



ABQ THE PLAN: THE RIO GRANDE VISION

CONNECT, PROTECT AND EXCITE!



Photo Credit: Bill Tondreau

Outreach / Concept Development / Implementation

Prepared for the Mayor's Office, City of Albuquerque
City of Albuquerque Project Number 763700
November 4, 2013

message from the Mayor

Thank you for your interest in the Rio Grande Vision and in the City of Albuquerque. We have an opportunity to make game-changing improvements to our city, and I hope that you will join us each step of the way.

The Rio Grande Vision (RGV) is about bringing the river more into our daily lives, by:

- Connecting people to the Rio Grande & Bosque through recreation, education, stewardship and other quality of life opportunities
- Protecting the Bosque through restoration and conservation projects
- Exciting people with new ways to enjoy this wonderful natural resource

The RGV is a conceptual visioning document that is full of ideas and concepts; it is not a blueprint for individual projects. The ideas listed in the RGV have come from citizens and consultants who have participated in the visioning process to this point – and additional input is always welcomed.

The Rio Grande is a unique and beautiful natural resource that should be seen and experienced by all, and protected for future generations. Join me as we venture into the future.

Thank you,

Mayor Richard J. Berry



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ABQ THE PLAN: THE RIO GRANDE VISION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



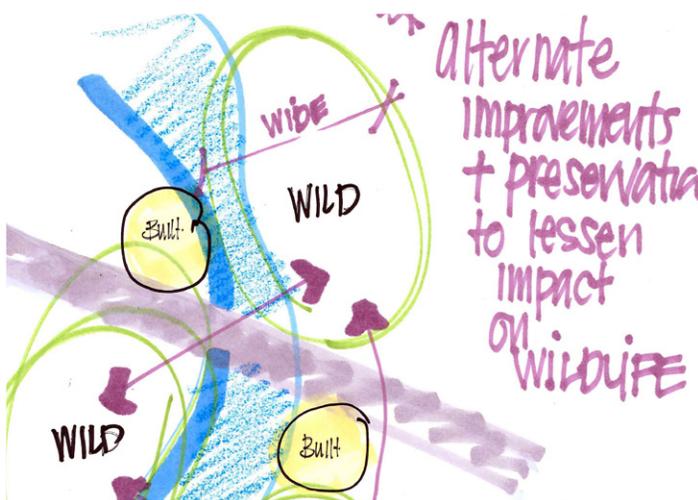
introduction

The Rio Grande Vision Corridor Plan is a conceptual plan for improvements along the Rio Grande in Albuquerque that will Connect, Protect and Excite! This report is the second of two documents created for the Rio Grande Vision. In November 2012, the Research and Analysis report was completed and made available to the public. The Research and Analysis report, which provides background information and context for this report, included an introduction to the project, documented existing conditions, compiled and mapped data from a variety of sources, summarized research on comparable river cities and recreation participation rates, compiled information on other Rio Grande-related studies and the land and water managers in the corridor, and provided examples of other relevant river projects. This report documents the second half of the project, where City staff and the project team developed a conceptual plan of corridor improvements, presented these ideas to the public, and then developed a strategy for implementation.



outreach

The City of Albuquerque has a history of public outreach related to the river, through their management of Rio Grande Valley State Park and work with the Open Space Advisory Board. In 2011, The City of Albuquerque's Mayor Richard J. Berry solicited public input on the river via public meetings. Soon after, the Mayor developed a public outreach strategy for ABQ the Plan, so that it could evolve with public input and become the community's plan. The strategy included presentations, creation of a website with surveys, use of the neighborhood association newsletter for communications, and development of an ABQ the Plan email list to get the word out about meetings and project developments. The Rio Grande Vision used all of the City's tools and added more. The project had its own website and linked it to the City website. Additionally, a series of interviews with subject matter experts contributed to a better understanding of the complexity of stakeholder missions, activities and operations along the Rio Grande. Finally, two committees (a steering committee and a technical committee) provided valuable information, perspectives, and direction to the planning team. The Rio Grande Vision is a conceptual plan. Further planning, design, and outreach will help refine the Vision and the Corridor Plan, and be a requirement for implementation.



concept development

Following an extensive research and analysis phase and a multi-pronged public outreach effort, a conceptual plan was created for improvements in the river corridor - primarily within Rio Grande Valley State Park (RGVSP). The Corridor Plan reflects strategic decisions to:



- Ensure that improvements and changes foster enjoyment and understanding of the Bosque and river, and support existing conservation and restoration efforts
- Provide new, high quality recreation, conservation, and educational improvements that will help connect a broader portion of the population to the river
- Focus improvements in areas that are already disturbed or in use by the public
- Consolidate existing trails and paths in order to reduce land disturbance and facilitate Bosque and river restoration
- Distribute improvements along the river to leverage existing public investment and optimize community access
- Encourage public and private partnerships and investment in areas along the river outside of the levees and Rio Grande Valley State Park, where river related uses could reinforce our community's heritage and provide long-lasting community benefits.

The Rio Grande Vision is not a recreation plan. It is a conceptual plan comprised of recreation, conservation, and education principles, practices, and improvements that will provide a wider variety of ways for citizens of all ages and abilities to experience and learn about the Rio Grande and the Bosque. By deliberately creating new and different opportunities for public interaction with the river and the Bosque, more people will begin to see the Rio Grande as both an amenity and a resource. The mosaic of natural and restored areas in the Bosque, and the unique environment found within the floodway are the reasons that many people are currently drawn to RGVSP. For this reason, the Corridor Plan deliberately has a very light footprint, with improvements occupying less than .5% of the RGVSP's 4900 acres.

Elements of the Corridor Plan include:

- trail consolidation and restoration
- boardwalks
- boat ramps and access paths
- improved access areas
- viewing platforms
- education technology package
- interpretive trails/restoration showcases and signs
- art work and aesthetic elements
- extension of the Paseo del Bosque/ Blue Green Trail
- pedestrian bridges
- wayfinding and signage package
- specialized redevelopment zones related to the river and agriculture
- cultural loop - a path for pedestrians, bikes and transit that connects cultural sites in the area

conservation and restoration

Protection of the river and the Bosque are a priority for the City of Albuquerque and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD). The City of Albuquerque and MRGCD cooperatively manage the 4300-acre Rio Grande Valley State Park in the midst of urban pressures like vandalism, fire and homelessness, and under severe drought conditions that impact water availability for the environmental and recreation activities envisioned in the Park's enabling legislation. Each implementation phase of the Rio Grande Vision will include river and Bosque conservation and/or restoration activities that will reinforce the ongoing work being done by the City, MRGCD and other partners like the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. Additionally, each implementation phase will be developed within the regulatory context of the Bosque Action Plan, a Rank 2 plan that describes goals, objectives, strategies and requirements related to lands within Rio Grande Valley State Park.

implementation

The Implementation Strategy provides a road map for moving forward with the Rio Grande Vision. The following implementation components are included:

- Planning and design guidelines
- Preliminary project identity study
- Compliance discussion related to the Bosque Action Plan and applicable municipal codes and ordinances
- Organizational structure discussion
- Phasing discussion and design and planning action items and spin-off projects
- Funding
- Case studies



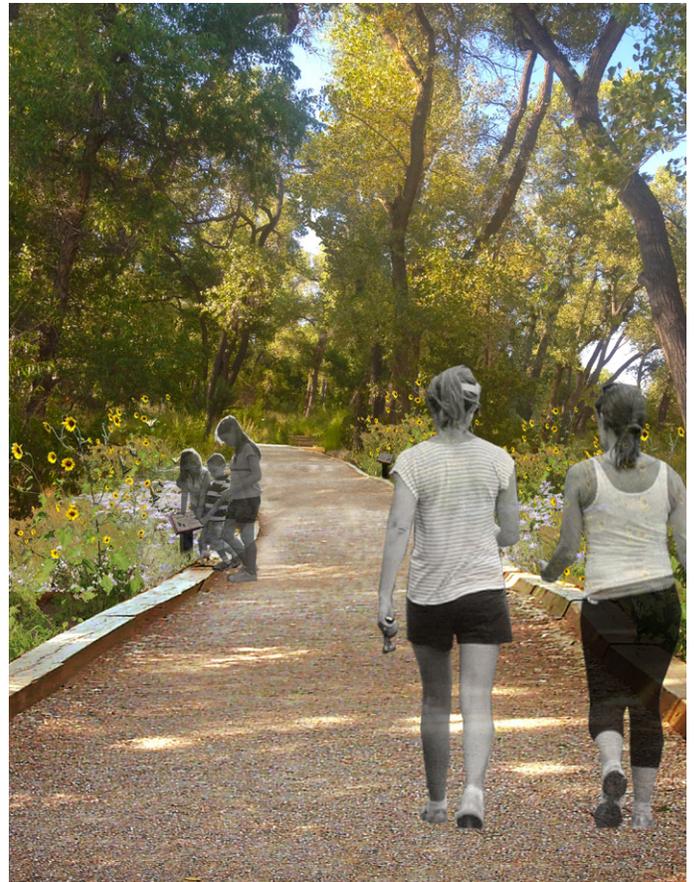
The Rio Grande Vision Corridor Plan is supplemental and complementary to the extensive number of past and present river environment restoration efforts by the City of Albuquerque, the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District and others. The purpose of the Rio Grande Vision Corridor Plan is to provide a framework for strategic improvements within the mosaic of natural areas that will expand public opportunities to experience the river and Bosque in a safe, fun, and respectful way.

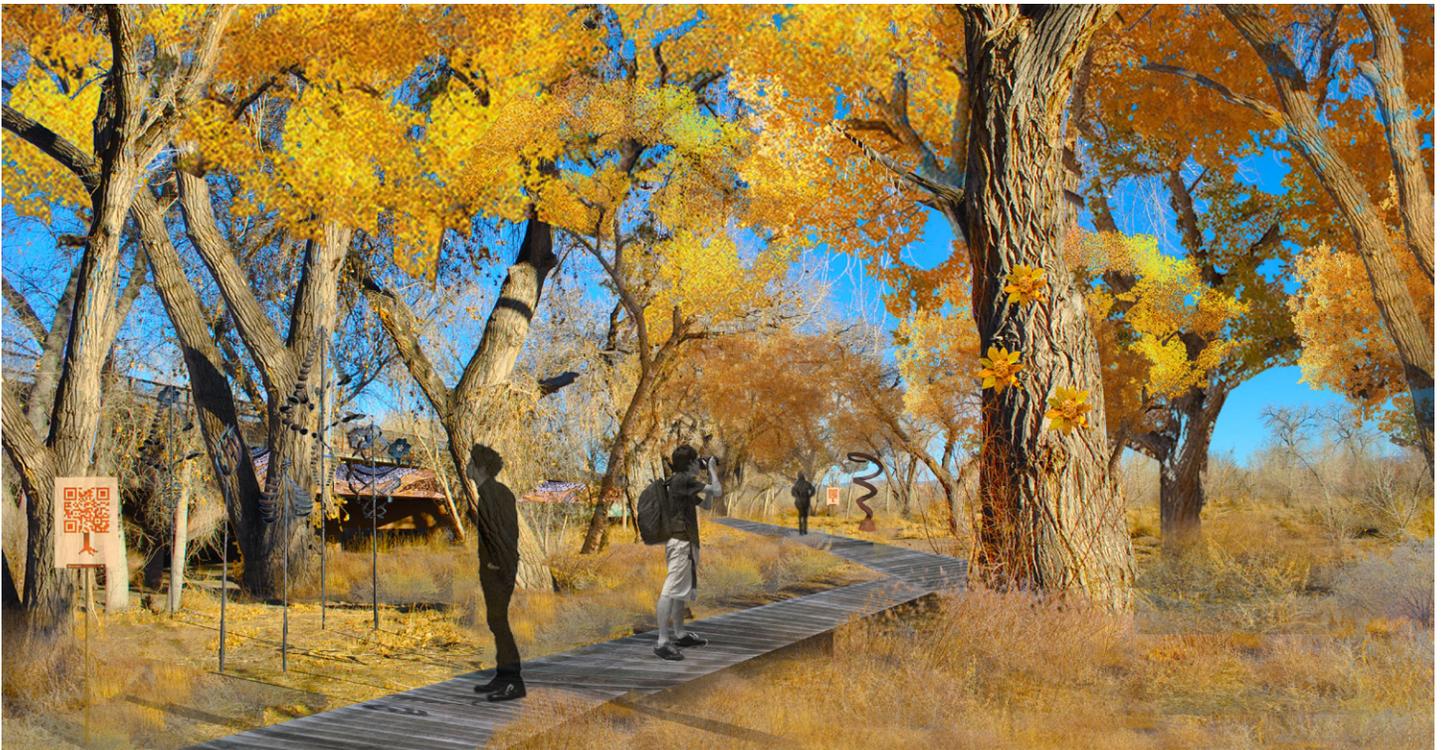
- Visualization Studies: The intent of these images is to illustrate opportunities for new ways to experience the river in ways that connect, protect and excite!
- Conservation and Restoration: Enlargements of the conceptual corridor plan illustrate in the distribution of potential access, education and recreation improvements along the river corridor. Equally important, and described in the document, are conservation and restoration efforts, new wayfinding and signage systems, and education elements that will be implemented with each phase of improvements.

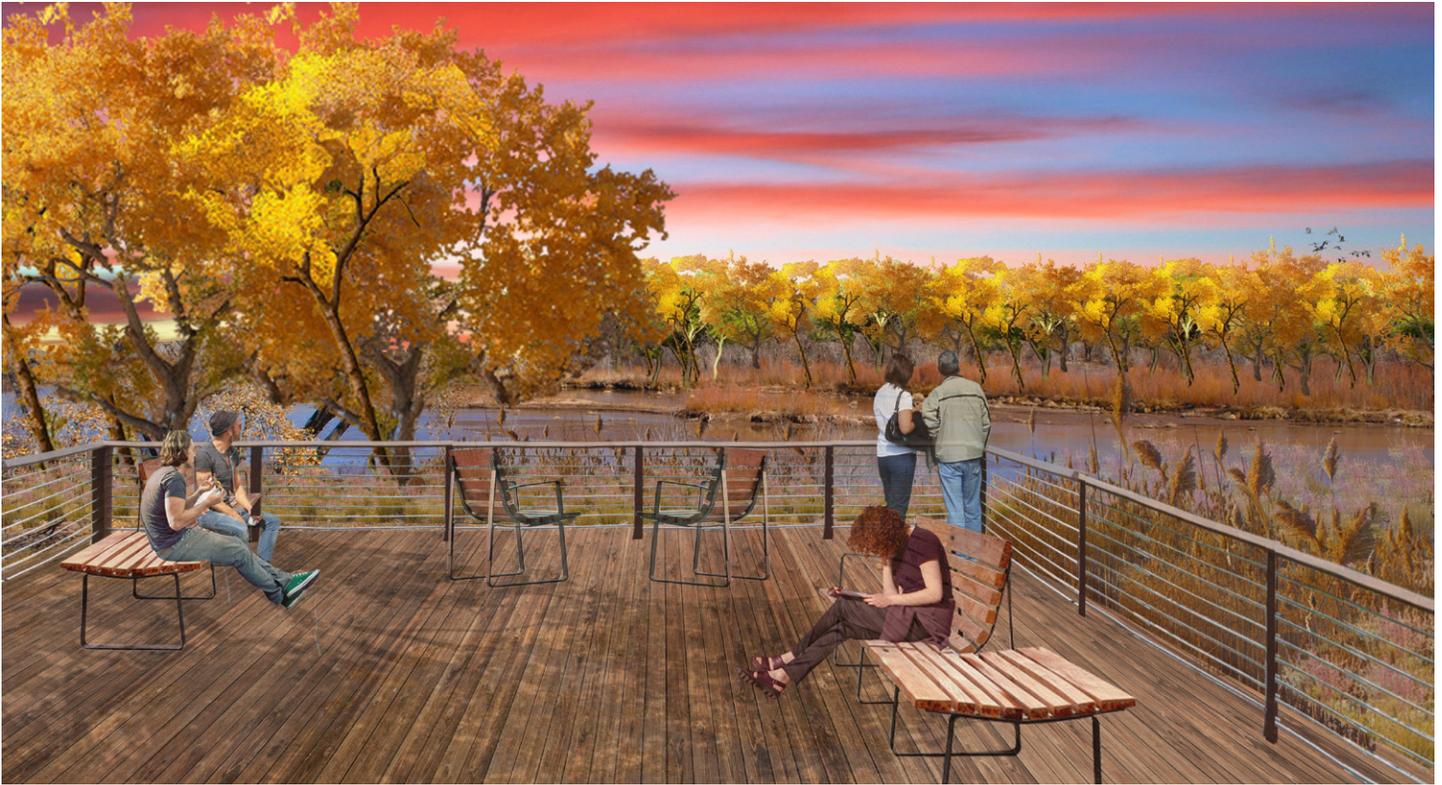
This page: (top) southeast area of river crossing at Bridge Boulevard; (bottom) east side of river south of Central Avenue.

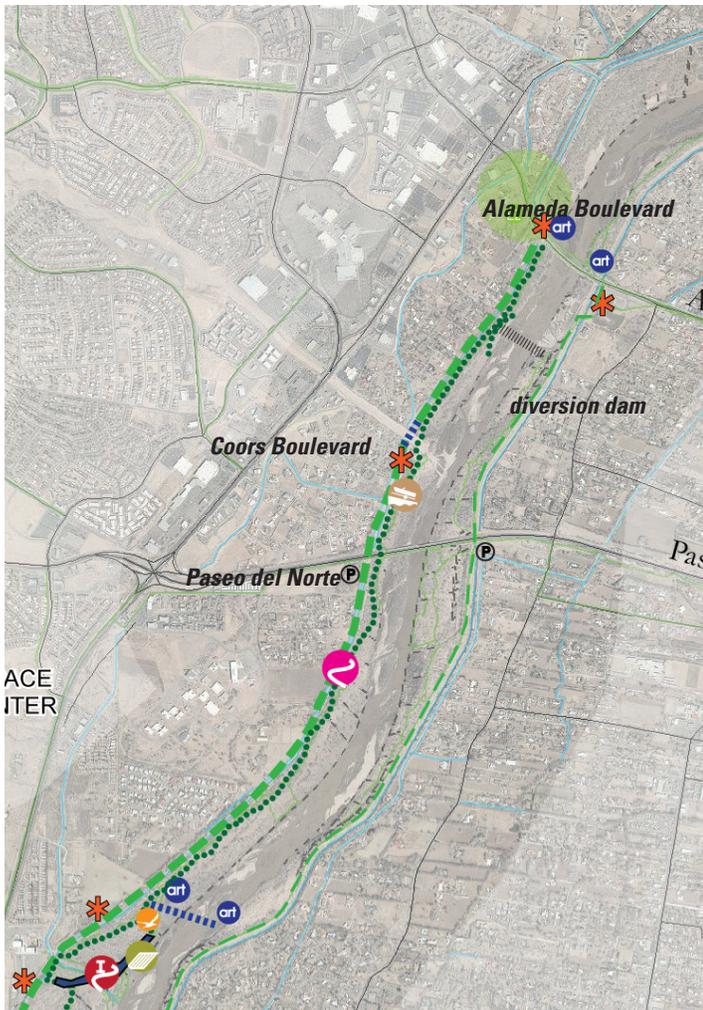
Opposite page: (top) under the Montañito Bridge; (bottom) Montañito Art Walk on the west side of the river.

Following page: (top) deck overlooking the river; (bottom) northeast area of Central Avenue Bridge.



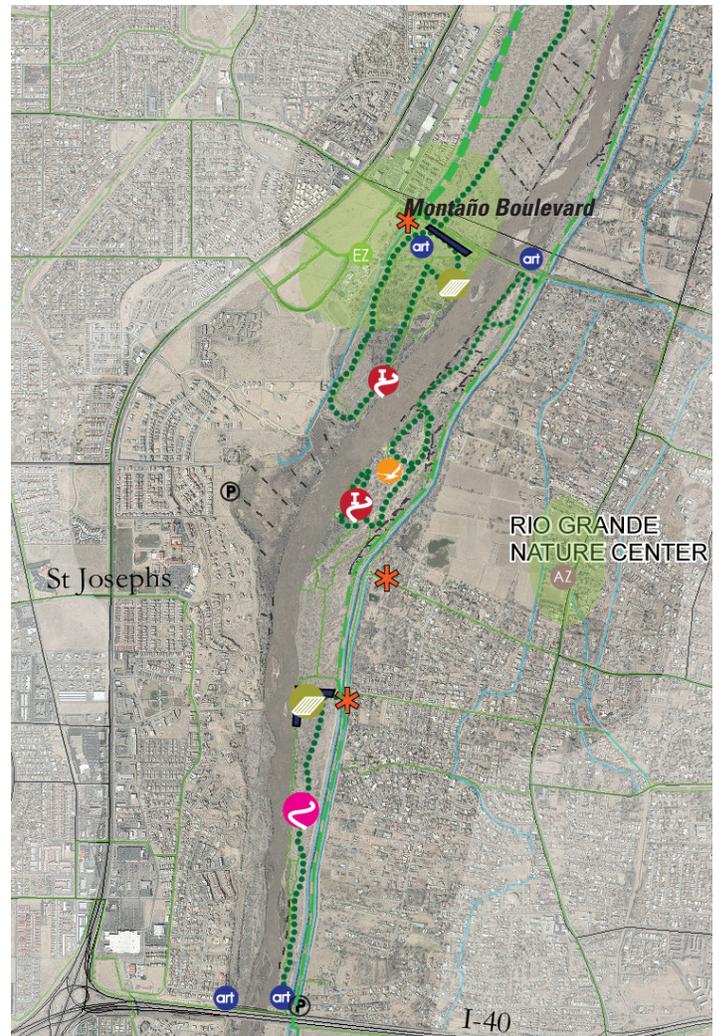






alameda loop

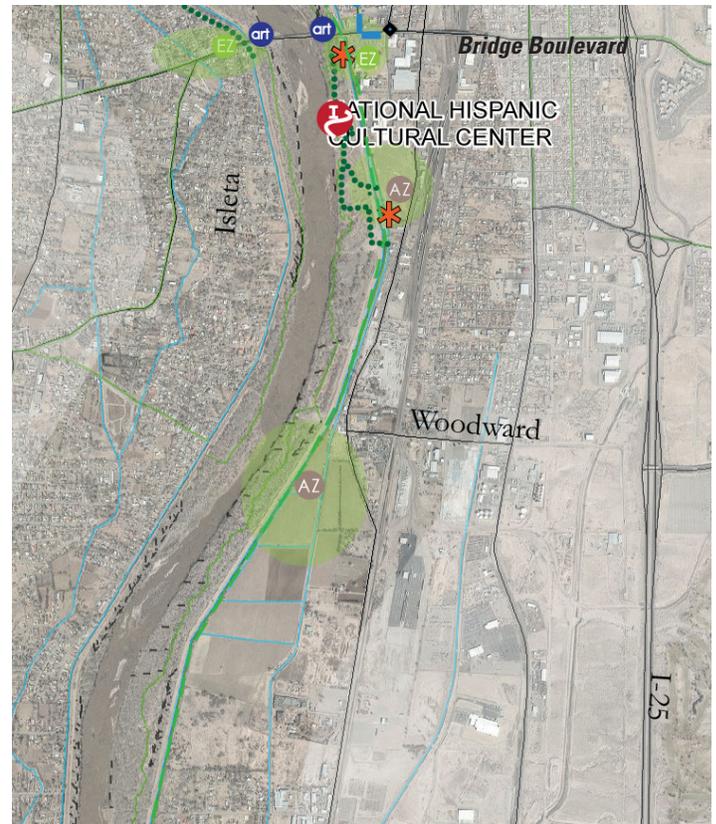
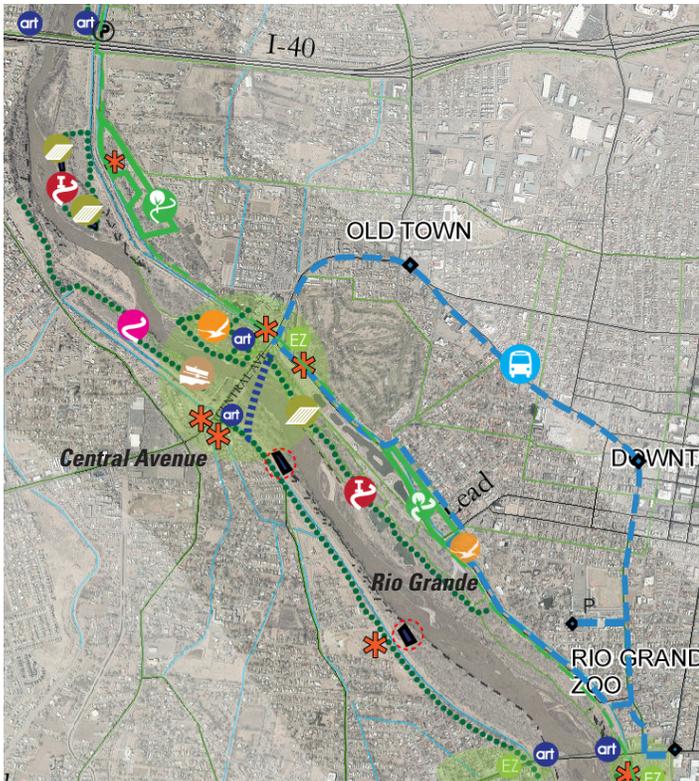
West side trails and a new pedestrian crossing illustrated in this portion of the corridor provide exciting opportunities for improved river access on both sides of the river. A paved path, illustrated on the westside levee, functions much like the Paseo del Bosque on the east side of the river. The path parallels an improved and consolidated soft surface trail in the Bosque, and connects to the regional bike trail system and existing crossings at Alameda, Paseo del Norte, and Montañito. The path also connects to a new pedestrian/bicycle/equestrian bridge that crosses the river near the City of Albuquerque Open Space Visitor Center. The new bridge and associated viewing platform, boardwalk, improved parking at Calabacillas, and interpretive trails provide visitors on both sides of the river with new ways to experience the Rio Grande and the Bosque.



montañito loop

Improvements illustrated in this area reinforce the education and recreation activities already occurring along the river corridor. At the Pueblo Montañito trailhead on the SW side of the bridge, new improvements include an accessible boardwalk that extends along the base of the bridge out into the floodway, a consolidated trail loop, and interpretive exhibits. In the Bosque, in an area near the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park, new improvements include a wildlife observation platforms, interpretive exhibits, and a consolidated trail. At the end of Campbell Road, improvements to access such as signage and site furnishings are proposed, as is a new accessible boardwalk and a consolidated trail that will lead visitors from the Paseo del Bosque and the access area to the river.





central

Improvements illustrated in this area expand on the other recreation, education, and entertainment opportunities associated with the ABQ BioPark and Rio Grande Valley State Park facilities. Proposed improvements include a new park at the end of Mountain Road at the north end of the ABQ BioPark, which will provide a direct connection to the Rio Grande from Old Town. A new pedestrian crossing south of the bridge and a trail along the levee on the west side of the river between Central and Bridge are also proposed. These improvements, in association with the Paseo del Bosque will create a 4-mile river trail loop in the heart of the City. Other improvements include access and parking improvements on the east side of the river on both sides of Central Avenue, improvements to the existing picnic area near the Botanic Garden and Aquarium, a new wildlife observation platform near the Rio Grande Botanic Garden and the Rio Grande Zoo, art installations, consolidated trails, interpretive exhibits, and boat ramps.

hispanic cultural center

New and improved access points, public art and consolidated trails comprise the primary physical improvements illustrated in this area. With coordination, implementation of improvements in this area will reinforce public investments, visitation, and activities associated with the National Hispanic Cultural Center (NHCC), Rio Grande Valley State Park, and the City's Bareslas Railroad Park.



south valley

Improvements in this area of the corridor are focused on improving strategically located public access areas and extending the Paseo del Bosque to the southern boundary of Bernalillo County. Improvements are located near Rio Bravo Boulevard, at the South Diversion Channel, Rio Bravo Park, and Durand Open Space. Additional improvements include a new pedestrian crossing and improvements at the new Valle del Oro National Wildlife Refuge and a new access area at I-25.



In addition to physical improvements related to recreation, conservation, and education, the Corridor Plan includes planning and policy initiatives to Connect, Protect and Excite! Sample projects and initiatives include the following: creation of a river park at Central Avenue, development of urban agriculture zones, creation of UNM flagship farm school, an urban agriculture center near Bridge Boulevard and the Hispanic Cultural Center, Rio Grande water education showcase near Rio Bravo, urban agriculture/restaurant/lodge exploration at Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, and Rio Grande Festival.



implementation

The Implementation Strategy provides a road map for moving forward with the Rio Grande Vision. The following implementation components are included:

- Planning and design guidelines define the critical characteristics and attributes of anticipated improvements and efforts, and explain how they help to Connect, Protect and Excite!
- A preliminary Project Identity Study was prepared at the beginning of this project to begin to explore naming and positioning opportunities for the project. Successful project communications, promotions, wayfinding and signage systems will rely in part on a strong identity and brand. The Rio Grande Vision recommends that Rio Grande Valley State Park serve as the focus for the project identity in order to leverage all of the current and future investments made by multiple jurisdictions, agencies and stakeholders along the 19-mile corridor.
- Compliance with the intent of the Bosque Action Plan and applicable municipal codes and ordinances will be required for design and implementation. Designs will evolve with public input. Improvements within Rio Grande Valley State Park will be reviewed by the Open Space Advisory Board, Middle Grande Conservancy District and the US Bureau of Reclamation. Depending on the type and location of improvements, additional approvals may be required from the US Army Corps of Engineers, the City of Albuquerque’s Environmental Planning Commission and other agencies and jurisdictions.
- The organizational structure associated with the Rio Grande Vision has not been defined, but the Implementation Strategy outlines multiple options for consideration and explains why this is an important feature of the project.
- Phasing is divided into design and planning projects- all of which should provide value and help build momentum for future improvements. These lists are the recommendations for the first projects to go forward from the Rio Grande Vision Plan. Additionally, a list of specific, initial phase improvements are listed in the Appendix accompanied by information on probable cost, potential partnering opportunities, other key stakeholders and corresponding legislative districts.
- Funding will be a determining factor in phasing and implementation. Funding opportunities vary across the project area due to the wide variety of improvements (recreation, conservation, education, agriculture, economic development), jurisdictions and land and water managers. Funding for each project will likely be comprised from multiple sources, and the work effort - research, analysis, writing applications and tracking will require consistent effort.

- Case studies are included in this section to provide motivation, inspiration and information on implementation strategies used in other river cities.

To learn more about ABQ the Plan: The Rio Grande Vision, please visit the project website at www.riograndevision.com or <http://abqtheplan.cabq.gov>. You can also call the Mayor’s Office at 505.768.3000 or send an email to theplan@cabq.gov.





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Photo Credit: Bill Tondreau

OUTREACH



ABQ THE PLAN: THE RIO GRANDE VISION

connect, protect, & excite



concept development | images of the site



the nature center and I-40



introduction

Public outreach related to the Rio Grande Vision began long before the project became a reality. The City of Albuquerque's Mayor Richard J. Berry initiated a conversation with the community in 2011 - looking for ideas and information on preferences for improvements to the river corridor and Rio Grande Valley State Park. Then came ABQ the Plan. The Mayor developed a public outreach strategy so that ABQ the Plan, as it evolved, would become the community's plan. The strategy included presentations, creation of a website with surveys, use of the neighborhood association newsletter for communications, and development of an ABQ the Plan email list to get the word out about meetings and project developments.

The outreach strategy for the Rio Grande Vision, one of several ABQ the Plan projects, used all of the City's tools and added more. The project had its own website and is linked to the City website. Additionally, a series of interviews with subject matter experts contributed to a better understanding of the complexity of stakeholder missions, activities and operations along the Rio Grande. Finally, two committees (a steering committee and a technical committee) provided valuable information, perspectives and direction to the planning team.

The Rio Grande Vision is a conceptual plan. Further planning, design, and outreach will help refine the Vision and the Corridor Plan, and be a requirement for implementation.

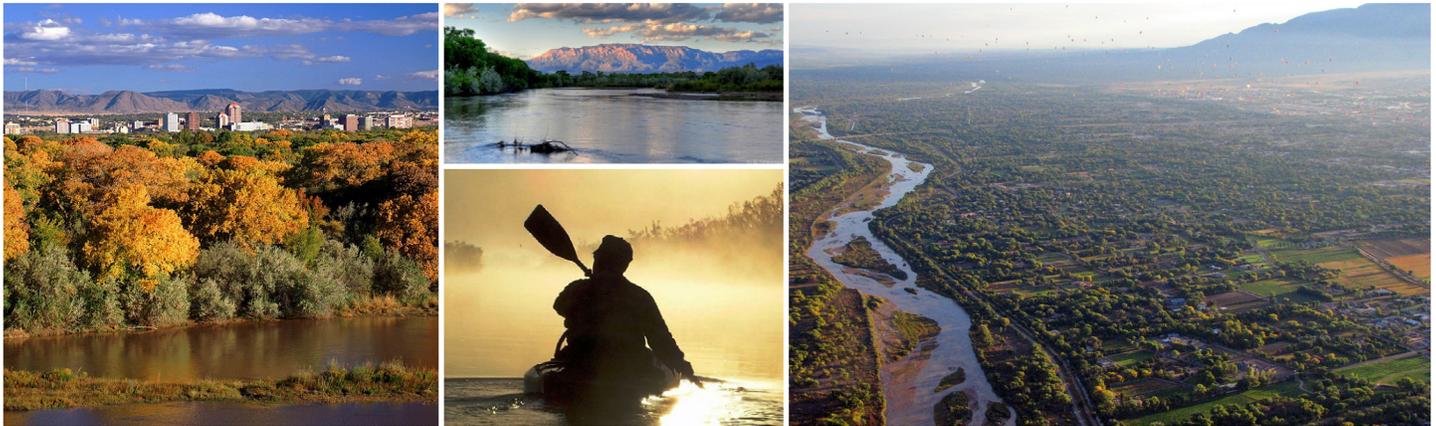
ABQ the Plan

It was important to Mayor Berry that ABQ the Plan be the community's plan, not his or the City Council's. A public involvement & communications plan was developed to educate the community on ABQ the Plan and to obtain public opinion.

presentations

In 2012, the concept of ABQ the Plan was presented at three Town Hall Meetings and three Summerfest events. In addition, the Mayor attended dozens of neighborhood meetings and engaged Albuquerque's thriving business community to continue a dialogue about how we can better invest in our future. In total, the Mayor attended over 100 events with over 40,000 citizens about what this investment could look like, and how it could be accomplished.





presentations to business & community organizations

- Albuquerque Economic Development
- Albuquerque Lawyers Club
- Apartment Association of New Mexico
- Balloon Fiesta Park Charrette
- Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
- Downtown Action Team
- Economic Forum
- Greater ABQ Chamber of Commerce
- I-25 Association
- Johnson Controls
- League of Women Voters
- NAIOP
- Neighborhood Associations and Coalitions
- NM Tech Council
- Realtor groups including Coldwell Banker Legacy
- Rotary Club, Kiwanis
- Sandia National Labs
- UNM School of Architecture & Planning

rio grande vision survey

The information below reflects relevant data collected from the ABQ the Plan website surveys from August 2012 to March 2013. Please note that these were not scientific surveys, but they were used as a means to collect public input.

Online Survey #1: ABQ the Plan

Which ABQ the Plan Projects Are Important To You?

- 1,173 Responses
- This survey was created in August of 2012.
- The surveys asked for a ranking of potential projects.
- Results: Top 5 projects: Rio Grande Enhancements, Bus Rapid Transit, Paseo del Norte and I-25 Interchange, 50-Mile Loop, Route 66 Improvements.

Should we invest in our future?

- Results: 78.4% said Yes

Online Survey #4: Rio Grande Vision

- This survey asked locals how they currently access the river and Bosque and what improvements they'd like to see.
- 489 responses

Where to you live in relationship to the river?

- Results: 58% said within driving distance

Which amenities (some existing, some potentially in the future) appeal to you most? (Check all that apply):

- Results (top selections): trails for cyclists and walkers, boardwalks and paths, dining, boat rental

Where would you like to see these amenities?

- Results: Top selection was All of the Above (Alameda, Montañito, Central, Hispanic Cultural Center, South Valley)

Comments:

Add shops or food along the Rio Grande / Preserve the Bosque and keep it clean / Protect the Bosque/ Do not touch the Bosque at all/ Promote enjoying the outdoors with biking, running, shopping, kayaking, paddle boarding / Get people outdoors and staying healthy and fit. / Create a tourist attraction for out of staters / keep the younger generation here.

ABQ the Plan newsletters

ABQ the Plan projects have been discussed in the monthly Neighborhood Newsletter, which is distributed to approximately 600 recipients and is viewed online by approximately 1200-1500 people. In addition, the ABQ the Plan e-newsletter has been distributed monthly to approximately 500 subscribers.

ABQ the Plan website

ABQ the Plan is a feature of the City of Albuquerque website. The ABQ the Plan page includes information on each project and links to project websites, so that visitors can learn more about the projects, be notified of upcoming meetings and review project documents. The website also invites visitors to share their opinions and participate in an online survey.

<http://abqtheplan.cabq.gov>





committees

Two volunteer committees generously provided their time and expertise to assist the City with development of the Rio Grande Vision. The Steering Committee was comprised of various community leaders and advocates of the Rio Grande and Bosque. The Technical Committee was comprised primarily of public sector subject matter experts including land and water managers for the Rio Grande and Bosque. Both committees met with the planning team three times between September and December 2012.

steering committee

Barbara Baca, COA Parks and Recreation
 Betty Rivera, COA Cultural Services Department
 Bob Murphy, Economic Forum
 Dan Shaw, Bosque Ecological Monitoring Program
 Elaine Hebard, Resident
 Geraldine Forbes, UNM School of Architecture and Planning
 Greg Foltz, Coldwell Banker Commercial
 Heather Wess, Routes Rentals and Tours
 Jerry Widdison, Open Space Advisory Board
 Jay Rembe, Infill Solutions
 John Kelly, MRGCD, Board of Directors
 Josh Skarsgard, ABQ the Plan Implementation Committee
 Matt Schmader, COA Open Space Division
 Michael Hayes, Quiet Waters Paddling Adventures
 Roger Schluntz, UNM School of Architecture and Planning
 Steve Harris, Far Flung Adventures
 Suzie Lubar, COA Planning Department
 Tania Armenta, Albuquerque Convention and Visitor's Bureau

technical committee

Alf Simon, UNM School of Architecture and Planning
 Alicia Austin Johnson, US Army Corps of Engineers
 Andrew Hautzinger, US Fish and Wildlife
 Beth Dillingham, Rio Grande Nature Center State Park Beth.
 Clay Campbell, Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation
 Dennis Wilson, US Bureau of Reclamation
 Grant Brodehl, Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation
 Jerry Lovato, AMAFCA
 Jim Wilber, US Bureau of Reclamation
 Jose Viramontes, US Fish and Wildlife
 Joseph Maestas, US Bureau of Reclamation
 Judith Wong, COA Parks and Recreation
 Julie Luna, Mid-Region Council of Governments
 Kelly Gossett, NM Kayak Instruction
 Matt Schmader, COA Open Space Division
 Mike Hamman, US Bureau of Reclamation
 Ray Gomez, MRGCD
 Rick Billings, ABCWUA
 Rick Janser, ABQ BioPark
 Subhas Shah, MRGCD
 Tom Harvey, US Fish and Wildlife





interviews

Over the course of the project, primarily from August to November 2012, the project team interviewed land and water managers and subject matter experts to gain information on existing conditions, planning, operations and management activities on the Rio Grande, in the Bosque and on lands adjacent to Rio Grande Valley State Park. The following entities generously shared their knowledge and time with the planning team:

- Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority
- Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority
- Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation
- Bosque Ecological Monitoring Program
- City of Albuquerque: Cultural Services and ABQ BioPark, Parks and Recreation and Open Space Division, Fire Department, Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency, Planning Department, Police Department
- City of Rio Rancho Parks and Recreation
- Commonweal Conservancy
- McCune Foundation
- Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District
- Mid-Region Council of Governments
- National Hispanic Cultural Center
- Organizers in the Land of Enchantment
- Skarsgard Farms
- South Valley Economic Development Center/Rio Grande Community Development Corporation
- South Valley Regional Association of Acequias
- State of New Mexico Rio Grande Nature Center State Park
- The Nature Conservancy
- University of New Mexico: Biology, Civil Engineering, & Sustainability Studies Departments (Dr.'s Cliff Dahm, Mark Stone and Bruce Milne)
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Bureau of Reclamation
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Village of Corrales
- Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque

missions and goals

The primary focus of initial interviews was to understand the missions, roles and responsibilities of the land and water managers along the Rio Grande corridor. The project team also wanted to attain a better understanding of how and when there was interaction or collaboration, and engage the participants in a dialogue about opportunities for improvements along the river. The interviews were informative and promising - with each participant expressing interest in the process, and in opportunities for stronger collaboration and coordination of projects and activities along the Rio Grande.

Interviews revolved around the following questions:

1. What is your organization's mission and management role related to the Rio Grande?
2. What do you think your organization can contribute to the overall economic and recreational enhancement of the river, and what obstacles do you face?
3. Is your organization involved in major projects along the Rio Grande corridor in the vicinity of Albuquerque? Where?
4. Do you have thoughts on new opportunities/ideas for connecting the community to the river? Where should this happen?
5. Which crossings hold the most promise for connecting people to the river? Why?

visions for the future

The Rio Grande and the Bosque are an integral part of many communities and many lives, and we were repeatedly reminded of this during our interviews. Tony Gallegos of the South Valley Economic Development Center, for example, described a vision for the Bridge Boulevard area that reflected its role as a historical trade center with ferries, pedestrian and vehicular bridges fostering a strong connection between east and west. Betty Rivera of Albuquerque's Cultural Services Department, described





a vision for river-related destinations that relied on the amenities found in Rio Grande Valley State Park and that complemented activities at existing nearby ABQ BioPark facilities. Other suggestions included emphasizing and celebrating the river and its role in the City - highlighting the physical transition from city to Bosque to river; educating the public about the relatedness of the Rio Grande and Albuquerque’s agricultural heritage; and exploring the river’s role in the transformative potential for community food production.

Many interview participants- agencies, academics, environmentalists, and community members alike, supported a “centralized monitoring clearinghouse,” as the Bosque Biological Management Plan describes it, that would represent all the priorities, coordinate activities and foster stewardship for the future of the Rio Grande and its watershed.¹ At this stage, the Endangered Species Collaborative is the only venue/organization where all land and water managers are represented. It is our understanding that the focus of this group’s activities is narrow - a response to an evolving regulatory mandate to address endangered species issues in a coordinated manner.

So what would river oversight and coordination look like? Suggestions included an Authority (as is used in some regions in Texas), a coalition, a regional planning entity or a new role for an existing entity like the Open Space Advisory Board. There was not a consensus among interview participants on the best way to do this, and several participants expressed the need for continued autonomy. One scenario included the new entity overseeing the few first Rio Grande Vision projects to completion. Some groups, like the Nature Conservancy, pointed out that creating a coalition would be a good first step, as opposed to setting up a new organization, like a foundation, which would then require resources just to keep it going.

¹ *Middle Rio Grande Ecosystem: Bosque Biological Management Plan.: The First Decade: A Review & Update.* (BBMP) Robert, Lisa, prepared in cooperation with the Middle Rio Grande Bosque Initiative and the Bosque Improvement Group. Albuquerque, 2005.

Many participants in the interviews spoke of the urgency of promoting a vision for the future. Ted Harrison of Commonweal Conservancy and Cliff Dahm at UNM among others encouraged this project to be ambitious. They pointed to many communities that have taken on stewardship of its river and watershed as a major commitment, for example, Brisbane, Australia has a ten day river festival, which includes entertainment as well as ecological symposiums on the future of the river. They also emphasized that an effort toward more collective stewardship could not be more timely - due to ongoing drought and the scarcity of water. Currently, there is not enough water in the Rio Grande to sustain many wildlife species, to overflow its banks, and to promote natural cottonwood recruitment in addition to serving sovereign nation/tribal, municipal, and agriculture demands. Flooding the Rio Grande for cottonwood recruitment and other ecological goals has not occurred since 2005 due to drought conditions. Without coordinated conservation and restoration efforts including flooding, it is anticipated that the Bosque, part of the largest cottonwood-willow forest on the continent, will disappear.

Most interview participants acknowledged that the physical and jurisdictional complexity of the Rio Grande calls for sophisticated solutions. Projects fostering multi-disciplinary/multi-jurisdictional cooperation and promoting the river as a complex and rich ecosystem were cited as requirements for river protection. The development of the Valle del Oro Wildlife Refuge, and the subsequent partnership of AMAFCA and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to manage stormwater quality with constructed wetlands, were cited as promising, ecologically-based responses to current challenges.



connect -

- *make the Rio Grande and the Bosque more present in the daily lives of local citizens*
- *connect to a bigger vision - the blue/green trail that will connect new mexico to colorado and texas*
- *strengthen the surrounding character of the city near the river with new land uses and elements that celebrate their proximity to the Rio Grande*
- *connect with all the water and land managers in the corridor- MRGCD, US Bureau of Reclamation, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife, Interstate Stream Commission, NM State Parks, Bernalillo County, Albuquerque Bernalillo Water Utility Authority, to define improvements and collaboratively implement the plan*

protect -

- *promote a more naturally functioning river system*
 - *mimicking historic flows; freeing the river to do its own work, including returning areas of the landscape to a more natural, diverse state- i.e. wet meadow areas and back channels; maintaining wildlife connectivity; supporting high flows; respecting ground-water interactions; identifying and protecting lands with priority water rights; integrating water quality with water management; and extending restoration to the watershed.*
- *integrate the management along the Rio Grande and its contributing watersheds*
 - *sharing data; minimizing rivalry and isolated initiatives; prioritizing and funding ecosystem basics; learning the lessons; and putting the 'ecosystem' first*
- *build consensus and partnership through active outreach*
 - *promoting a strong water conservation ethic; engaging the public and soliciting community action*
- *note that these priorities above are included in the Middle Rio Grande Ecosystem Bosque Biological Management Plan and its update*
- *promote land use patterns that will strengthen the ecosystem, showcase the restoration efforts and reveal the natural and cultural processes at work*

excite -

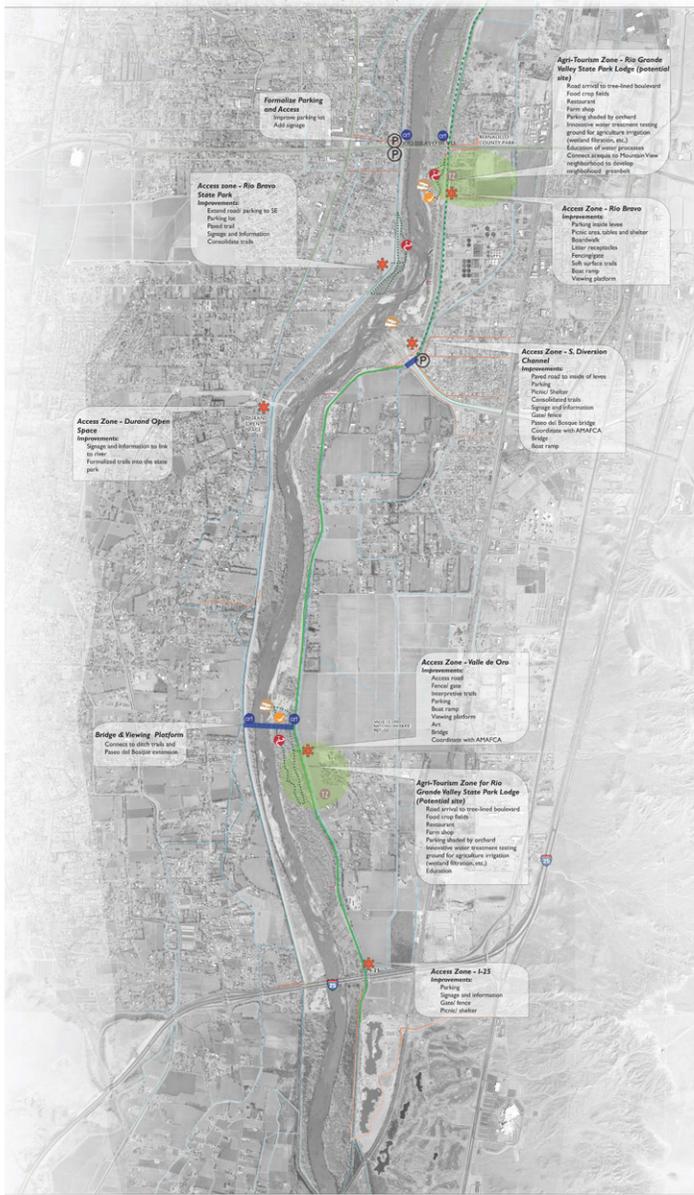
- *communicate a bold vision*
- *provide meaningful and well maintained amenities that communities want*
- *phase improvements and identify initial projects that will build momentum for future phases*
 - *get a new project going to inspire future direction*
 - *allow for public opinion to assess concepts and revise direction*





ABQ THE PLAN: THE RIO GRANDE VISION
connect, protect, & excite

concept development | south



preliminary corridor plan southern section - december 2012

public meetings

City staff held four joint town hall meetings for the Rio Grande Vision and the 50-Mile Loop. These meetings were held in October of 2012 at the Albuquerque Museum and the Open Space Visitor's Center, and in December at the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park and the Open Space Visitor's Center.

All Town Hall Sessions were publicized and all of the Rio Grande Vision documents presented at these meetings were made available on the Rio Grande Vision website.



Town Hall Meeting
December 4th & 5th, 2012

Comment Form for:
(Check one or both)

- Rio Grande Vision Project
- 50-Mile Loop Project

Please provide comments on this form, and place it in the comment box. Comments may also be emailed to theplan@cabq.gov



(clockwise) RGVSP sign, siphon area, bird tracks in the river bed, Rio Grande south of Central Avenue



website

www.riograndevision.com

A project website was created at the beginning of the Rio Grande Vision project. The website was created to provide project transparency, provide a consistent message about the goals of the project, provide public access to project documents, and to provide information on upcoming public meetings.

Links to the ABQ the Plan website are available from the project website and vice versa. Long term, it is the intent of the City to keep the project website updated and running, so the public can stay connected to the project as it moves into implementation.

<http://abqtheplan.cabq.gov>

Gallery

[Home](#) » [Gallery](#)

[SITE IMAGES](#)



[Slideshow](#)
[View 107 photos](#)

[OCTOBER PUBLIC MEETINGS](#)



[Slideshow](#)
[View 5 photos](#)

[SPRING 2012 RIVER TOUR WITH MAYOR BERRY](#)



ABQ THE PLAN: THE RIO GRANDE VISION

CONNECT, PROTECT AND EXCITE!



[HOME](#) [NEWS & EVENTS](#) [PROJECT DOCUMENTS](#) [FEEDBACK](#) [GALLERY](#) [CONTACT](#) [COMMITTEES](#)

Welcome to Albuquerque's Rio Grande Vision

Albuquerque's Rio Grande Vision is about connecting Albuquerque to the river, and protecting the spectacular amenity and resource that flows through the heart of our community. The Rio Grande Corridor in Albuquerque is a hidden ecological jewel that needs to be seen and experienced in order to be fully appreciated by the community and protected for future generations. The Mayor's Office is leading a team of planners, engineers, designers, scientists and economists who will be evaluating conditions along the river. The planning team will be reaching out to the community to learn more about the Rio Grande in Albuquerque, and then developing concepts that will protect the Rio Grande while making it an integral part of people's lives. Please click on [News & Events](#) and [Project Documents](#) to learn more about the project.

ABQ the Plan is a city-wide public project/public investments plan that will spur private investment, improve quality of life for residents, promote tourism and bring new dollars to Albuquerque, enhance economic development and bring new jobs to Albuquerque. The Rio Grande Vision project is one of several ABQ the Plan initiatives designed around a new Vision for Albuquerque as a great outdoor city, a city of innovation and creativity, and a sustainable community. [Click to learn more about](#)

WANT TO RECEIVE E-NEWS?

[Subscribe to the ABQ the Plan e-news list by clicking here](#)





ABQ THE PLAN: THE RIO GRANDE VISION

CONNECT, PROTECT AND EXCITE!



Photo Credit: Bill Tondreau

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

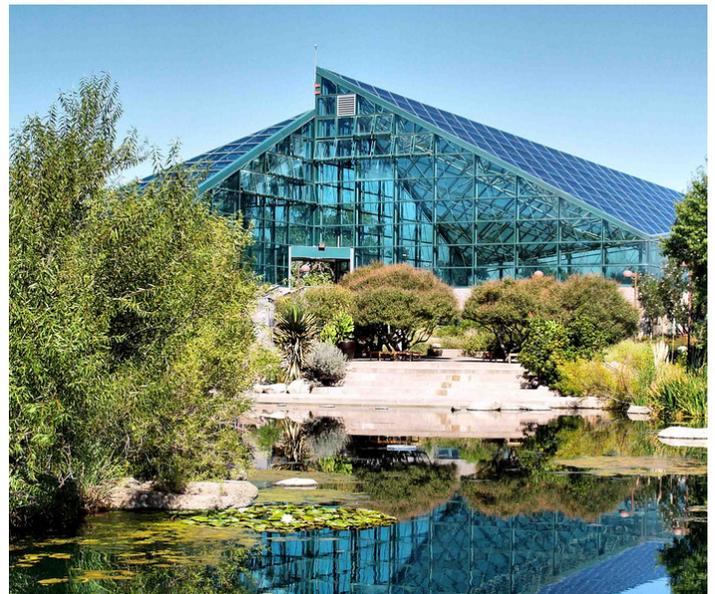
introduction

The Rio Grande Vision Corridor Plan is a conceptual plan for improvements along the Rio Grande in Albuquerque that will Connect, Protect and Excite! Developed following an extensive research and analysis phase and a multi-faceted public outreach effort, the corridor plan reflects strategic decisions to:

- Ensure that improvements and changes foster enjoyment and understanding of the Bosque and river, and support existing conservation and restoration efforts.
- Provide new, high quality recreation, restoration and educational improvements that will help connect a broader portion of the population to the river.
- Focus improvements in areas that are already disturbed or in use by the public
- Consolidate existing trails and paths in order to reduce land disturbance and facilitate Bosque and river restoration
- Distribute improvements along the river to leverage existing public investment and optimize community access
- Encourage public and private partnerships and investment in areas along the river outside of the levees and Rio Grande Valley State Park, where river related uses could reinforce our community's heritage and provide long-lasting community benefits
- Improve wayfinding to the river and Bosque, and include a strategically placed, coordinated signage system that will help people find their way to Rio Grande Valley State Park and help them navigate through the park

The Rio Grande Vision is not a recreation plan. It is a conceptual plan comprised of recreation, conservation and education principles, practices and improvements that will provide a wider variety of ways for citizens of all ages and abilities to experience and learn about the Rio Grande and the Bosque.

To date, the focus of most funding and improvements within the Bosque and along the river has been restoration and conservation. These efforts by MRGCD, City of Albuquerque Open Space Division, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Bureau of Reclamation and US Fish and Wildlife Service are ongoing. The Rio Grande Vision Corridor Plan supplements and complements these efforts with additional recreation, restoration and education improvements. By deliberately creating new and different opportunities for public interaction with the river and the Bosque, more people will begin to see the Rio Grande as both an amenity and a resource. These people will become stewards of the river - protecting it for generations to come.





LITTLE KNOWN FACTS

- *The Rio Grande in Albuquerque is part of Rio Grande Valley State Park which is one of the 25 largest parks in an urban area in the U.S and more than 5 times larger than Central Park*
- *The Bosque is part of the largest cottonwood-willow forest on the North American continent and is at least 1.25 million years old*
- *The Rio Grande flows through one of the few active rift valleys on earth and is the fourth longest river in North America*
- *Native peoples have lived along and farmed in the river valley continuously for over 2,500 years*
- *Albuquerque has more wild edges and sections of river than almost any other comparable U.S. city*
- *The ABQ BioPark is located right next to the Rio Grande and has over 500,000 visitors annually*





vision - connect to the wild

what do we want the rio grande to be in 30 years?

goals

- Ensure that improvements in the corridor Protect and Connect
- Celebrate the transition areas between the built environment and the Wild
- Strengthen and leverage existing public infrastructure and investments
- Balance the scale and placement of improvements to benefit the entire community
- Integrate wild, natural and restoration areas into the mosaic of corridor improvements

design principles

connect

- Connect citizens to the Rio Grande and the Bosque by making it easier to access and by providing a variety of opportunities for activities and experiences.
- Connect citizens in the community by involving them in environmental education and stewardship.
- Connect to a bigger vision - the Blue/Green Trail located in and along the Rio Grande, that will connect New Mexico communities, and connect New Mexico to Colorado and Texas.
- Connect all of the water and land managers in the corridor so that they can collaboratively refine the details of improvements and implement the plan.



protect

- Protect the Rio Grande by promoting a more naturally functioning river system.
- Protect the Bosque with conservation and restoration projects in areas such as reclaimed trails. Showcase conservation and restoration efforts to reveal the natural and cultural processes at work.
- Conducting ongoing monitoring of habitat to document changes - especially in areas of public use.
- Protect the ecosystem through integrated, coordinated and collaborative best practices operations and management along the Rio Grande and contributing watersheds.
- Protect the corridor's public and natural qualities: locate improvements in disturbed areas and limit the development of structures inside the levees.



excite

- Be bold and persistent in implementing improvements that connect and protect.
- Be strategic by incrementally building and maintaining high quality recreation/education improvements that the community wants.
- Strengthen the surrounding character of the city near the river with new land uses and elements that celebrate their proximity to the Rio Grande.
- Be inclusive by engaging the community to refine the Rio Grande Vision - building public pride in the river and creating stewards of this ecological gem.
 - *phase improvements and identify initial projects that will build momentum for future phases*
 - *get a new project going to inspire future direction*
 - *allow for public opinion to assess concepts*
 - *build consensus and partnership through active outreach*



elements

The corridor plan is comprised of elements - programs, policies and improvements that will help connect people to the river, protect the Rio Grande and excite the community about the beautiful, ecologically rich resource in their midst. The next few pages illustrated excerpts from the Elements boards that were presented to the public in December 2012.





boardwalks & paths 

- upgrade trails - access made more deliberate, maintained & secure - instills pride & care
- raise walks to protect ecologically sensitive areas & allow for wildlife passage
- use material from uplands thinning projects
- reclaim unneeded trails



boat launches / ramps / access 

- facilitate & add infrastructure:
 - paddling access in city
 - portage path at diversion



pedestrian bridges 

- connect west and east sides
- provide views
- low impact design



access area 

- consistent experience: hours, parking, amenities, signage and security
- low impact design
- education opportunity



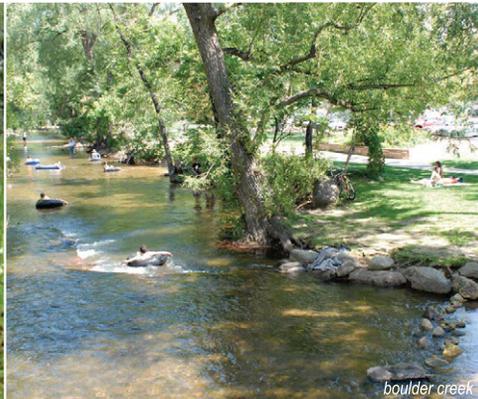
wildlife observation platform 

- view of bosque and river
- scientific monitoring
- education
- sculptural/artful
- bird watching





rio grande at ohkay owingeh pueblo



boulder creek

natural public parks

- restore areas and integrate amenities
- use naturalistic design
- provide clear access and transitions from “developed” to “wild”



central park event



wayfinding & education

- get people to the river
- have consistent messaging
- provide easy access to maps, apps and QR codes



Poetry - The Language of Conservation



Seed Bomb dispenser:

interpretive trails showcasing restoration

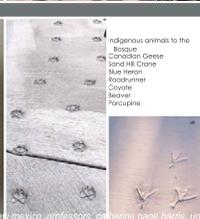
- educational/ecological monuments
- interpretive trails
- interactive exhibits
- art
- restoration



rio grande bosque restoration and educational



Bosque Animal Tracks



indigenous animals to the bosque: Condor, Grebe, Sand Hill Crane, Blue Heron, Pyrochroa, Coyote, Badger, Porcupine



assistant professor art and ecology, assistant professor biology



nils-udo



patrick dougherty - ruaille-buaille

art

- ecological and land art
- cultural art
- river related monuments



user facilities - restrooms

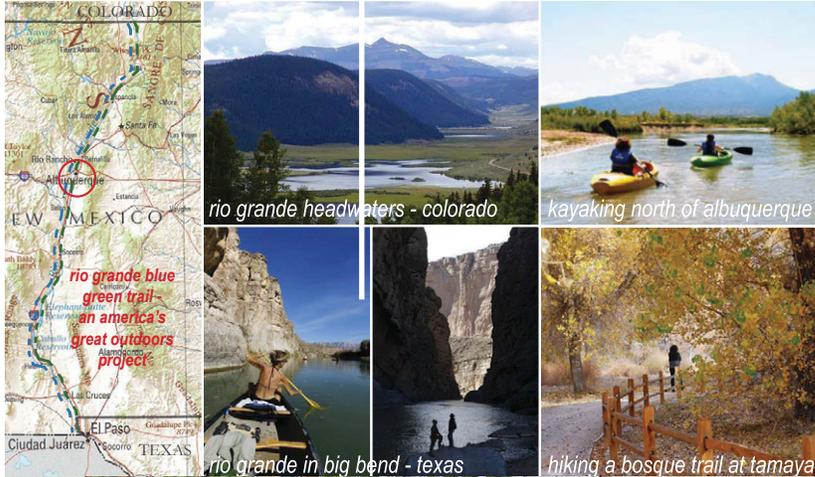


integrated viewing platforms

facility infrastructure

- parking
- restrooms
- viewing platforms
- seating/shelter
- security





rio grande headwaters - colorado

kayaking north of albuquerque

rio grande in big bend - texas

hiking a bosque trail at tamaya

albuquerque to promote NM blue/green trail

- extend along full length of rio grande state park:
 - paseo del bosque trail
 - connect paths + direct around sensitive areas
 - facilitate paddling
- albuquerque plays leadership role to extend throughout NM



ecozones

- each zone is a unique ecological +/- or economic development opportunity
- i.e. central crossing

conceptual design



restaurant with overlook patio

restaurant outside the levee overlooking the bosque

- restaurant outside of levee
- outdoor spaces (decks, platforms and terraces) at or inside the levee
- patio overlooks bosque and connects to trails
- raised structures used to minimize impact, ideally placed in previously disturbed areas





tree-lined drive



restaurant

los poblanos as a model



agricultural fields supply market and restaurant



farm store



rio grande valley state park lodge adjacent to the bosque

- celebrate and fund the park
- provide education of rio grande's agricultural heritage
- leading agri-tourism site



music venue



farmer's market

rio grande festival

- weekend event at four Central corners & around the Alameda pedestrian bridge, build up to week-long at multiple sites
- float event put in at Alameda, take out at Central
- cultural rio grande tour, major entities hold events, shuttle connects
- scientific conferences - where we are with the rio grande ecology
- guided nature walks



floating event



food trucks

cultural loop



- multi-modal
- connects destinations
- provides opportunities for shared parking



parking - low impact



cultural shuttle loop



project area map

This map shows improvements in the corridor that are intended to Connect and Protect. Disturbed areas within the levees are priority sites for project improvements. No private development is proposed inside the levees.

KEY

- PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE 
- WILDLIFE OBSERVATION PLATFORM 
- AGRI-TOURISM ZONE 
- ECO-ZONE 
- ART 
- ACCESS AREA 
- PARKING 
- BOARDWALK 
- TRAIL 
- BOAT RAMP 
- INTERPRETIVE TRAIL 
- PARK / PROMENADE 
- CULTURAL LOOP 
- PAVED TRAIL 
- SOFT TRAIL 

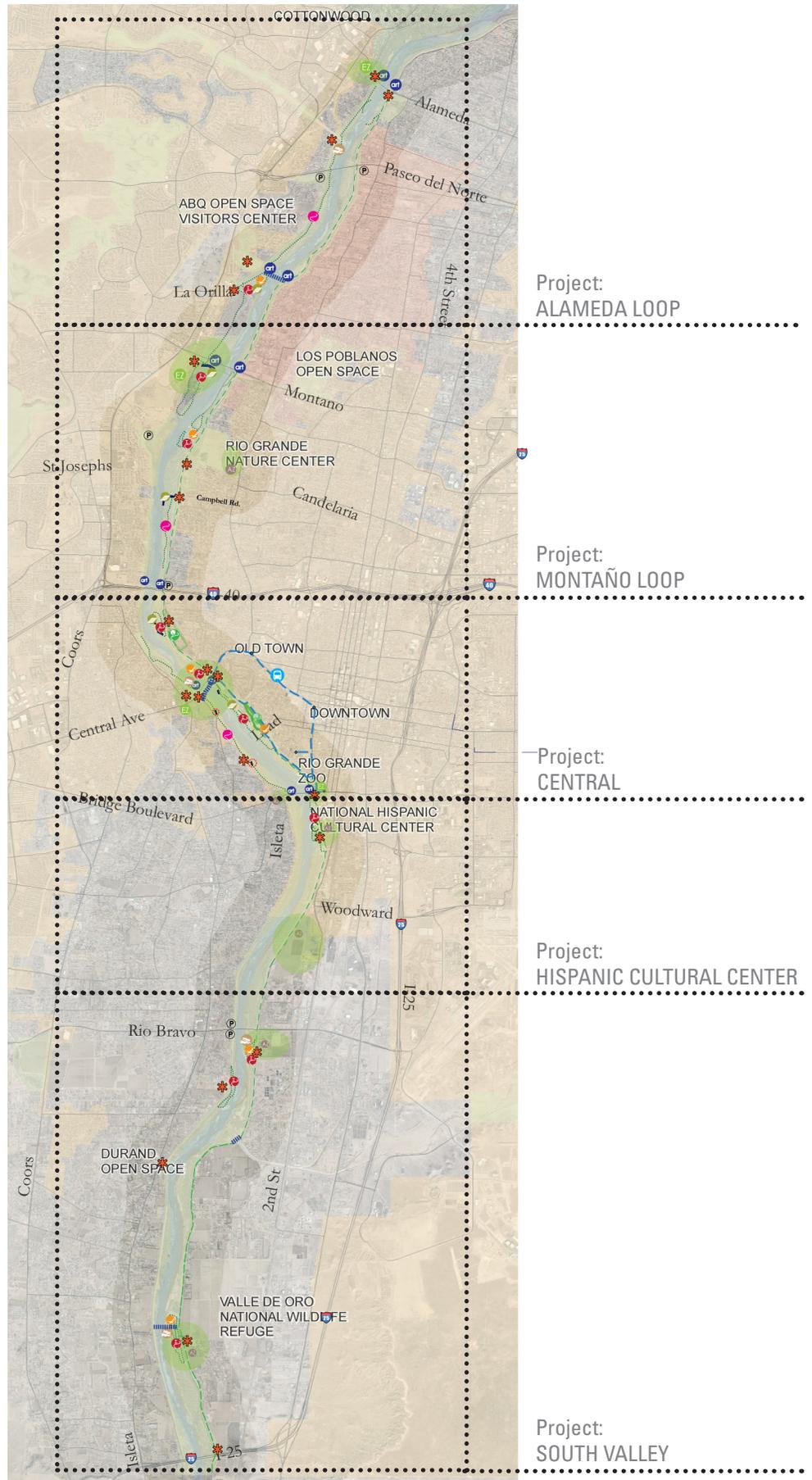
EXISTING

- EXISTING / NOT IMPROVED 
- PAVED TRAIL 

JURISDICTION

- ALBUQUERQUE 
- CORRALES 
- LOS RANCHOS 
- RIO RANCHO 

LEGEND



corridor plan

The Rio Grande Vision Corridor Plan is a conceptual plan for improvements along the Rio Grande in Albuquerque that will Connect, Protect and Excite! The Rio Grande Vision Corridor Plan is comprised of several pieces: goal and principle statements (see previous pages), the plan, elements of the plan, detailed illustrations and descriptions of proposed improvements along the Rio Grande, and visualization studies that illustrate what the plan components might look like.

connect

The majority of the improvements proposed in the Corridor Plan are focused on connecting the community to the Rio Grande and the Bosque. The Elements represent a kit of parts approach to improving recreation, conservation, and education conditions in the corridor. Improvements, strategically placed within and along the perimeter of RGVSP, provide new and different ways for community members and visitors to experience the Rio Grande and Bosque. This structure provides flexibility for implementation, allowing the City of Albuquerque, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) and other public and private partners to continue planning, design and implementation of the Corridor Plan in phases.

protect

Protection of the Rio Grande and the Bosque is integral to the Corridor Plan. It is the literal centerpiece of the project as well as the concept - Connect, Protect, and Excite! The City of Albuquerque, the MRGCD and the US Army Corps of Engineers have been responsible for leading the majority of Bosque restoration and protection activities in Rio Grande Valley State Park, and this conservation work will continue. Much of the work has been related to meeting requirements related to the Endangered Species Act. Millions of dollars have been spent on river and Bosque restoration work and the work is ongoing. Additionally, Rio Grande Nature Center State Park provides educational programs to 10,000 people annually. The Rio Grande Vision Corridor Plan is supplemental and complementary to these efforts. The mosaic of natural and restored areas in the Bosque, and the unique environment found within the floodway are the reasons that many people are drawn to RGVSP. The purpose of the Rio Grande Vision Corridor Plan is to provide a framework for strategic restoration, recreation and education improvements within the mosaic of natural areas, that will expand public opportunities to experience the river and Bosque in a safe, fun, and respectful way.

Corridor Plan principles include focusing new improvements in disturbed or busy areas that are already in use by the public, consolidating existing trails and paths, and then facilitating river and Bosque restoration efforts in the abandoned trail areas. Ideally the amount of newly disturbed area would be less than the amount of abandoned and restored trail areas, and we recommend investigating this approach for future projects.





The Corridor Plan will have a very light footprint in the Bosque and River area.

- Total Corridor Plan Area = 4228.5 acres (this includes RGVSP and some areas adjacent to the river, but outside of the park boundary)
- Natural/Undeveloped Area Needed for Improvements = 20.6 acres (does not include improvement areas on degraded/developed land)
- Estimated Area of Abandoned + Restored Trails = 6 acres
- Estimated Net Area of Natural/Undeveloped Land Needed for Improvements = 14.6 acres
- Natural Areas Developed within the Corridor Plan, as a Percentage of the Total Corridor Plan Area = 0.35%

We do understand that there is concern about increasing the number of people who visit the river and Bosque. However, local public safety officials believe that promoting appropriate public access will create a safer RGVSP by increasing observation of the Bosque and river, and putting pressure on people who are engaged in illegal activities in the Bosque to go elsewhere. This is one example of how the Corridor Plan is guided by Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles- a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring crime through environmental design. Another example of this is the creation of coordinated new and renovated Access Areas along the corridor. A hierarchy of Access Areas is planned to provide a reliable combination of amenities such as consistent signage and wayfinding elements, restrooms, parking, sitting areas, and shelters. New and regular visitors to each Access Area will be able to depend on consistent service and orientation features, and be able to quickly learn how to navigate into, around and through RGVSP. Currently, access to RGVSP is not well promoted, is inconsistently marked, and even the access hours are not coordinated between the City of Albuquerque, Bernalillo County and the NM State Parks Division. Local Public Safety officials encourage the introduction of more recreation/conservation/education visitors to the river corridor via well-appointed, coordinated access areas, with the belief that this will encourage visitation by people who will keep an eye on the RGVSP and become stewards of the Bosque and River.

excite

The Corridor Plan is a conceptual plan. New features along the river - boardwalks, wildlife observation platforms, river crossings, interpretive exhibits, boat ramps, trails and art, will provide exciting, fun and compelling ways for people to experience the Bosque and the river. There is more public outreach, design and detailing that needs to occur to refine the Corridor Plan components and their locations- providing opportunities to build public support and participation in the implementation of the

Corridor Plan.



a diversified approach

The Corridor Plan is designed to strike a sustainable and energizing balance between Connect, Protect and Excite!

This diversified approach for the Corridor Plan, with many types of improvements that address a wide variety of community interests is inclusive: developed with public input; reflecting a broad range of community needs; respectful of existing policies and regulations developed with community input; inclusive of new policies designed to protect long and short term community interests; and designed to attract segments of the community who are underserved or unengaged with the River.

During development of the Corridor Plan this diversified approach was well received by steering and technical committee representatives and participating land and water managers. Presentations to the public, however, were challenging. There was a large amount of information to communicate, and not enough time to do this well and have a meaningful dialogue/discussion. Many of the most vocal opponents- most of whom were concerned about the Bosque, did not appear to understand the Corridor Plan and/or did not agree with the intent of the project. This may be because Bosque protection has been the passion and focus of so many people for so many years. While one of the goals of the project is to connect people to the River, some participants clearly indicated that they did not want to make it easier or more convenient for people to visit the river because they were concerned about the negative impacts that more visitors would have on wildlife, and on the quiet natural environment that they treasured. Some participants did not want to see any improvements to the river and Bosque area. It was clear from these comments that participants felt that a coordinated effort to do anything but restoration in the Bosque was a step backward and should be met with opposition. This suggests several things for the project as it moves forward: that more public outreach and involvement is needed during design; that a more scientific approach to surveying the community, such as focus groups or phone surveys, might be appropriate to better communicate project information and solicit public opinion, and that improvements to project communication and messaging will be needed as components of the project move forward into further planning and design.

There are other river-related issues that are connected to Bosque preservation, and which are similarly important to serving long term community interests.

What will the river and its Bosque be like in the ... year 2025, and in the year 2050?"¹ What would central New Mexico be like without the river and its riparian areas? Would the community still exist? Would the area's history or the diversity of its people be as rich? These remain central questions for the Rio Grande in Albuquerque.

The Rio Grande Vision is about making the river a bigger part of people's lives. For those of us who frequent the river, there is a shared appreciation of the history, the beauty, and the always surprising and impressive scale and presence of such a large natural area in the midst of the city.

"...In common with the earliest inhabitants, [we] see a living environment that has inherent beauty and worth."² The Rio Grande drew Albuquerque's early residents to its banks, and a breadbasket and trading center for a wide regional area grew out of the natural riches. Today that heritage remains a source of beauty and a foundation for our communities. "What we are talking about when we talk about the river is a whole culture, an economy, a way of life... we associate the river with the farmland that surrounds it. And in order to retain the health of the river and keep the river the way we want to see it, vibrant and healthy, we must also protect agriculture."³

Working to keep water running through the Rio Grande is a near universal goal, sustaining the natural beauty and function that gives life to the Bosque, its wildlife, our people, and our culture. This will take leadership, as many sources vitally need more water than is available. "The life of the Rio Grande depends on the long-term vision of the people around it and their willingness to implement that vision... the big decisions."⁴ A key opportunity lies in that many uses are mutually supportive, for example, restoring the ecology supports agricultural productivity, while irrigation along the Rio Grande's floodplains recharges our ground water aquifers. Community-developed pilot projects can study and model efforts that enrich our natural bounty and share these lessons broadly, bringing them into a full public forum. Policy can support such forward movement.

1 *La Vida Del Río Grande, Our River - Our Life. A Symposium-May 24, 2002. Restoration and Monitoring on the Rio Grande.* Cynthia Abeyta.

2 *Reining in the Rio Grande, People, Land, and Water.* Phillips, Fred M., and G. Emlen Hall, and Mary E. Black. Albuquerque: UNM Press, 2011.

3 *La Vida Del Río Grande... Acequia Communities and the Privatization of Water,* Paula Garcia, New Mexico Acequia Association

4 Phillips et al.



visualization: before + after studies

Pages 34-39 are intended to illustrate how some of the corridor plan elements might transform certain areas of the river corridor. The intent of these images is to illustrate opportunities for new ways to experience the river in ways that connect, protect and excite!

corridor plan

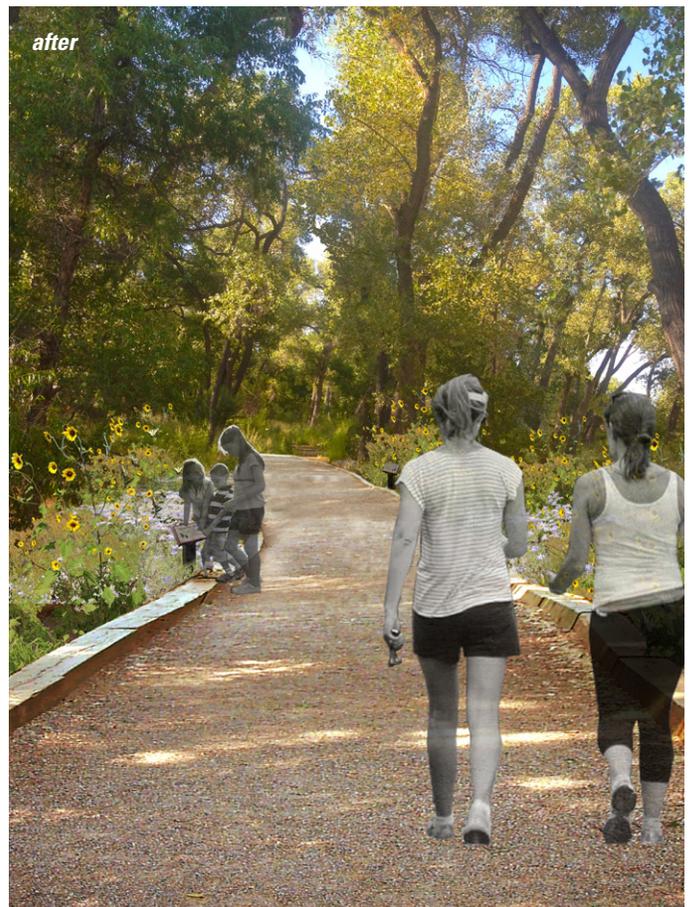
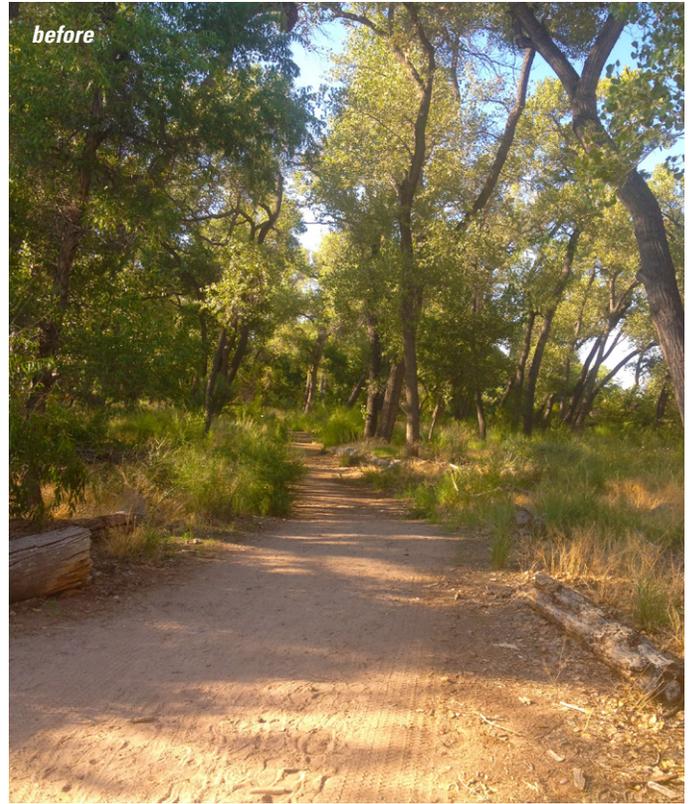
Pages 40-44 include enlargements of the corridor plan - illustrating in a conceptual manner, the distribution of potential access, education and recreation improvements along the river corridor. Not illustrated on the plans, but equally important, are conservation and restoration efforts, new wayfinding and signage systems, and education elements. For example:

- Trail Consolidation (where trails are selectively closed and corridors restored): will expand contiguous areas of Bosque.
- Wayfinding and Signage Systems: will guide people to parking and access areas from around the City, and help visitors find their way inside of Rio Grande Valley State Park.
- Education Elements: in addition to interpretive exhibits, will include information on the history, culture and ecology of the river and Bosque made available to the public via mobile devices.

Opportunities for river and Bosque restoration projects, as well as wayfinding, signage and education improvements, will be identified and implemented with each phase of improvements.

southeast area of river crossing at bridge boulevard

consolidated trails, interpretive signage, wildlife observation platform, children's forest exhibit, restoration





east side of river south of central avenue

accessible boardwalk, boat ramp, site furnishings, interpretive exhibits, restoration



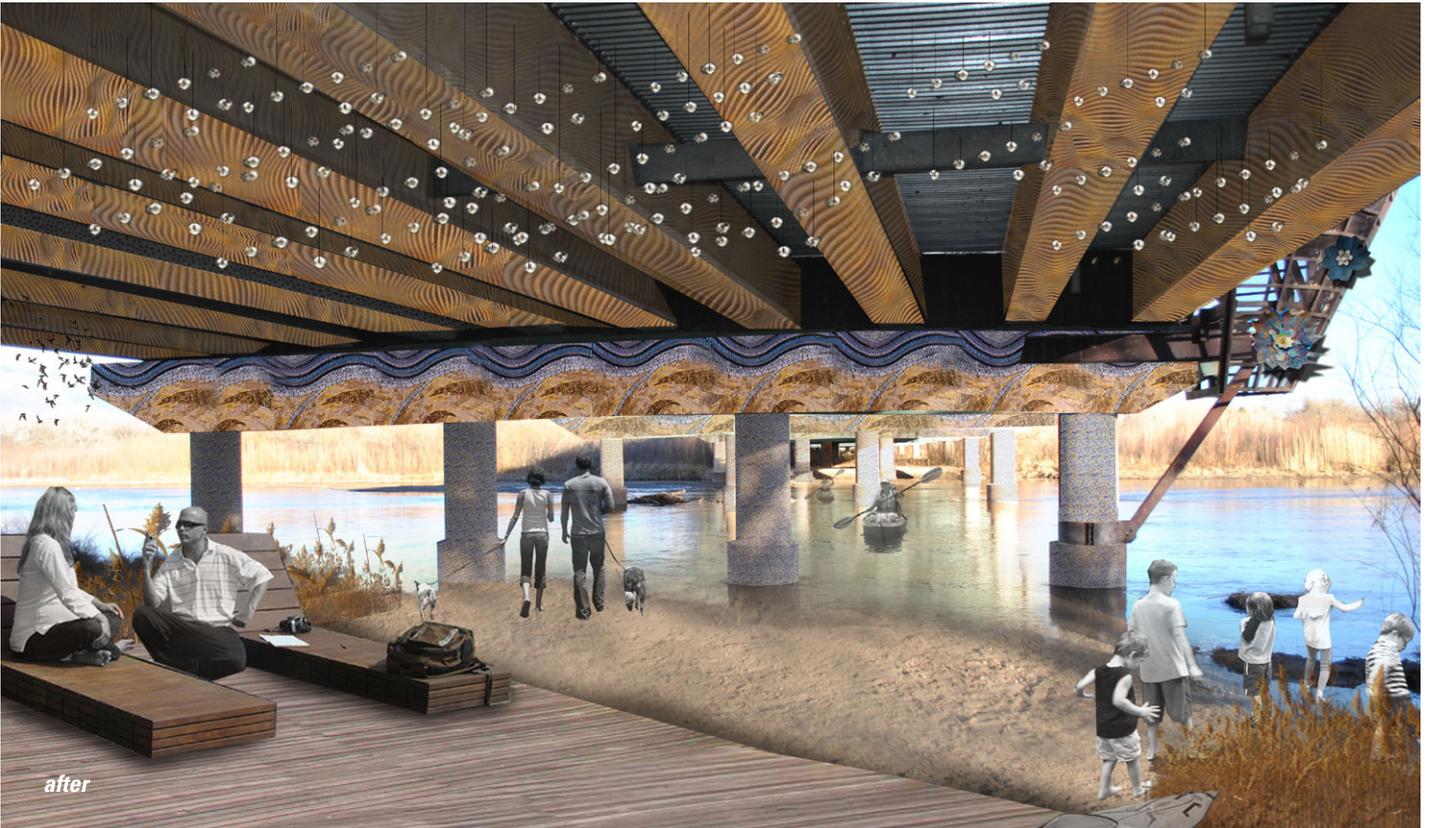


montaño art walk - west side of river, south of the bridge

accessible boardwalk, wayfinding and signage, QR code station, art, restoration of disturbed areas,



before

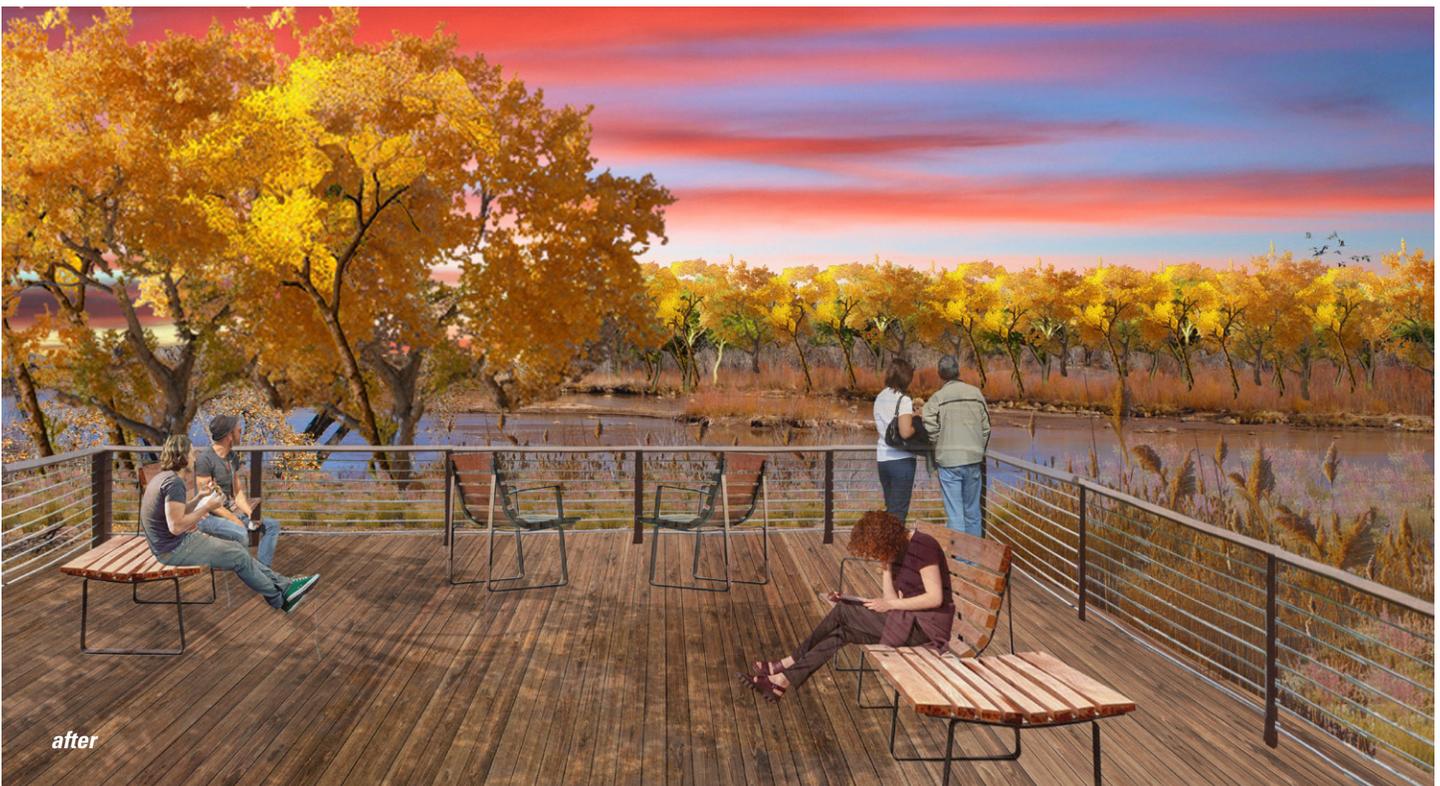


after

montaño art walk - under the bridge

accessible boardwalk, wayfinding and signage, art, restoration of disturbed areas, beach





deck overlooking the river - north of central, west side of the bridge

parking, accessible boardwalk and deck associated with nearby metropolitan redevelopment property, boat ramp, interpretive exhibit, site furnishings, restoration





northeast area at central avenue bridge

accessible boardwalk, boat ramp, site furnishings, wayfinding and signage elements, interpretive trail, consolidated trails, restoration





Boardwalk



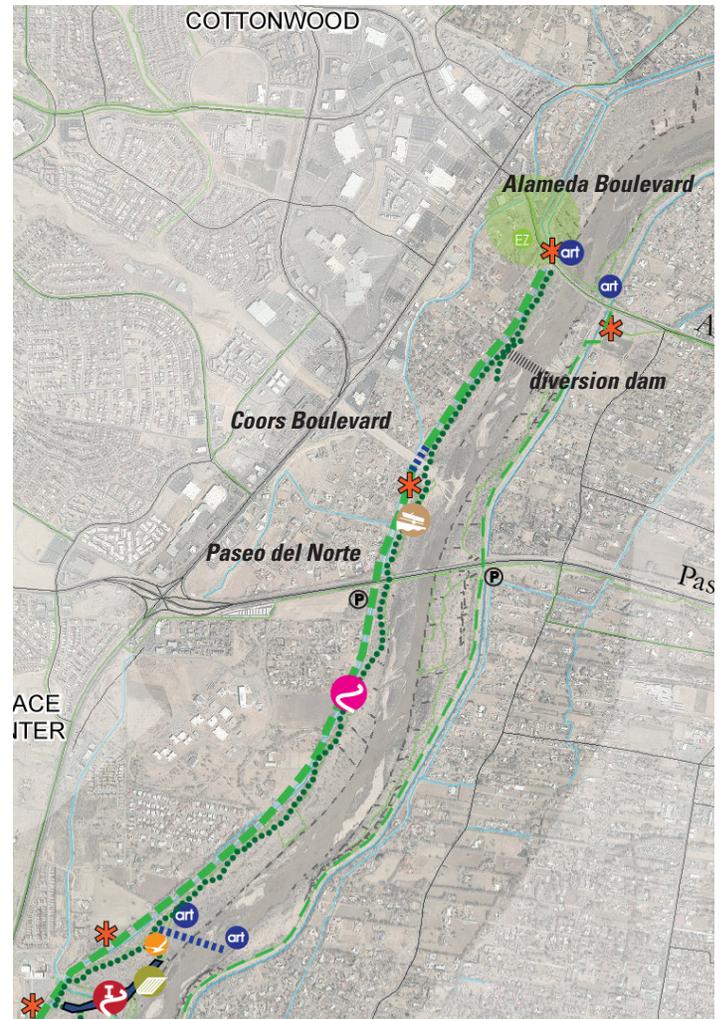
Pedestrian bridge



Art



Interpretive trail

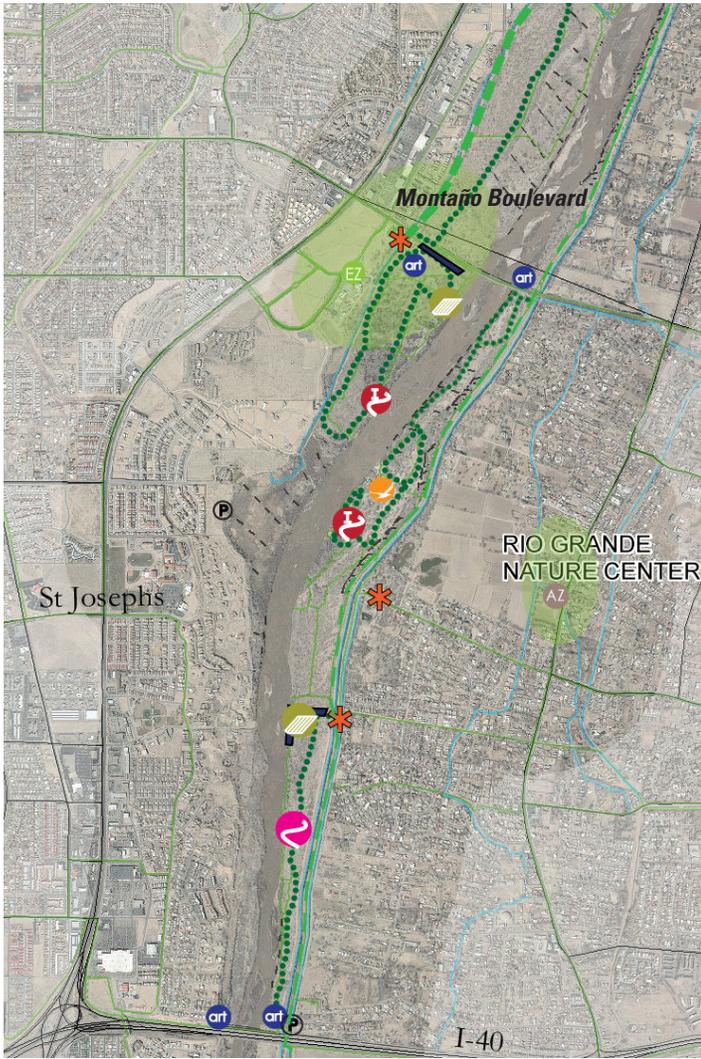


alameda loop

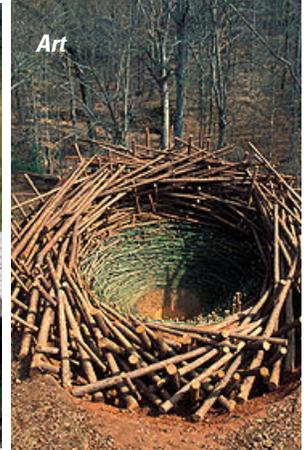
West side trails and a new pedestrian crossing illustrated in this portion of the corridor provide exciting opportunities for improved river access on both sides of the river. A paved path, illustrated on the westside levee, functions much like the Paseo del Bosque on the east side of the river. The path parallels an improved and consolidated soft surface trail in the Bosque, and connects to the regional bike trail system and existing crossings at Alameda, Paseo del Norte, and Montaño. The path also connects to a new pedestrian/bicycle/equestrian bridge that crosses the river near the City of Albuquerque Open Space Visitor Center. The new bridge and associated wildlife observation platforms, boardwalk, improved parking at Calabacillas, and interpretive trails provide visitors on both sides of the river with new ways to experience the Rio Grande and the Bosque.



* refer to pages 25-29 for descriptions of map icons.



Boardwalk



Art



Pedestrian bridge



Agrarian zone



montaña loop

Improvements illustrated in this area reinforce the education and recreation activities already occurring along the river corridor. At the Pueblo Montaña trailhead on the SW side of the bridge, new improvements include an accessible boardwalk that extends along the base of the bridge out into the floodway, a consolidated trail loop, and interpretive exhibits. In the Bosque, in an area near the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park, new improvements include a wildlife observation platform, interpretive exhibits, and a consolidated trail. At the end of Campbell Road, improvements to access such as signage and site furnishings are proposed, as is a new accessible boardwalk and a consolidated trail that will lead visitors from the Paseo del Bosque and the access area to the river.

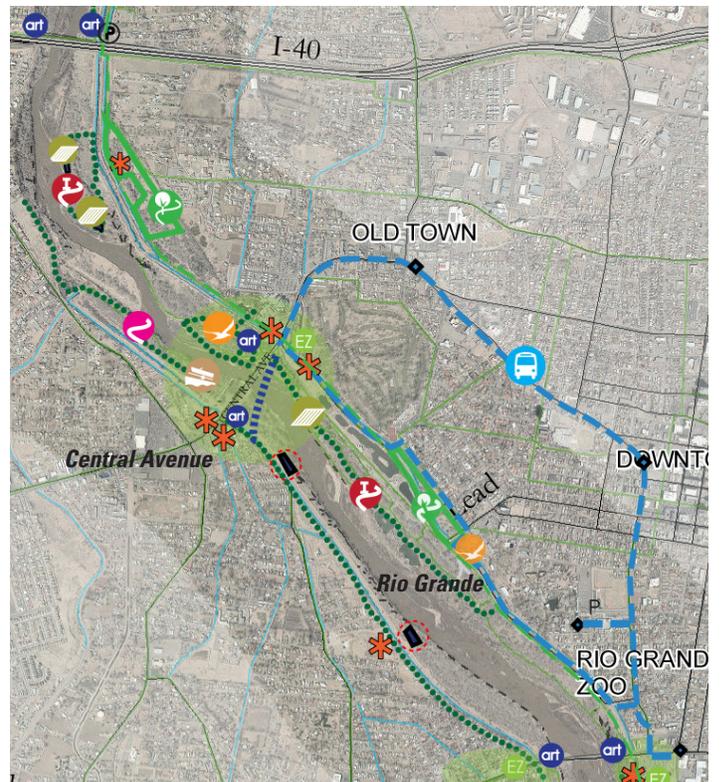
* refer to pages 25-29 for descriptions of map icons.





central

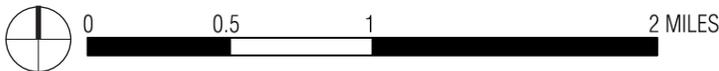
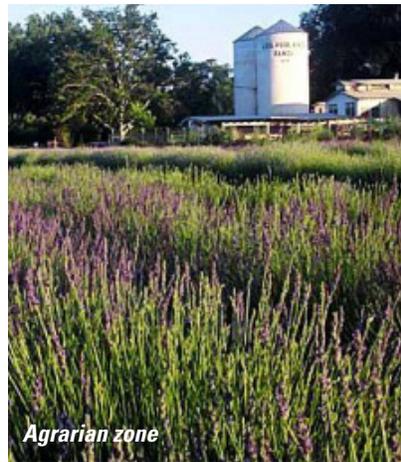
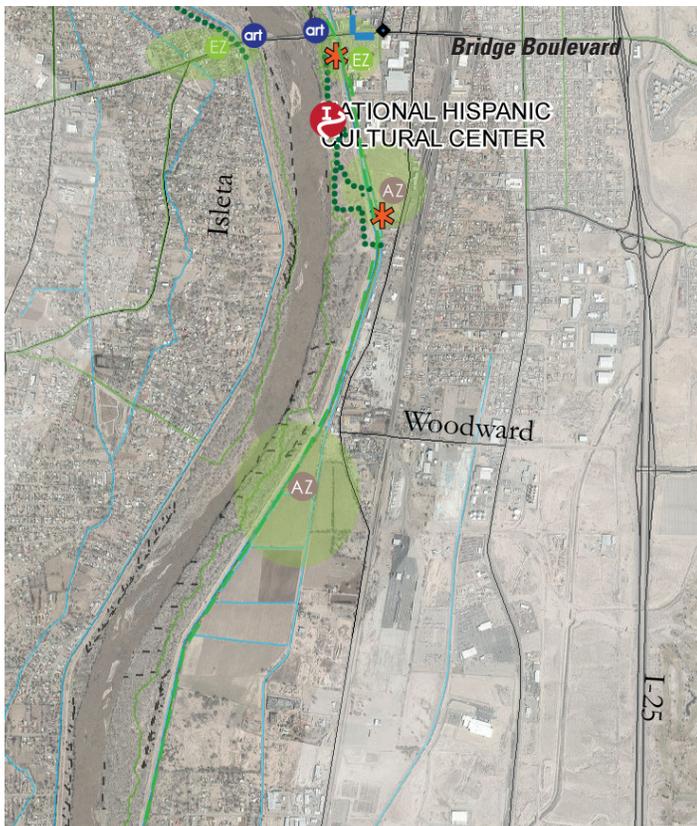
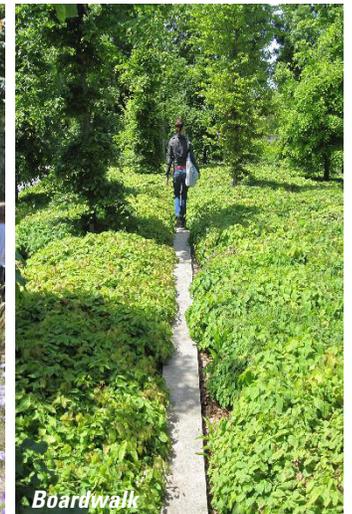
Improvements illustrated in this area expand on the other recreation, education, and entertainment opportunities associated with the ABQ BioPark and Rio Grande Valley State Park facilities. Proposed improvements include a new park at the end of Mountain Road at the north end of the ABQ BioPark, which will provide a direct connection to the Rio Grande from Old Town. A new pedestrian crossing south of the bridge and a trail along the levee on the west side of the river between Central and Bridge are also proposed. These improvements, in association with the Paseo del Bosque will create a 4-mile river trail loop in the heart of the City. Other improvements include access and parking improvements on the east side of the river on both sides of Central Avenue, improvements to the existing picnic area near the Botanic Garden and Aquarium, a new wildlife observation platform near the Rio Grande Botanic Garden and the Rio Grande Zoo, art installations, consolidated trails, interpretive exhibits, and boat ramps.



* refer to pages 25-29 for descriptions of map icons.

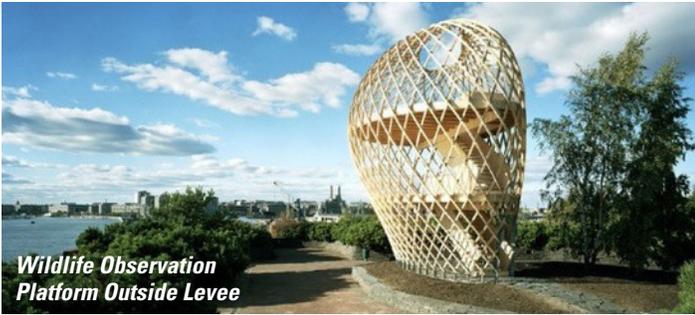
hispanic cultural center

New and improved access points, public art and consolidated trails comprise the primary physical improvements illustrated in this area. With coordination, implementation of improvements in this area will reinforce public investments, visitation, and activities associated with the National Hispanic Cultural Center (NHCC), Rio Grande Valley State Park, and the City's Barelais Railroad Park.



* refer to pages 25-29 for descriptions of map icons.





Wildlife Observation Platform Outside Levee



Pedestrian bridge



Agrarian zone outside the levees

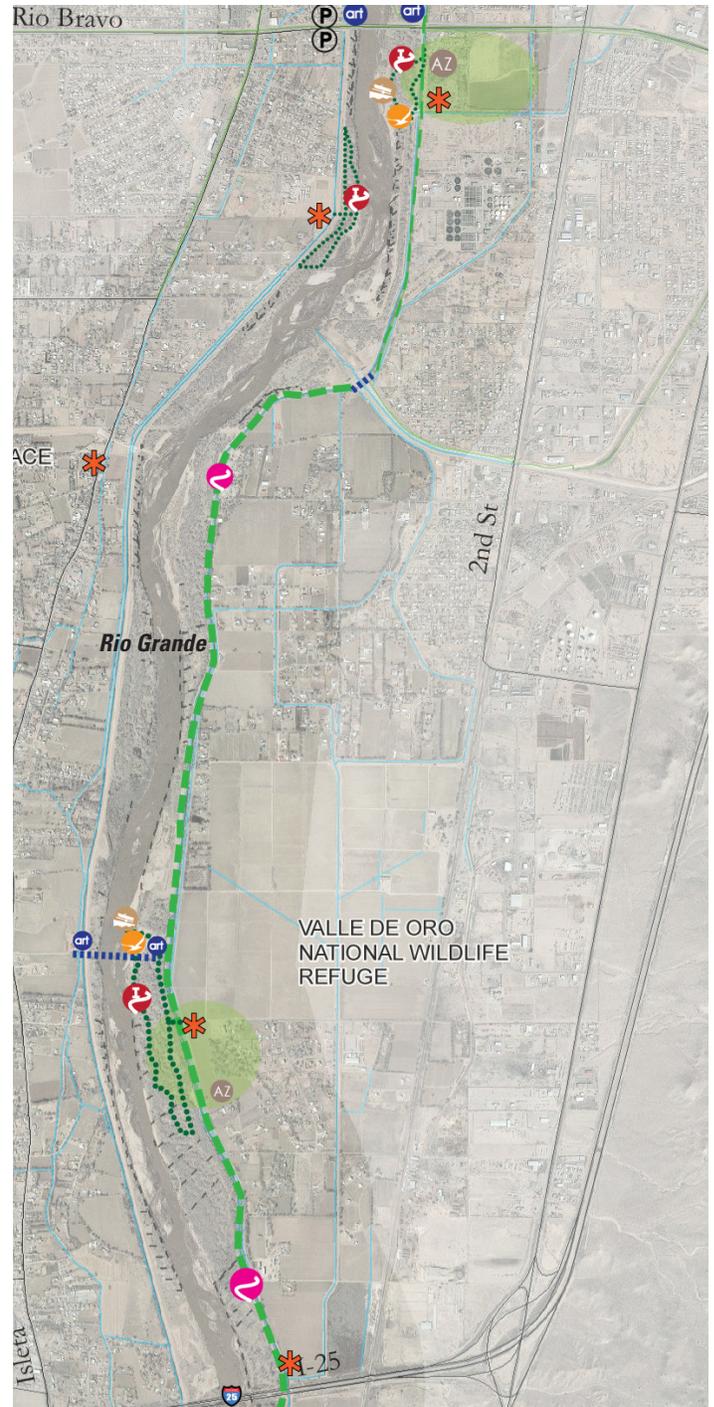


Pedestrian bridge

0 0.5 1 2 MILES



* refer to pages 25-29 for descriptions of map icons.



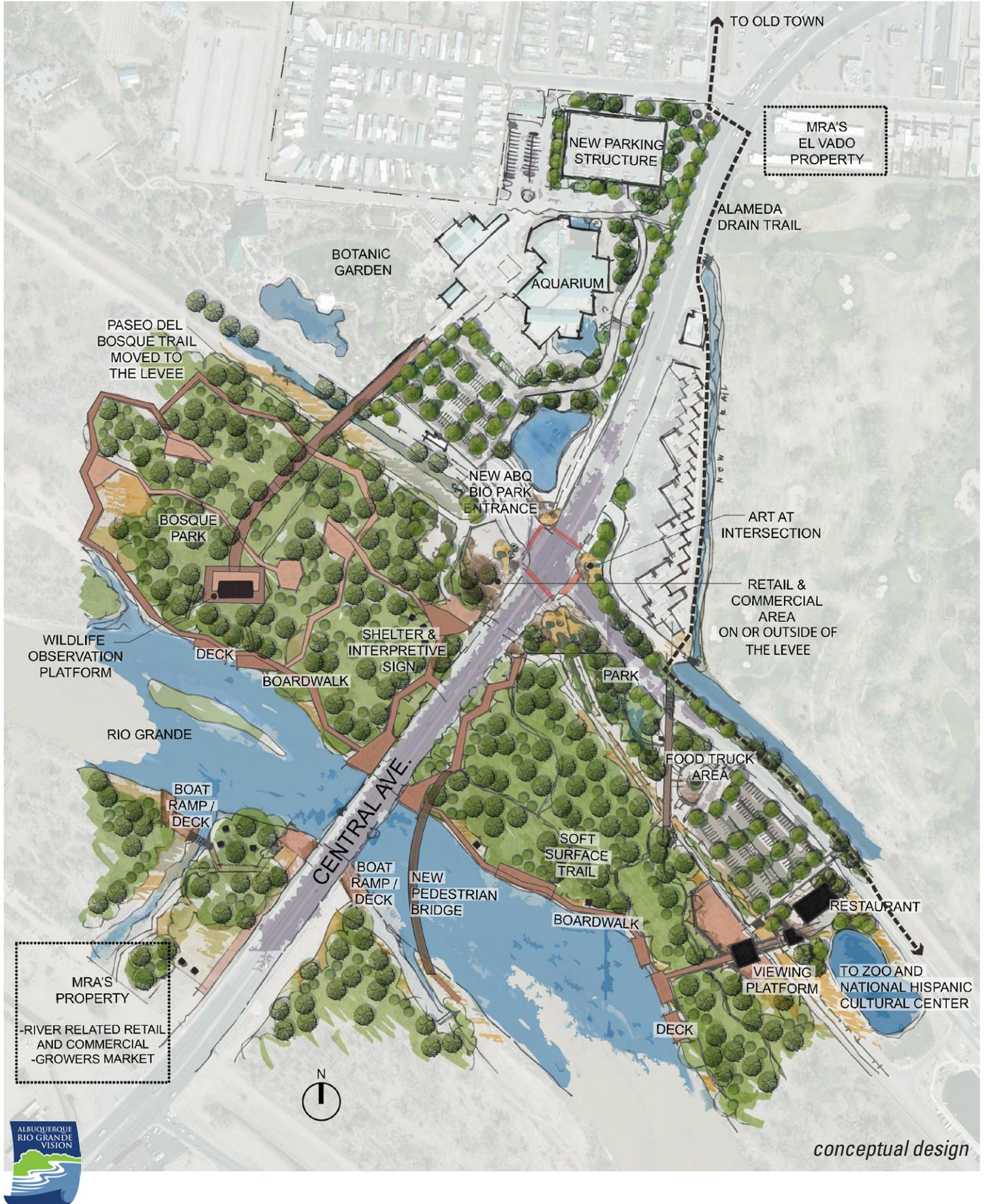
south valley

Improvements in this area of the corridor are focused on improving strategically located public access areas and extending the Paseo del Bosque to the southern boundary of Bernalillo County. Improvements are located near Rio Bravo Boulevard, at the South Diversion Channel, Rio Bravo Park, and Durand Open Space. Additional improvements include a new pedestrian crossing and improvements at the new Valle del Oro National Wildlife Refuge and a new access area at I-25.

planning, projects + policy

The previous pages illustrate improvements included in the Rio Grande Vision Corridor Plan. Planning and policy initiatives are a bit more difficult to illustrate. The following pages provide additional background on planning, project and policy initiatives that reflect the diversified approach of the Corridor Plan - to Connect, Protect and Excite!





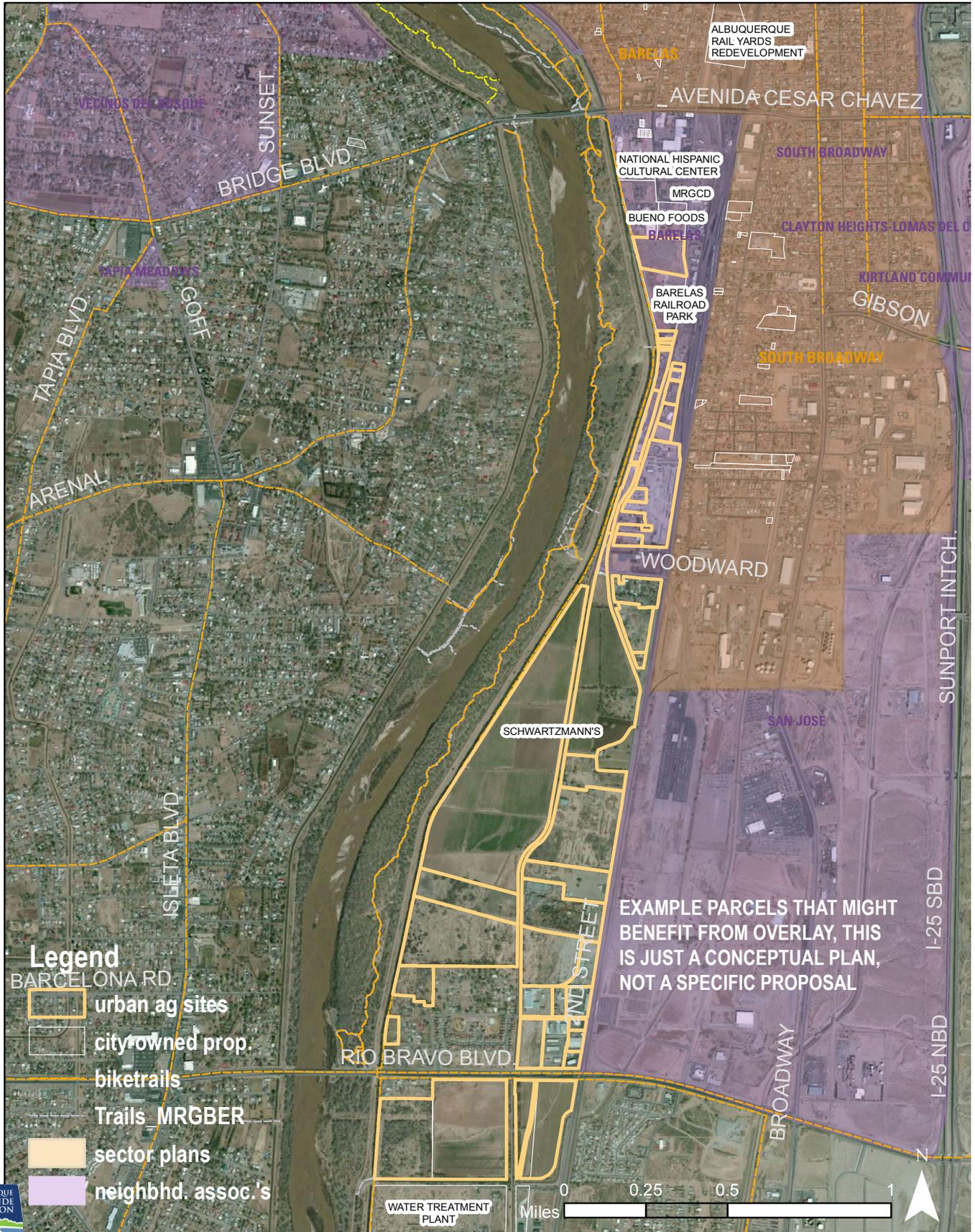


river park @ central

- Make the river a destination at Central Avenue
- Create a new entrance/intersection at Tingley Drive and Central that celebrates the river and BioPark facilities
- Provide river related amenities inside and outside of the levees
- Include and showcase new river and Bosque restoration.
- Leverage existing amenities, infrastructure, and restoration areas
- Provide a new pedestrian river crossing that connects to existing trails on both sides of the river
- Prioritize and incentivize development of the metropolitan redevelopment properties on both sides of the river with river related and/or complementary uses
- Project ideas:
 - NE corner: interpretive exhibit, boardwalk, consolidated trails, shelters and picnic areas, art, restoration, signage
 - SE corner: bosque park, art, parking, food trucks, restaurant, deck
 - NW corner: new river-related development outside levee, parking, boat ramp, trails, restoration, deck overlooking the river
 - SW corner: parking, trails, wayfinding and signage, restoration, consolidated trails, art
 - Crossing: pedestrian crossing on the south side of the existing bridge

*(Left page) Preliminary river park concept sketch
 (Top to bottom) These images are used to convey conceptual ideas: attractive shelters for gathering, beach edge/access in some locations, accessible boardwalks and decks used to provide closer access to water, river as a destination for balloons as well as people, creative, attractive and functional pedestrian crossings connect trails and provide new experiences along the river.*





urban agriculture zone

- Provide an incentive for land along the Rio Grande and its Bosque to remain in or return to agriculture and allow for mixed uses that provide economic support for the heritage culture of high-value food production.
- Showcase innovative models and land practices (see next pages). The hispanic cultural center, southside water treatment plant, and Valle de Oro reserve could serve as main anchors.
- Encourage a form of urban agriculture new to Albuquerque-planned unit developments that allow for a more dense group of housing with subsistence gardens, surrounded by fields in commercial agricultural production.
- Establish a voluntary overlay zone that owners can elect to apply to their parcels which fall within a distance of the Rio Grande.
- Facilitate a voluntary turnover of current industrial sites for those that find it beneficial to sell. The Bridge Boulevard redevelopment plan has identified a large industrial area, so City capacity exists for industrial uses as needed. Current brownfield sites would find new benefits to utilize superfunds.
- Pursue use of the City's Private Commons Development Zone (PCD Zone) as a vehicle for this overlay zone. This zone already allows for more dense residential clustering on parcels.
- Urban agricultural zone policies are spreading throughout the US- San Francisco and Minneapolis recently adopted plans.





6 dining on a patio overlooking the Bosque

urban agricultural project concept

bosque showcased + integrated

- View into Bosque makes a desirable destination
- Multi-disciplinary projects - biology restoration to bolster farm productivity (bird habitat for agriculture pests, etc.)
- Watershed vision: boardwalk material can be provided by Nature Conservancy-convened upper watershed thinning initiatives
- Interpretative walks provide public educational opportunity



4 bridge & boardwalk into Bosque



5 interpretive/education monuments



3 restaurant supplied by fields

restaurant

- Market for farm production
- Revenue for school
- Jobs for community
- Amenity for community and tourism



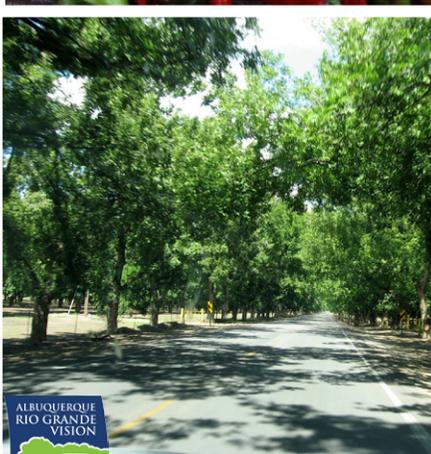
2 agricultural fields supply market and restaurant



farm store

fields + farm store

- Diverse production to maximize future career profitability: sustainable produce, animal production, & value-added products



1 tree-lined drive into site

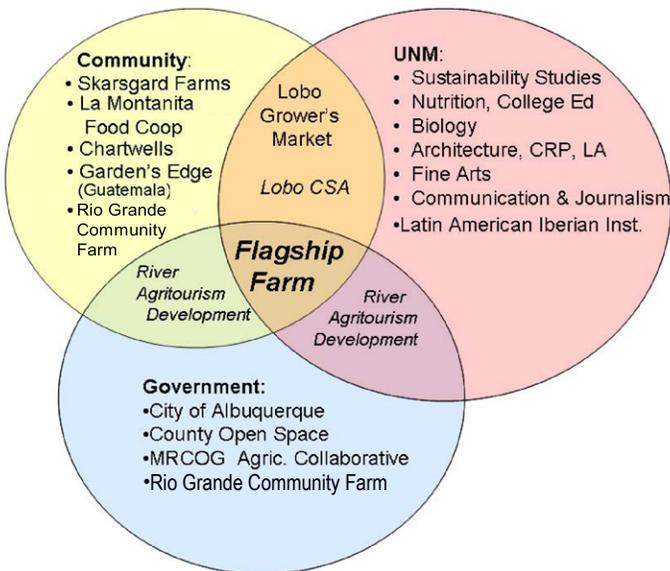
orchards line entrances + drives

- Traditional sense of arrival to rio grande, orchards give way to beautiful fields
- Sustainable planning and architecture techniques applied



unm flagship farm school

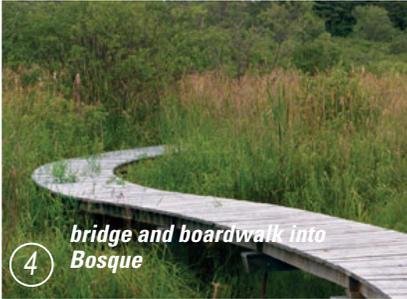
- 2-acre campus Flagship Farm: UNM in partnership with Skarsgard Farms,
- Incubator format: connect UNM, local governments, and community food developers
 - Fields serve restaurant and farm store, which support school as self-sustaining entity, existing grant proposals to USDA and Kellogg Foundation may help with start-up
 - Multi-disciplinary working studio groups develop various training programs, studies, and start-up enterprises (see diagram)
 - Collaboration with South Valley Economic Development Center could extend education and business incubation
 - Connect the unm campus to the businesses and nonprofit organizations associated with development that share economic and social agendas that support families in Albuquerque
 - Be a portal to the local food system and illuminate career paths for our students in many sectors
 - Have a graduate research component about resilient landscapes in New Mexico to face the challenges that climate change is presenting for the agricultural heritage and tourism value of the state
 - Function much as a library to serve academic interests across the curriculum
 - Include a student-run community supported agriculture project to bring organic food to students, faculty & staff







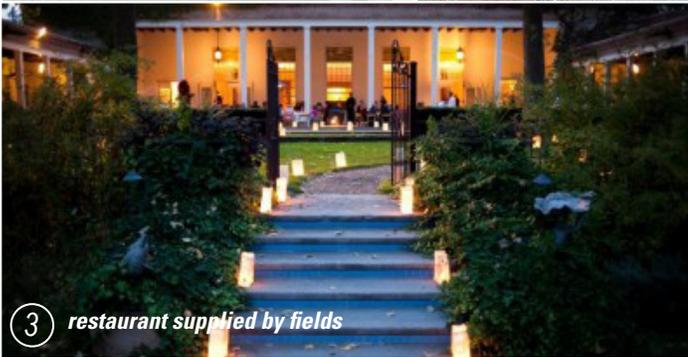
6 dining on a patio overlooking the Bosque



4 bridge and boardwalk into Bosque



5 interpretive/education monuments



3 restaurant supplied by fields



2 agricultural fields



1 tree-lined drive from hispanic cultural center and into site

bridge crossing zone - urban agricultural center

- private property illustrated as an example of private-public partnership opportunity for showcasing agricultural heritage and historic connection to the Rio Grande
- showcase agricultural practices and rio grande role in irrigation, linking processes from arrival to site transitioning to the river
- establish a parcel large enough to allow a development of a traditional sense of arrival to rio grande
- link to hispanic cultural center and their youth educational programs
- serve barelas railroad park
- develop future link with rail yards redevelopment project along rails





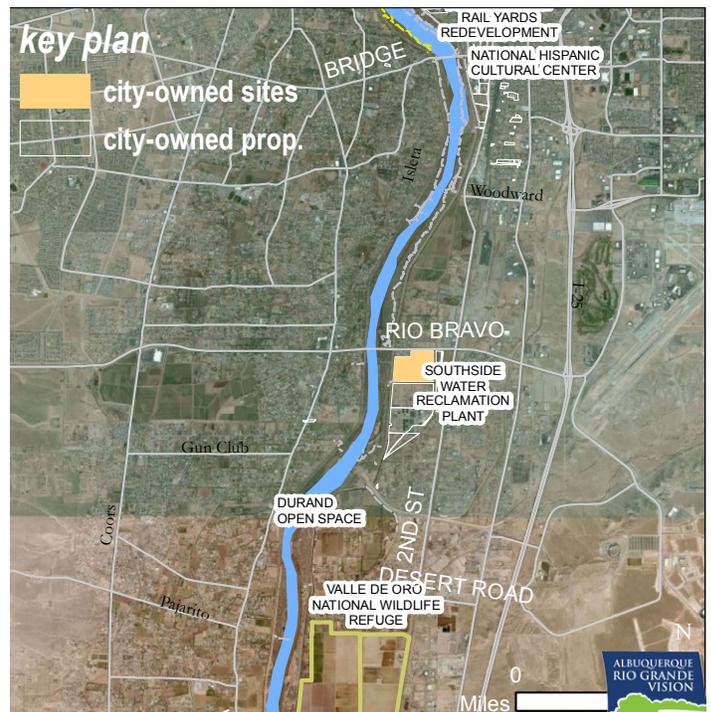


rio grande water education

- Water treatment plant area proposed as a showcase site - educational site for San Juan Chama Drinking Water Project and wetland treatment of water for agriculture, restoration and other innovative practices.
- Potential for City / UNM business incubator project: large world agricultural need today for finding new sources for phosphorus, an essential component of fertilizer, and abundant in waste. Pilot study for phosphorus extraction.

Other water education sites to consider:

- Valle del Oro: USFWS and AMAFCA are currently designing a stormwater wetland on and adjacent to the Valle Del Oro.
- Diversion Dam (south of Alameda near the Paseo del Bosque): an intake area for the San Juan Chama Drinking Water Project





valle de oro national wildlife refuge - link urban agricultural / restaurant / rio grande state park lodge

- Potential for traditional and dramatic sense of arrival to Rio Grande, a tree-lined drive through reserve to nature center
- Showcase agricultural benefits from adjacency to preserved land through interpretative trails and educational programs such as youth camps.
- Create an environmentally-oriented, New Mexico destination for locals and tourists in the South Valley.

Images:

- 1) A road lined with native cottonwoods could be created to lead visitors into the wildlife refuge or other facilities in the area.
- 2) Agricultural fields could co-exist near the wildlife refuge.
- 3 and 6) New facilities near RGVSP and Valle de Oro, like a lodge or restaurant, could be supplied from local fields, and would be convenient for visitors.
- 4) Accessible paths could be used to keep people in designated areas.
- 5) Interpretive exhibits could be used to educate visitors about the connection between urban agriculture and the environment in the Middle Rio Grande Valley.



6 dining on a patio overlooking the Bosque



4 bridge and boardwalk into Bosque



5 interpretive/education monuments



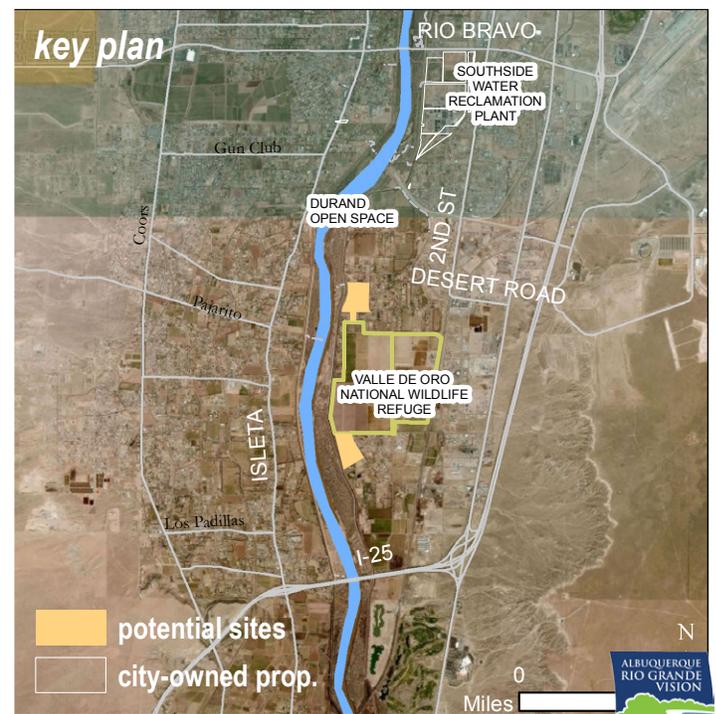
3 restaurant supplied by fields



2 agricultural fields



1 tree-lined drive from hispanic cultural center and into site







rio grande festival

- focus is the Rio Grande
- events organized to connect a wide variety of people to the river through fun recreation, education, and conservation activities
- makes use of event venues city-wide with transit connections to the main events on four corners of central
- float event put ins at points south of alameda diversion dam with primary take outs at central
- event could expand/grow to become a week-long, regional destination event(s) that addresses environmental/economic development tourism topics including stewardship, culture, nature, water, NM food and agriculture, recreation.
- activities could include exhibits by land and water managers and stakeholders, restoration work, nature walks, scientific conferences, land and water competitions, and NM food and food trucks, music, art and culture



