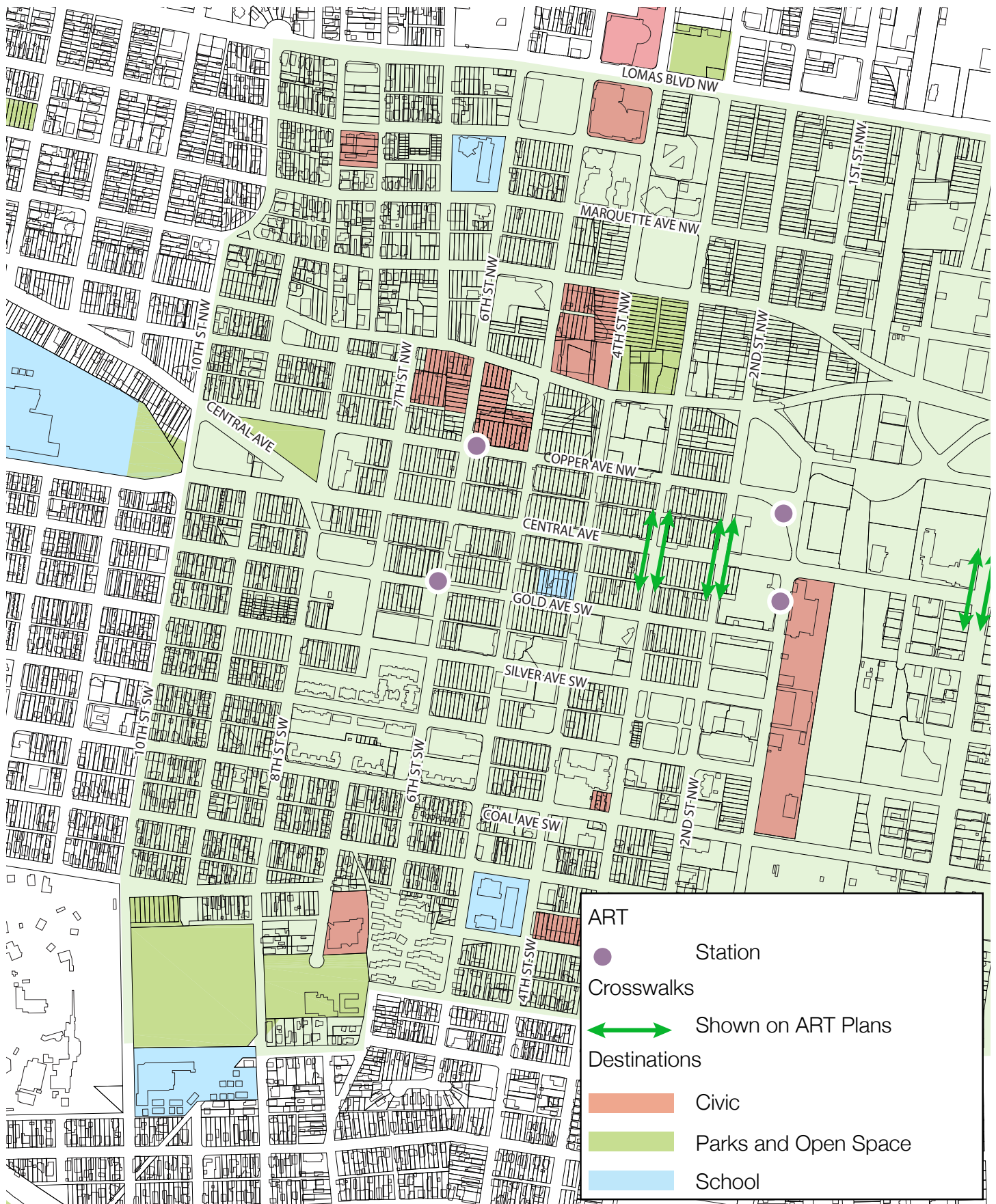
Analysis of existing parking supply reveals that on-street spaces are underutilized, with higher rates of utilization at off-street facilities. Of 18 sub-study areas surveyed in the 2016 Downtown Parking Study, on-street parking occupancy surpassed the optimal rate of 85% in just two areas and during three hours of data collection. Of 14 sub-study areas with off-street parking, parking occupancy surpassed the optimal rate of 90% in just one area observed during a single hour of data collection. When accounting for public off-street supply only, just one sub-study area revealed occupancy above 90% (93%), during one hour of data collection. This evidence suggests that Downtown parking supply is currently underutilized for a central business district.

In the in-depth 2014 study Albuquerque, New Mexico *Downtown Walkability Analysis*, Jeff Speck notes that many streets in downtown Albuquerque have lost a significant share of on-street parking due to travel lanes that are either too wide or too numerous given the volumes of traffic that they handle to accommodate standard parallel parking stalls. On some streets, where on-street spaces are non-existent, there is adequate space to add new parking stalls without rearranging lane configurations. By restriping certain streets, new on-street parking could be produced through existing infrastructure at a rate that would cost millions of dollars to replicate if built as new parking structures.

Parking concerns in Downtown related to TOD will likely be related to a perceived loss or scarcity of parking that may not correlate to actual rates of utilization. In order to receive the greatest return on investment from ART in this area, it is critical that strategies focus on efficiently distributing parking demand to underutilized facilities, leveraging opportunities for shared parking partnerships, and integration of parking into districtwide mobility branding and communications.

■ D.4 Downtown
Aerial Photograph





NEIGHBORHOODS

Downtown stretches from Coal to Lomas, between 8th Street and the train tracks, or about 250 acres. The area is about 200 acres excluding the Wells Park neighborhood transition to the northwest. The 300 foot square block size in downtown is rare in the region, and a distinct advantage that supports walkability. However downtown has significantly deteriorated, as many US downtowns have. Block after block is occupied by surface parking lots and many

To the south, west, and northwest of downtown are a series of historic neighborhoods, very well connected to downtown. These provide a significant amount of nearby housing, but at present it is not comfortable or convenient to walk or bike from these areas to downtown. Similarly, the train tracks disconnect the neighborhoods of EDo. ■

North-south pedestrian connections via crosswalks along Central is critical to connect neighbors to the employment destinations in the north and civic destinations in the south.

more recent buildings built downtown are out of character for their location and do not activate the street. However, some very recent developments and projects in the design stage are moving in a good direction to revive and reconnect the district.

In terms of housing, downtown is still deficient, even with the new options provided over the last decade. The structure of the district can easily support thousands of new housing units, which are necessary to activate a downtown into a 24-hour community. Currently a four-block section of Central Avenue is the sole active pedestrian area. Infill housing is necessary to support a greater diversity of retail offerings and expand the district.



KIMO THEATRE

OPPORTUNITIES



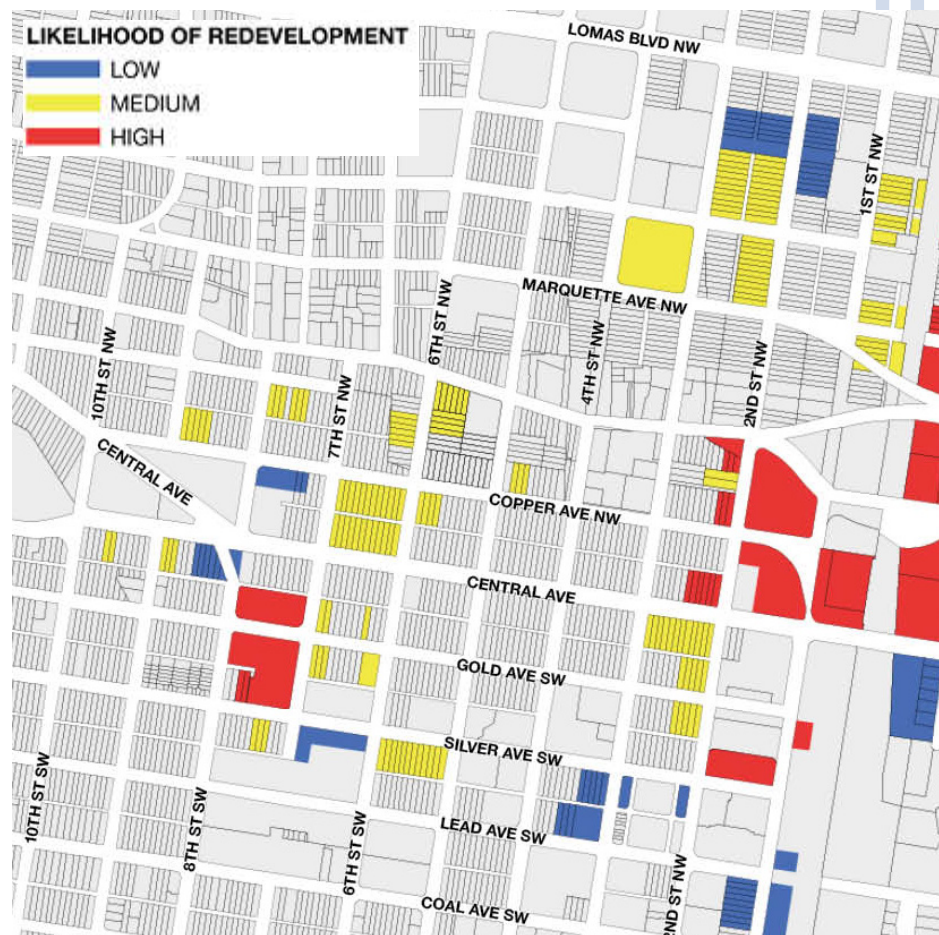
There is a much opportunity and momentum with the current infill projects and the energy created directly across the tracks in EDo, with Innovate ABQ.

DOWNTOWN

There are key sites which are located within close proximity to the future ART stations that could benefit from significant infill.

As Central Avenue is built out, there are several opportunities for multi-family housing to add residential density and support Central Avenue's retail viability.

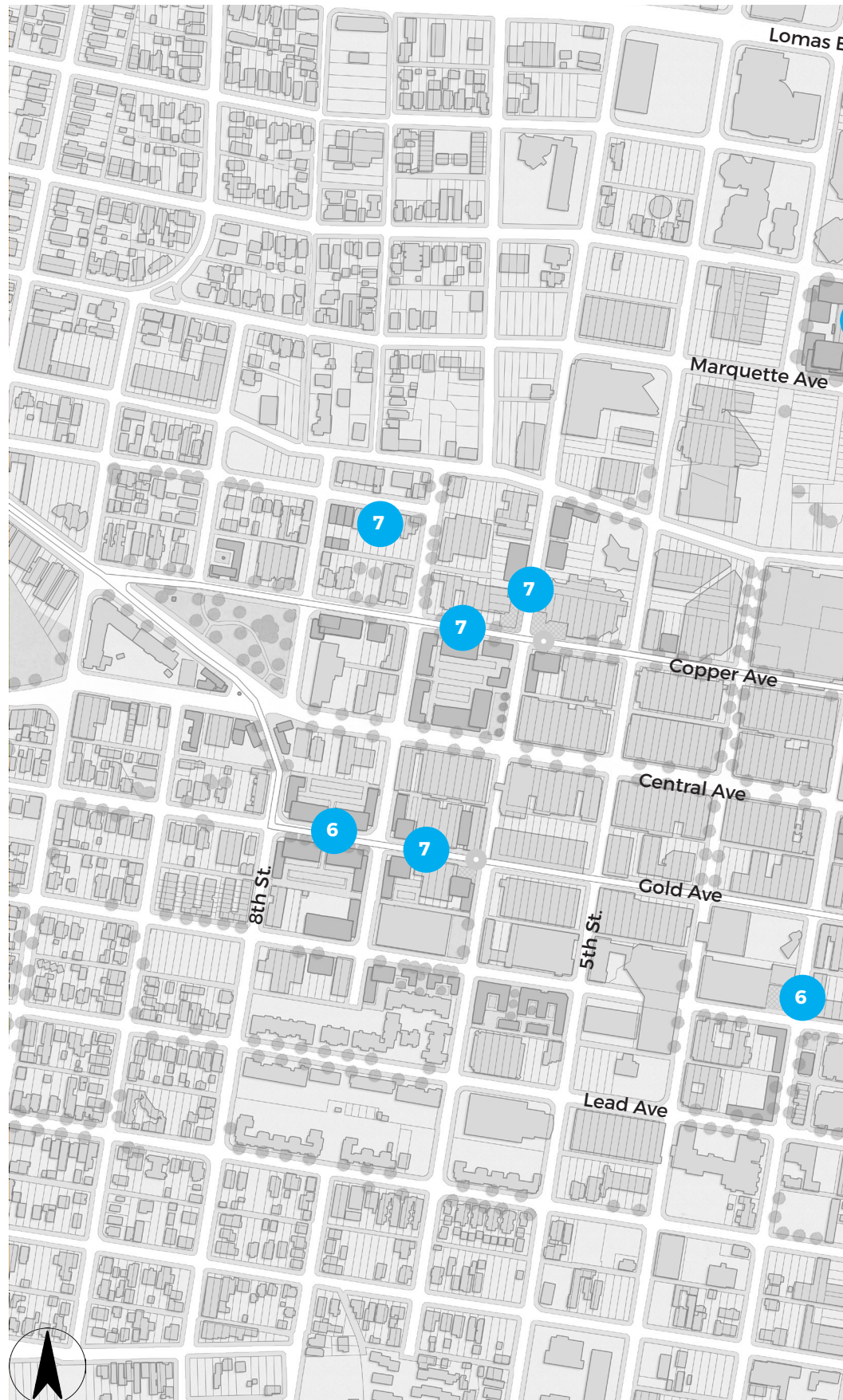
■ D.5 Downtown Likelihood of Redevelopment

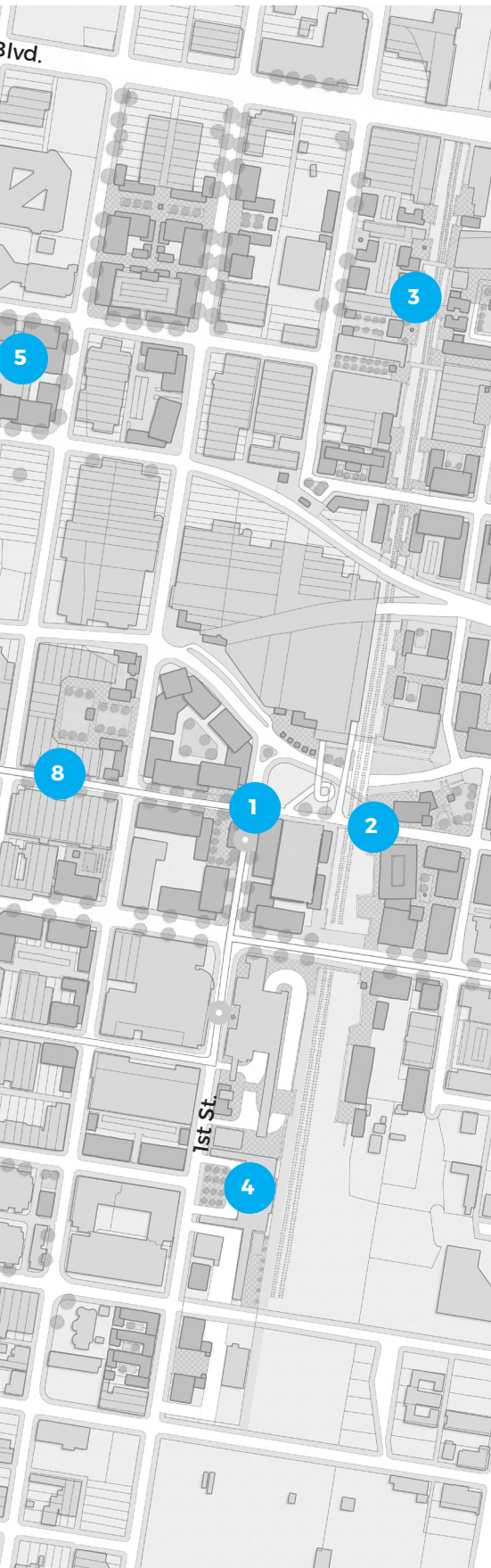


Other opportunities include development at Albuquerque's Civic Plaza which needs significant height for such a large space, and active, at-grade uses in order to re-energize this important civic space. The development and energy created in EDo by Innovate ABQ should be capitalized on and supported with development on several of the nearby vacant parcels.

The rail line provides numerous opportunities for unique, small-scale development. The rail should be seen and treated as an amenity, building on the example established by the Railyards.

Connections tying Downtown to EDo also provide many opportunities, which include repairing the street grid, dispersing traffic, moving pedestrians east and west, and activating the rail line with increased pedestrian activity.

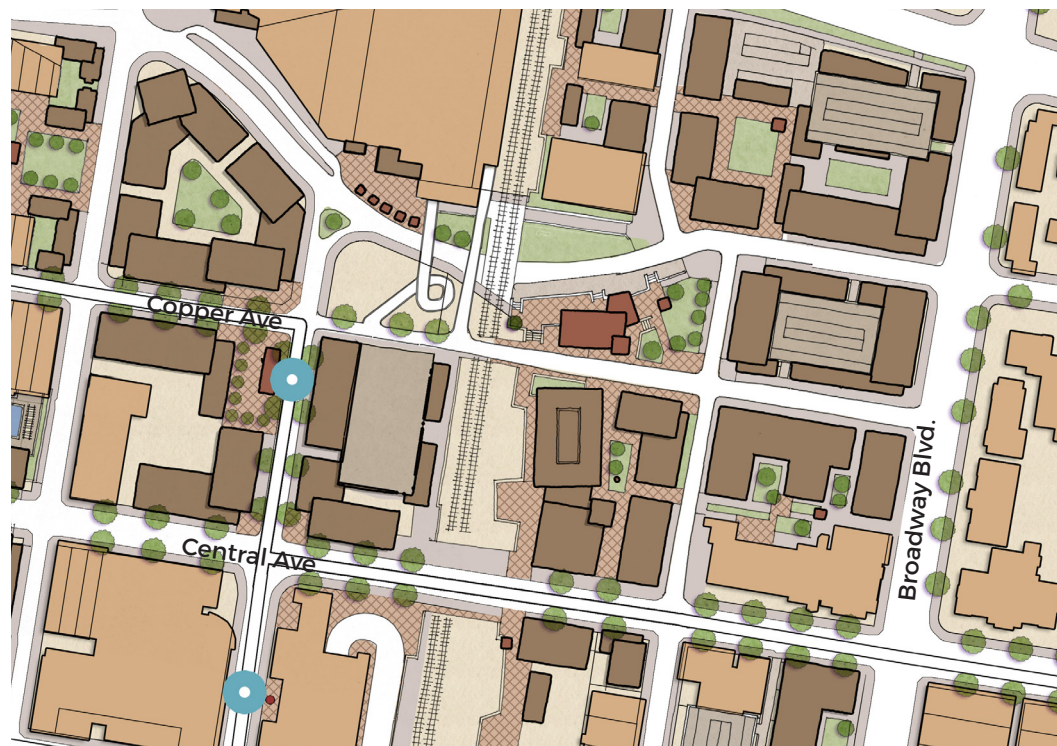




KEY ELEMENTS

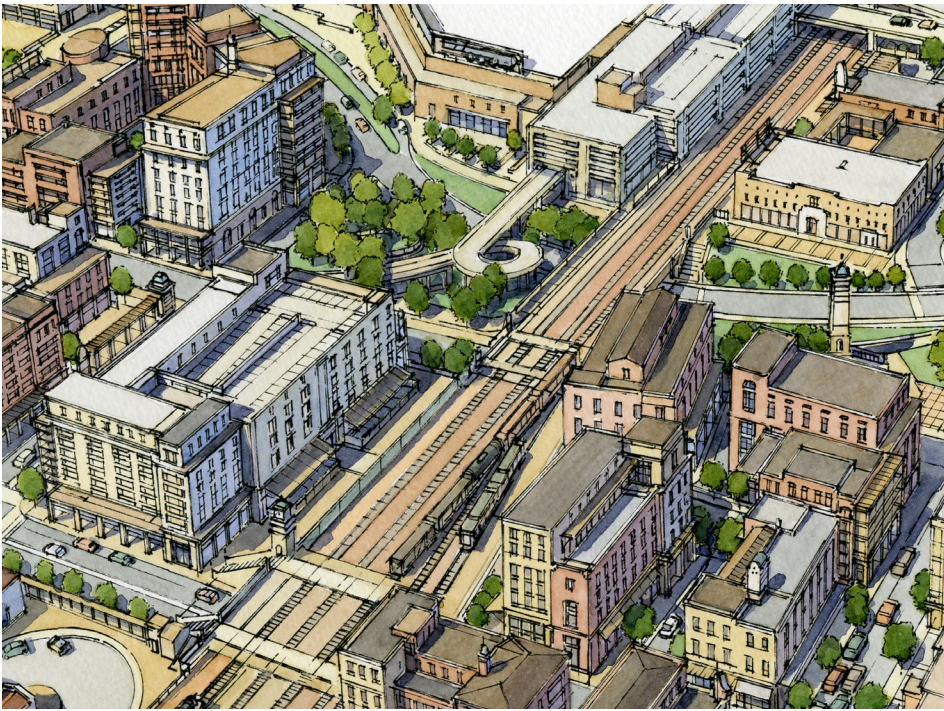
1 1st Street in Downtown Albuquerque provides a major north-south access. It parallels the rail line and connects the two stations at Copper and Gold. 1st Street is also the eastern edge of Downtown where a lot of the larger Downtown development and potential density culminates before the rail line and the transition in intensity to EDo. Given the importance of 1st Street, the One Central mixed-use project will help to leverage this opportunity.

2 Downtown has a very clear street grid which is part of the urban character of Albuquerque. There are instances where this street grid is broken, particularly around the train line, however there is opportunity to reconnect Copper Ave across the tracks between 1st St. and Broadway Blvd. This would result in increased pedestrian and vehicular connections, which would alleviate the bottle neck that can occur at Central and Marquette. By breaking down some of these large blocks into a smaller more permeable scale, they become more pedestrian friendly and the walkability between Downtown, Innovate ABQ, and EDo would be increased.



■ D.7 1st Street Infill

■ D.6 Downtown Annotated Plan



3 Like EDO, there are many opportunities for development along the west side of the rail tracks, particularly between Central and Lomas. There are many vacant sites and vacant buildings that could all become part of an 'Arts District' in Albuquerque. There is already a popular theater for the Albuquerque Theatre Guild on 1st Street, which could become the center of the envisioned 'Arts District'. Building upon the existing history of the area and capitalizing on under-utilized sites could provide a variety of spaces tied together by similar art related activities, and could be an key opportunity to create a unique identity for this area.

4 The Alvarado Transportation Center is at 1st and Gold. Everyday people get off of the train and set up temporary stalls where they sell the goods that they brought with them for the day. Since there is already an informal market operating at the station, there is an opportunity to create a more formal setting for a market which could help to organize the individuals who come to Albuquerque each day. In keeping with the proposed development along the rail line, north of Central, there could be the opportunity to locate the market along the rail line to start building the momentum moving north to the more intense rail line development.

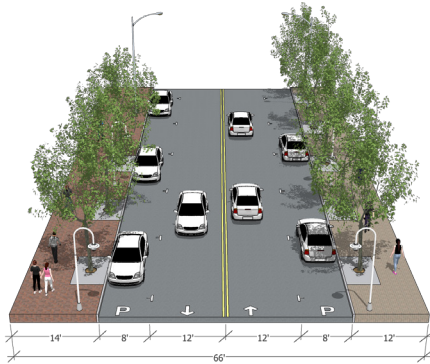
5 North of Albuquerque's Civic Plaza, there are a number of open parking lots that would allow for infill development. Just north of the Civic Plaza, a new building would allow the Plaza to be visually enclosed. Any proposed building should match in height and scale of 1 Civic Plaza to create a meaningful sense of enclosure.

Additionally, there are adjacent developments to the northeast which could break down the super blocks by providing mid-block pedestrian access. This would create a more permeable, walkable environment.

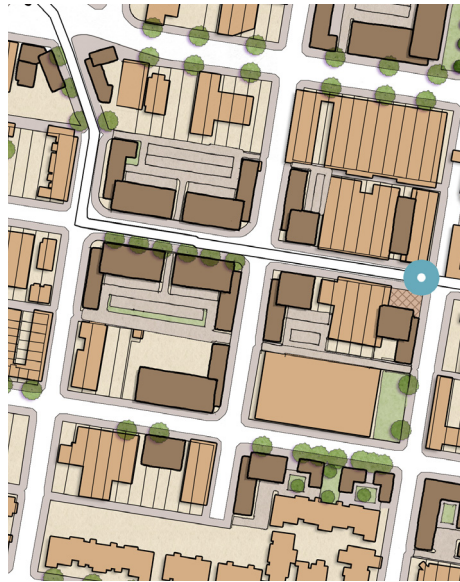


6 On both sides of Gold, between 7th and 8th, there is a significant amount of land which would be able to accommodate mixed-use buildings and have adequate surface parking behind. Smaller infill opportunities, such as those around 3rd and Silver, may develop using unique building types rather than half-block buildings.

Parking for the smaller parcels could take advantage of surrounding developments excess parking or utilize shared parking to help alleviate additional cost by the developer.

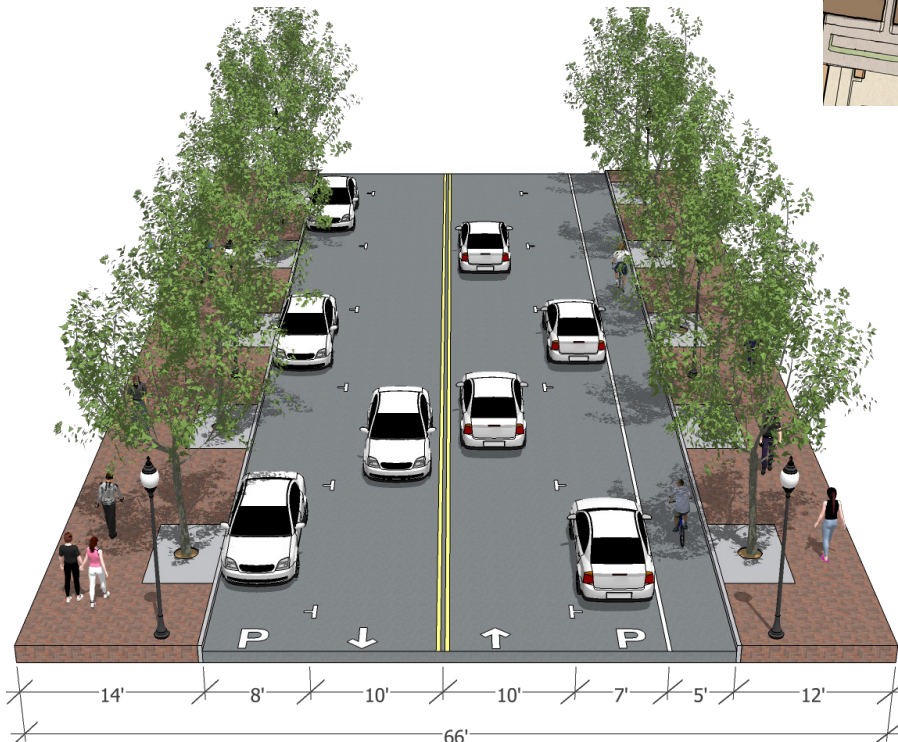
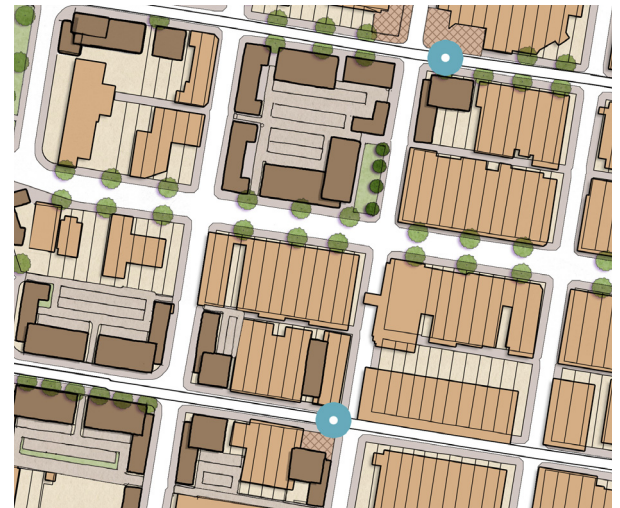


■ D.7 Existing Copper Ave



7 The streets throughout the heart of Downtown are principally good pedestrian streets. There are opportunities to make them better given that many of the sections only require minor revisions. For example, some cans of paint and a few employees to paint in bike lanes and reduce drive lane widths per the *Downtown Walkability Study*.

Between getting the lane widths to a safer pedestrian scale, there are also streetscape improvements that could be made. Some of these overall improvements include more on-street parking, street trees, and wider sidewalks.



■ D.8 Proposed Copper Ave

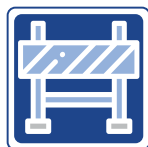
8 One specific example of #7 above is to add bike lanes to Copper Ave. D.8 illustrates the curbs on both sides can remain in place, while the lane widths are restriped to more appropriate widths based on the immediate context. This restriping provides the room needed to include a bike lane. The revised section also shows pedestrian scaled street lamps, which contributes pedestrian safety.



The Downtown stations share a number of barriers with other areas, but some are unique to this neighborhood.



B.01



DOWNTOWN LACKS SAFE AND CONTINUOUS BICYCLE FACILITIES.

Existing bicycle facilities are inconsistent throughout Downtown. They often start and stop unexpectedly and do not connect to each other. The future bicycle facilities plan addresses this issue within the downtown. A route along Edith is a good candidate for a north-south bicycle boulevard.



A.01



- + Implement the future bicycle facilities plan within Downtown.
- + Add bicycle facilities to Mountain Road.
- + Implement the recommendations in the *Downtown Walkability Study*.



B.02



STREET TREES ARE NEEDED THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN.

With few exceptions, Downtown's streets lack street trees. Street trees play a vital role in the walkability and livability of districts and neighborhoods. Physically, they provide shade, in an environment where shade is important. Psychologically, trees play a vital role in human wellness. Trees are just as important to downtown streets as they are to neighborhood streets.

The arid climate is often brought up as a reason not to plant street trees. However there are trees more well adapted to the high desert that work well as street trees. Without street trees, especially in a downtown, sun has a heat island effect, creating a high temperature microclimate.



A.02



- + Utilize trees appropriate for the high desert that will serve well as street trees, such as the Chinese Pistache, *Pistacia chinensis*.
- + Plant street trees along the high-priority pedestrian street throughout Downtown.

BARRIERS



B.03



DOWNTOWN STREETS ARE PRIORITIZED FOR CARS, INHIBITING PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY

Over time, as Downtown activities required more automobile access and parking and people moved out of downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, the transportation system was revised to service the increasing use of cars. The result is a downtown area with too much space dedicated to the automotive mode of transportation, and not enough reserved for pedestrians and cyclists. This condition is common throughout the US. In most urban areas, traffic counts have spiked and are reducing, being replaced by walking, biking, and transit use. Vehicle capacity is excessive for present and projected future usage.

When too much space is given to automobiles and too little to pedestrians and bicycles, walking and cycling is uncomfortable and often dangerous. Wide travel lanes contribute to speeding and speeding makes streets unsafe for all users. Even parallel parking spaces that are too wide can contribute to speeding. Lane width given to cars has often resulted in a loss of street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and sidewalks with ample width for two or more people.



A.03



- + Restripe streets to reduce travel lane widths and provide for additional bicycle and pedestrian facilities, or on-street parking where it is missing. Reduce travel lane dimensions to 10 feet wide in general, or 11 feet wide along bus routes.
- + Set intersection control systems to always provide pedestrian crossings in Downtown (not requiring a button request).
- + Convert Lead and Coal to 2-way travel.
- + Implement the recommendations in the *Downtown Walkability Study*.



B.04



ON-STREET PARKING IS MISSING ALONG MANY STREETS AND STREET SEGMENTS DOWNTOWN.

On-street parking plays a vital role in urban streets. The most obvious role is providing parking for businesses. Each block Downtown has the capacity for approximately 40 parking spaces along its perimeter. The area between the Downtown ART stations, 10 blocks in total, could provide 400 parking spaces on-street, a very significant capacity for convenient parking. Throughout Downtown, on-street parking should be consistent and ubiquitous. Currently it is missing in

many locations to make way for turn lanes or additional travel lanes. Traffic counts throughout Downtown are relatively low. In most cases turn lanes and excessive travel lanes can be removed to allow for missing on-street parking.



A.04



- + Remove travel lanes and turn lanes where possible to allow for consistent on-street parking.
- + Reduce travel lane widths to allow for more on-street parking. For example, many sections of 5th St., prohibit on-street parking despite sufficient width.
- + Implement the recommendations in the *Downtown Walkability Study*.