
TECHNICAL SUPPLEMENT 1: LAND USE AND ZONING

Albuquerque Rapid Transit Project

Prepared for:



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1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

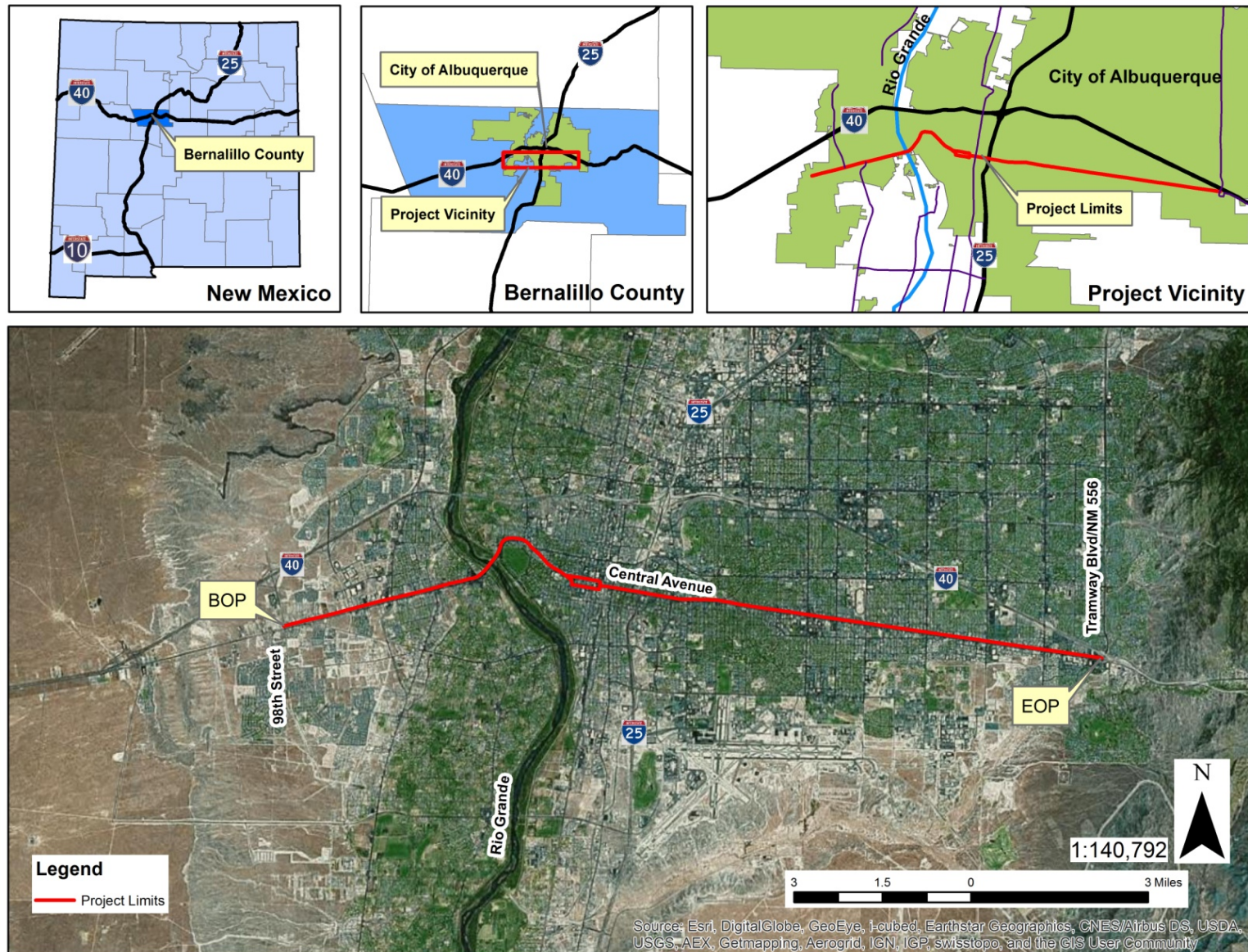
The City of Albuquerque Transit Department (ABQ RIDE), in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), is proposing a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project along Central Avenue in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This project is referred to as the Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART) Project. While the elements of BRT systems are highly variable and depend on the needs of each specific area, the primary features proposed for the ART include: (1) modern articulated rapid vehicles; (2) rapid vehicle lanes (lanes reserved for buses only), as described below; (3) rapid vehicle stations, as described below, spaced at approximately ½ to 1 mile intervals and with off-board fare collection; and, (4) modifications to the traffic signal system to provide rapid vehicle priority.

The proposed project will extend from 98th Street on the west side of the Albuquerque metropolitan area to Tramway Boulevard on the east side (See Figure 1). The overall route length is approximately 15 miles and generally follows the alignment of Central Avenue, except through Downtown Albuquerque. In the Downtown area, the route will split with westbound service located on Copper Avenue between 10th Street and 1st Street, and eastbound service following Gold Avenue from 1st Street to 8th Street.

The major design and operational features of the proposed project include:

- Construction of two dedicated rapid vehicle lanes within the existing operational right-of-way of Central Avenue from Coors Boulevard east to Louisiana Boulevard (approximately 8.75 miles). In general, the rapid vehicle lanes will occupy the existing median of the street and will include one westbound lane and one eastbound lane. This concept will be used in all locations except as follows:
 - From San Pasquale Avenue to 10th Street (0.75 miles), the rapid vehicles will operate in a single reversible lane with the rapid vehicle operating in the off-peak direction traveling in mixed flow traffic lanes.
 - In the Albuquerque Downtown area, the rapid vehicles will operate in mixed flow traffic on Copper Avenue (westbound from 1st Street to 10th Street), Gold Avenue (eastbound from 8th Street to 1st Street), and Central Avenue from Broadway Boulevard to 1st Street. No major reconstruction to the streets will occur in this area.
- Rapid vehicles will operate in the inside traffic lane in mixed flow from 98th Street to Coors Boulevard, and from Louisiana Boulevard to Tramway Boulevard. Queue jumps will be provided at signalized intersections in these segments.
- Construction of stations within the roadway median and/or street curbside. Stations will consist of concrete platforms approximately 65 feet long and 10 to 14 feet wide. The platforms will be elevated 6 to 14 inches above the pavement to allow for level boarding from the ART station to the rapid vehicle. In addition to the platform, stations will include a ticket vending machine and an overhead canopy to shield passengers from sun and precipitation. Other passenger amenities such as benches, an information kiosk, trash receptacles, and security lighting may also be provided.
- Rapid vehicles will operate at approximate 5 to 10 minute headways depending on time of day. Hours of operation have not been determined but are likely to be from 5:00 am until midnight.

Figure 1 Project Vicinity



Given Central Avenue's long established position as the original key commercial route for the City of Albuquerque and the broad span of the project limits, land uses along the corridor are varied, but highly dominated by commercial uses. The parcels near the most western rural portion of the project consist of large vacant plots, however as the project travels east, properties become primarily commercial with few exceptions as discussed in the following sections.

Sector Development Plans further define zoning regulations within their boundaries. Since the area within the project limits is primarily comprised of the most established neighborhoods in the city, almost the entire corridor is covered by a Sector Development Plan which will be discussed below.

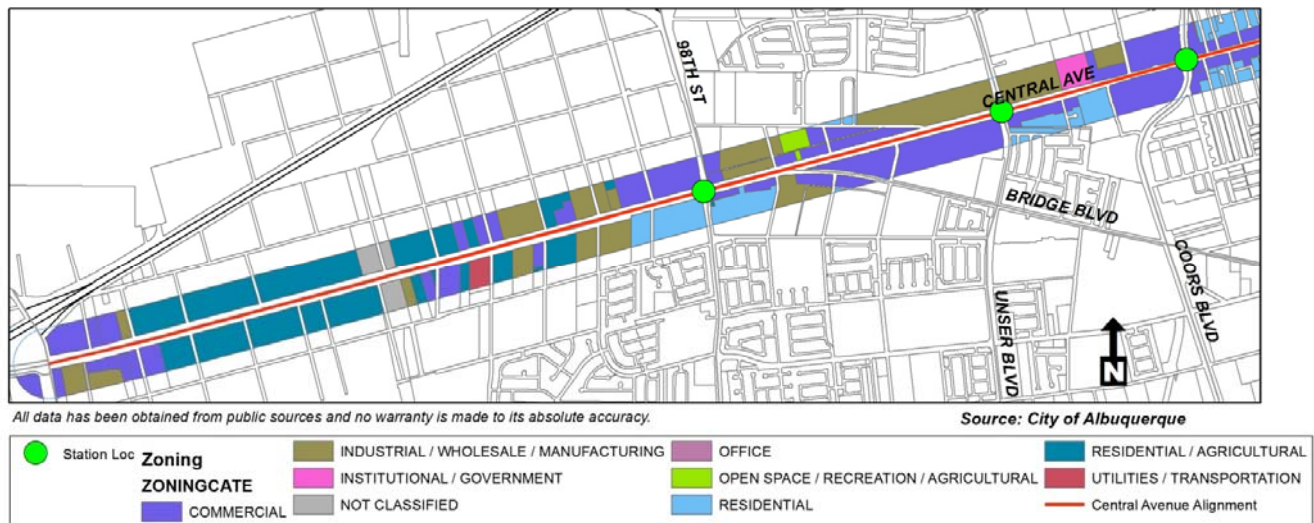
Land Use / Existing Conditions



This section of the project corridor has a large amount of vacant land except near the major intersections. The region from Coors Boulevard west is characterized by larger lots, many of which are undeveloped or underutilized. Some industrial/manufacturing properties and some wholesale/warehousing uses exist in large box structures. Given that this was once part of Historic Route 66, there are some older structures such as motels that are situated close to the roadway.



Zoning



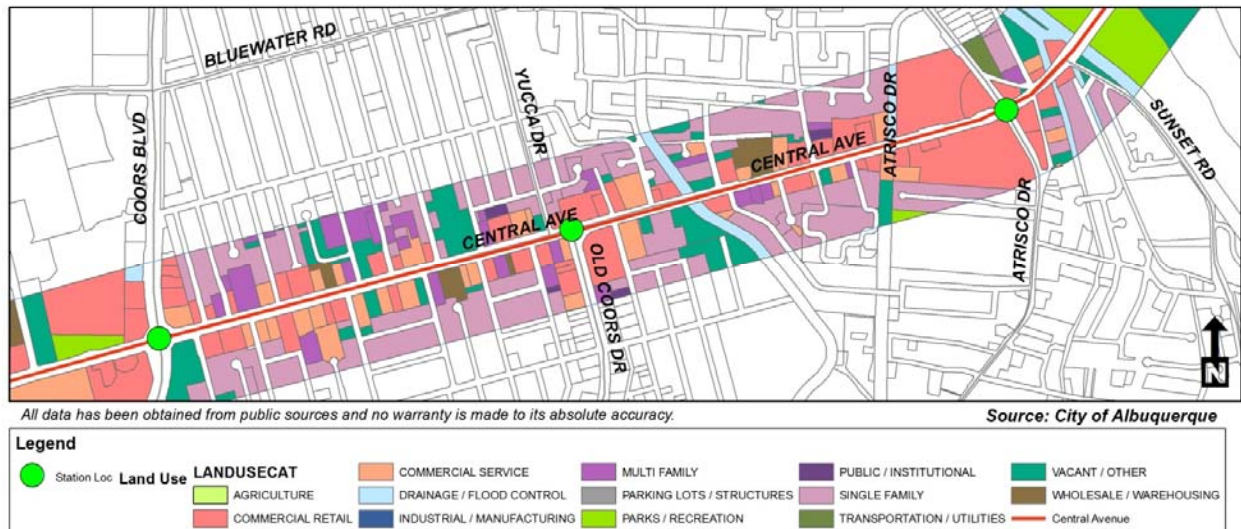
A large portion of the parcels in this section of the BRT project are zoned residential/agricultural, which is considered a placeholder for future consideration and suggests future flexibility. Parcels near the west end of Central Avenue are zoned commercial as well as parcels nearing 98th Street and Coors Boulevard showing that these intersections are expected to become activity centers. Some parcels are still zoned industrial/wholesale/manufacturing.

West Route 66 SDP - Central Avenue between the BOP and Coors Blvd

The West Route 66 Sector Development Plan establishes Special Neighborhood zoning from the BOP to Coors Boulevard on Central Avenue where established zoning did not address the special need for a transition to more mixed land use opportunities. The Special Neighborhood Zone (SU-2) allows a mixture of uses for new development and redevelopment appropriate to the special needs of the neighborhood. The West Route 66 Sector Development Plan also establishes a Design Overlay Zone to achieve cohesive positive development, a positive streetscape, landscape design, and quality site design to be implemented on site-specific new construction. It applies to all properties within the plan area boundaries and takes precedence over other City or County regulations if there is conflict.

Coors Boulevard to Atrisco Drive SW

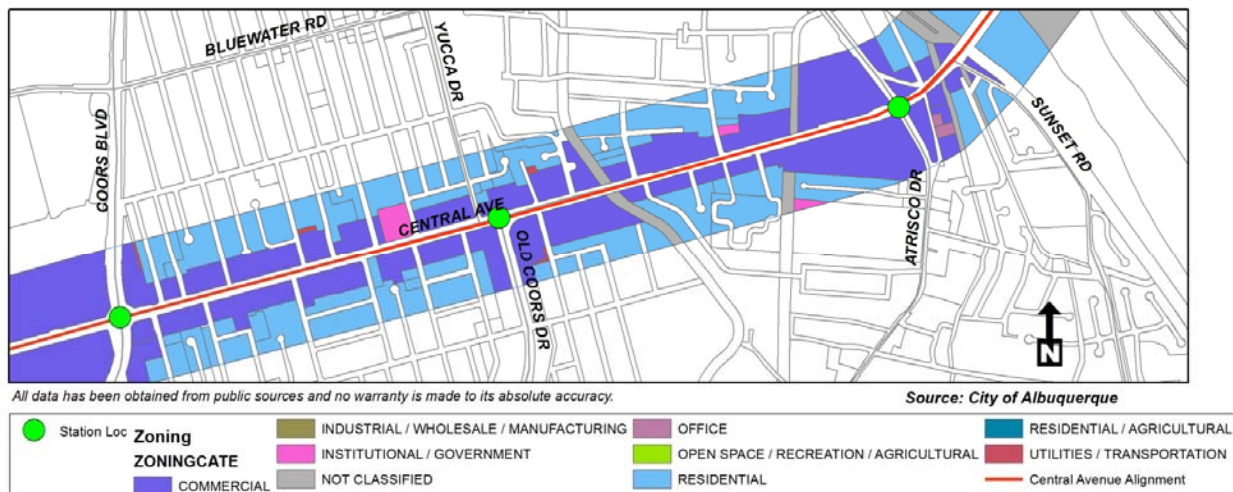
Land Use / Existing Conditions



This portion of the project corridor begins with a gateway feature at Coors Boulevard and expansive views into the valley. It is characterized by mostly small, older commercial establishments fronting the streetscape. There are still many vacant parcels but these are decreasing in frequency when heading east. There are some residential uses in the form of mobile home parks and apartments, and some motels representing remnants of the motor court style from the Historic 66 heyday. There is a strip mall and a large big-box retailer southwest of Atrisco Drive.



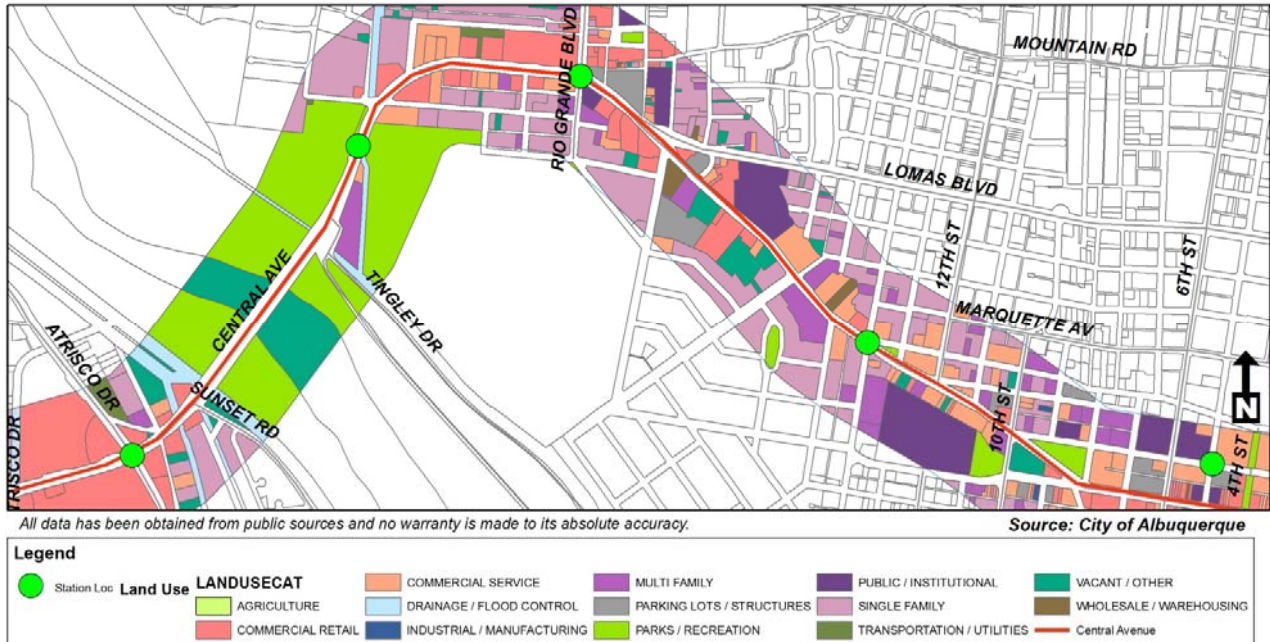
Zoning



Within this portion of the project area, the parcels are zoned almost exclusively commercial with one large parcel zoned Institutional/Government and occupied by a fire station. The West Mesa Sector Development Plan governs the north side of Central Avenue within this portion of the project, but does not give specific guidance on zoning or development.

Atrisco Drive SW to 10th Street SW

Land Use / Existing Conditions



Land Use Segment A - Atrisco Dr to San Pasquale Ave

This section of the project corridor includes the Rio Grande River bridge crossing and public institutions such as the Albuquerque Biopark (which includes the Albuquerque Aquarium, Botanic Garden, and Tingley Beach), and the Historic Old Town. Signage for these institutions and landmarks are located on Central Avenue however only parking lots servicing them are immediately visible from the street. The Beach Apartments, a multi-family development is located at Tingley Drive.

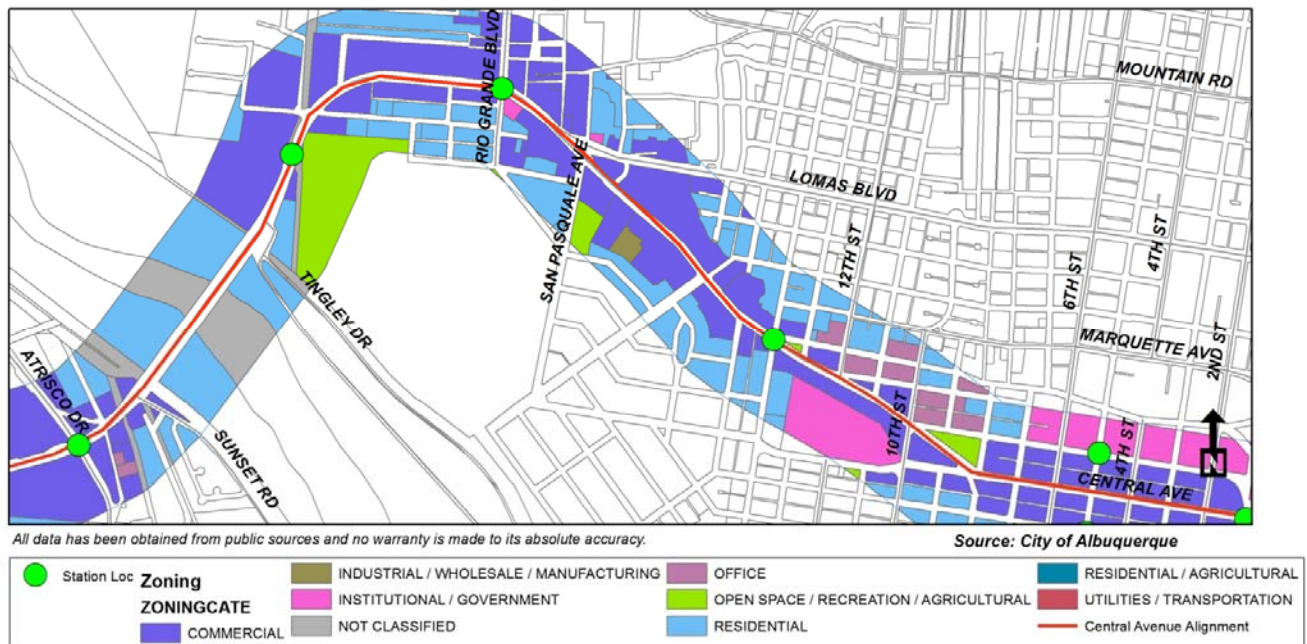


Land Use Segment B - San Pasquale Ave to 10th St

This area of Central Avenue is significant as it provides a seam between two important historic neighborhoods as discussed below. Along with the small commercial structures, there are multi-family developments. Manzano Day School, a historically significant private middle school lies on the north side of Central Avenue near the Old Town Plaza, and the public Washington Middle School lies on the south side of Central Avenue behind some small commercial properties.



Zoning



The parcels in this section of the project corridor are primarily zoned commercial with the exception of the Open Space/Recreation/Agricultural designation at the Albuquerque Biopark.

Generally, the zoning along this portion of Central Avenue is commercial with exceptions for open space/ recreation/ agricultural for Tingley Beach near the Rio Grande River.

Huning Castle SDP - South side of Central Ave between the Rio Grande River and 10th Street

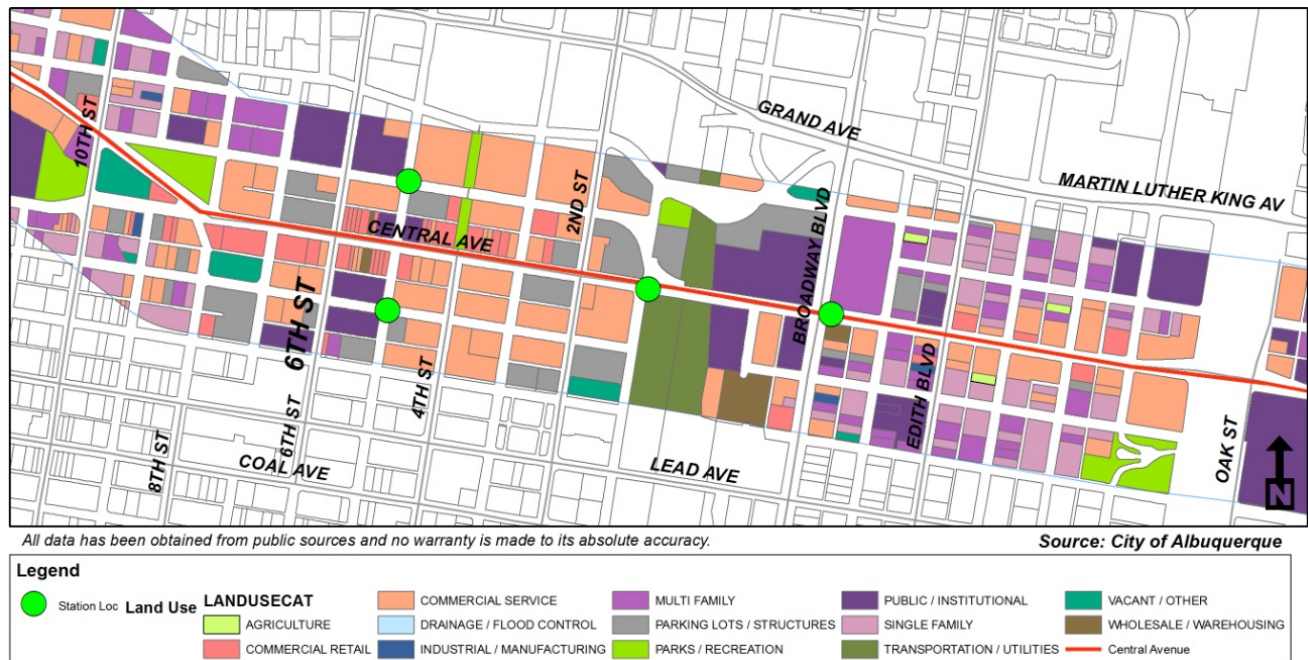
The Huning Castle SDP establishes the Special Neighborhood Zone (SU-2) for the Reynolds Addition between 14th Street and 10th Street on Central Avenue which was previously zoned as Office/Institutional. This is to ensure that new development on Central Avenue will be consistent with existing development and have a minimum impact on the adjacent neighborhood with regard to traffic, noise, and litter.

Downtown Neighborhood Area SDP - North side of Central Ave between

All properties will maintain a Special Neighborhood Zone (SU-2) designation to ensure that infill development is responsive and complementary to existing neighborhood patterns. Central Avenue is the only area within the plan boundaries where multi-family, commercial, or office uses are encouraged. Any property that falls within one of the two Historic Overlay Zones shall also comply with those design guidelines.

10th Street SW to Interstate-25

Land Use Maps / Existing Conditions



Land Use Segment A - 10th St to Broadway Blvd

This portion of the project corridor begins with a neighborhood park and a roundabout as Central Avenue straightens into the Downtown Core, the densest portion of the corridor. Multi-story buildings bordering the sidewalk with little to no extra space characterize the area. Active commercial exists along the street level such as retail, restaurants, and an historic theatre. Less active commercial uses or residential uses operate in the upper levels. The Albuquerque Alvarado Transportation Center is located on a large parcel just west of Broadway Blvd. There are still a couple of surface parking lots bordering Central Avenue in this area.

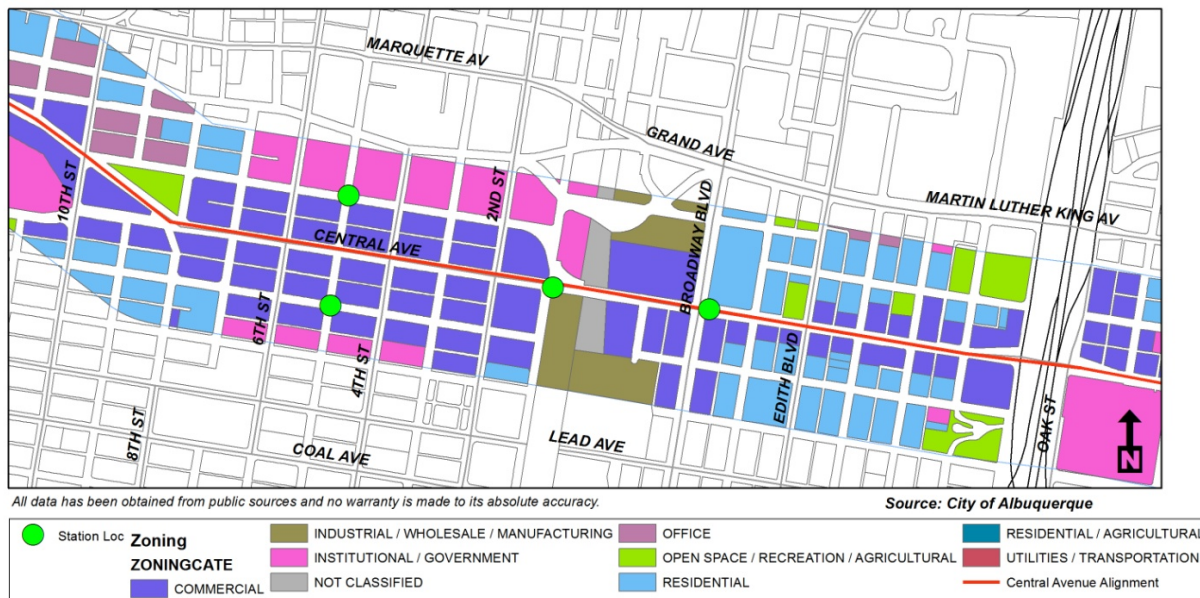


Land Use Segment B - Broadway Blvd to I-25

The development in this portion of the project corridor consists of multi-story structures with historic integrity. This part of the roadway has less density than the Downtown Core with buildings limited to 4 stories or less and some surface parking areas. The historic Albuquerque High School at Broadway Blvd (shown right) was converted into condominiums as a redevelopment project. There are many commercial service motels and hotels near the intersection with I-25, including the historic Hotel Parq Central.



Zoning



Downtown 2025 SDP - Central Avenue between 10th St and Broadway Blvd

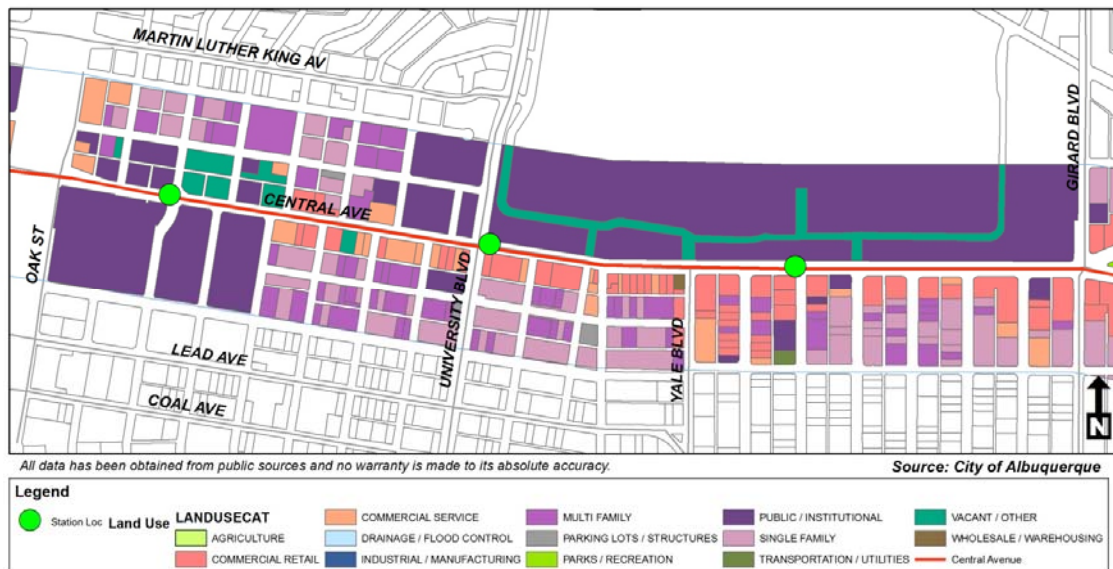
The Downtown 2025 SDP defines the Downtown Core to be the SU-3 Special Center Zone and designates Central Avenue (within the plan boundaries) as the Arts and Entertainment District, one of five districts created by this plan to regulate permitted uses, building types, and building standards. The SU-3 Special Center Zone allows a variety of uses controlled by this plan and tailors the development of the Urban Center to create a clear and defined boundary between the Downtown Core and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Huning Highland SDP - Central Avenue between Broadway Blvd and I-25

Originally, much of this area was zoned for office use because city planners considered it an extension of downtown; however growth in other parts of the city prevented downtown from expanding into this neighborhood. The Huning Highland Area was re-zoned to be the Special Neighborhood Zone (SU-2), which allows a mixture of uses controlled by this SDP. SU-2 zoning is appropriate for areas where other available zones do not promote conservation of special neighborhood characteristics and a mixture of uses with careful control and coordination. Within the overall SU-2 zone, separate zoning categories are established. The SU-2 zone is comprised of sub-zones with the zone along Central Avenue designated Neighborhood Commercial/ Residential (NCR) which has a zero front yard setback requirement for all properties.

Interstate-25 to Girard Boulevard

Land Use Maps / Existing Conditions



Land Use Segment A - I-25 to University Blvd

This portion of the corridor has a similar density to just west of I-25 with some large multi-story structures and some vacant parcels or parking lots. However the land uses in this area are primarily large public institutions such as Presbyterian Hospital located immediately southeast of I-25 (shown right)

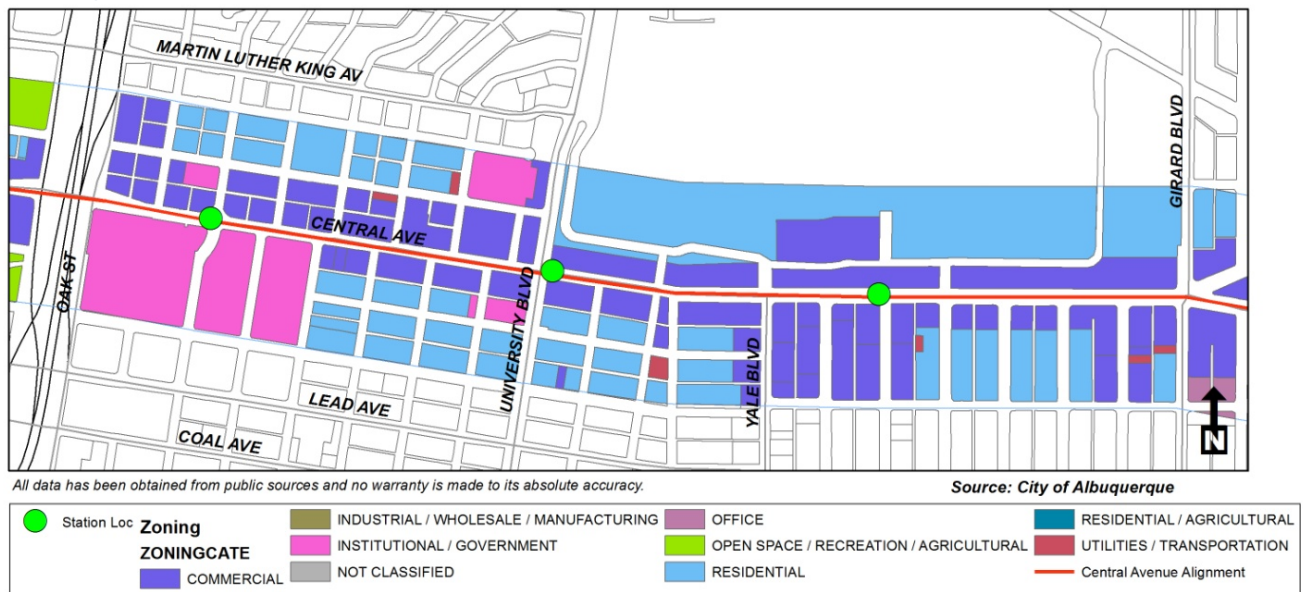


Land Use Segment B - University Blvd to Girard Blvd

This section of the corridor is dominated by the University of New Mexico (UNM) on the north side of Central Avenue. Several structures of varying size and density occupy the streetscape here with some buildings forming a wall against the street with short setbacks and some open parking. The south side of Central Avenue consists of almost exclusively commercial uses that service UNM such as a multitude of restaurants.



Zoning

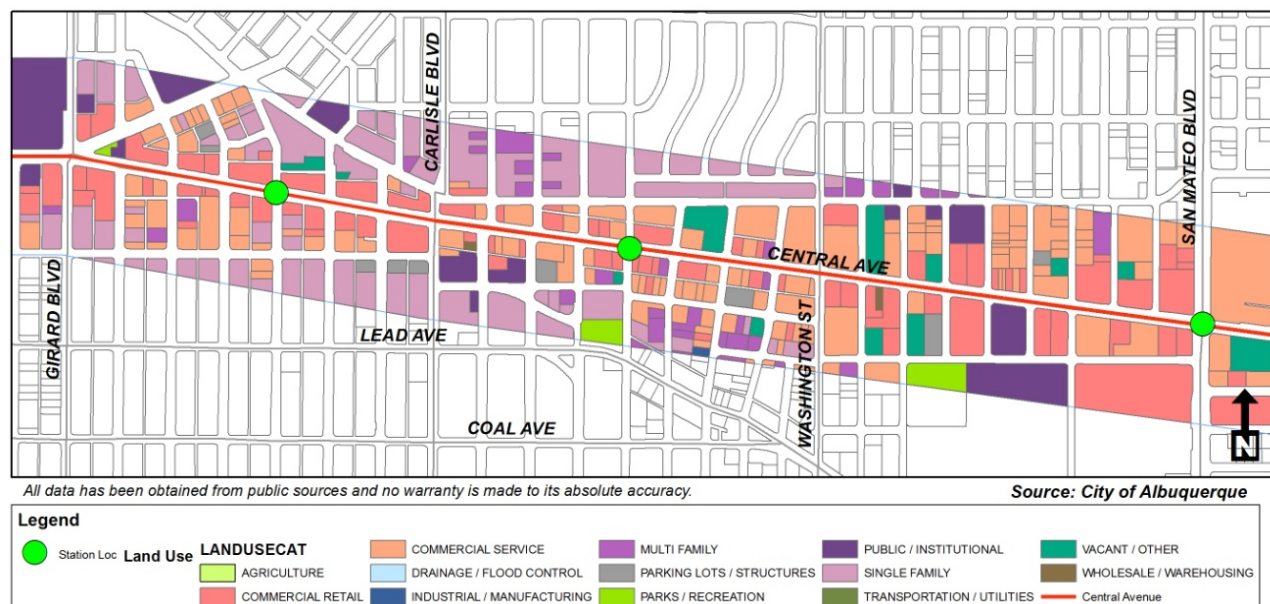


University Neighborhoods SDP - Central Avenue between I-25 and Girard Blvd

Zoning along Central Avenue includes some institutional/government parcels along with commercial in order to accommodate University uses. Zoning for the University Neighborhoods behind Central seeks to improve the existing mixed use characteristics of the area by encouraging compatible relationships between related uses and buffering incompatible uses. This SDP calls for no further expansion of institutional ownership or activities into the areas zoned residential and requires a buffer between parking lots and residential areas.

Girard Boulevard to San Mateo Boulevard

Land Use Maps / Existing Conditions

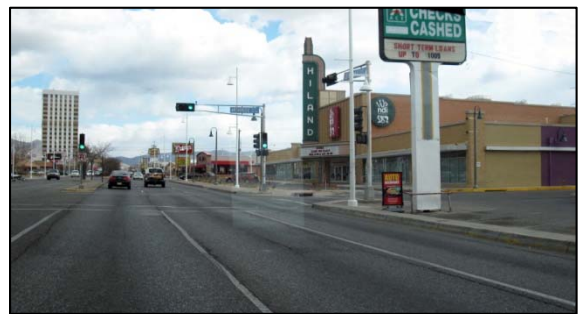
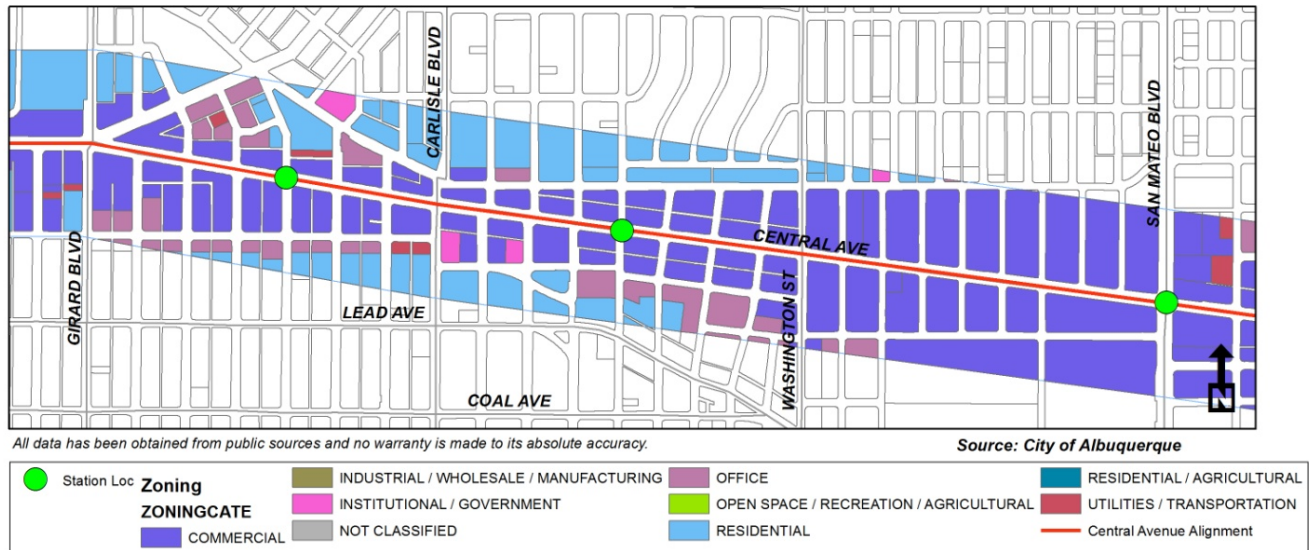


Land Use Segment A – Girard Blvd to Washington St

This area is known as the Nob Hill District which is well known for its neighborhood-commercial atmosphere. Land use is almost exclusively commercial, but with a variety of commercial types varying from retail to restaurants to motels to office, etc. The density of the structures is moderate and many of the buildings line the sidewalk with short setbacks even though they are single story and there are a few gaps for parking. New developments are starting to infill with multi-story and multi-use structures.

**Land Use Segment B – Washington St to San Mateo Blvd**

This section of the corridor is known as the Highland District where the density decreases and land uses include more parking and vacant parcels along with the commercial buildings. The Highland area is known to be less pedestrian and more automobile focused than the Nob Hill area. The old Hiland Theatre (shown right) is on the parcel designated as public/institutional as it is currently used as a school of dance.

**Zoning****Nob Hill Highland SDP - Central Avenue between Girard Blvd and San Mateo Blvd**

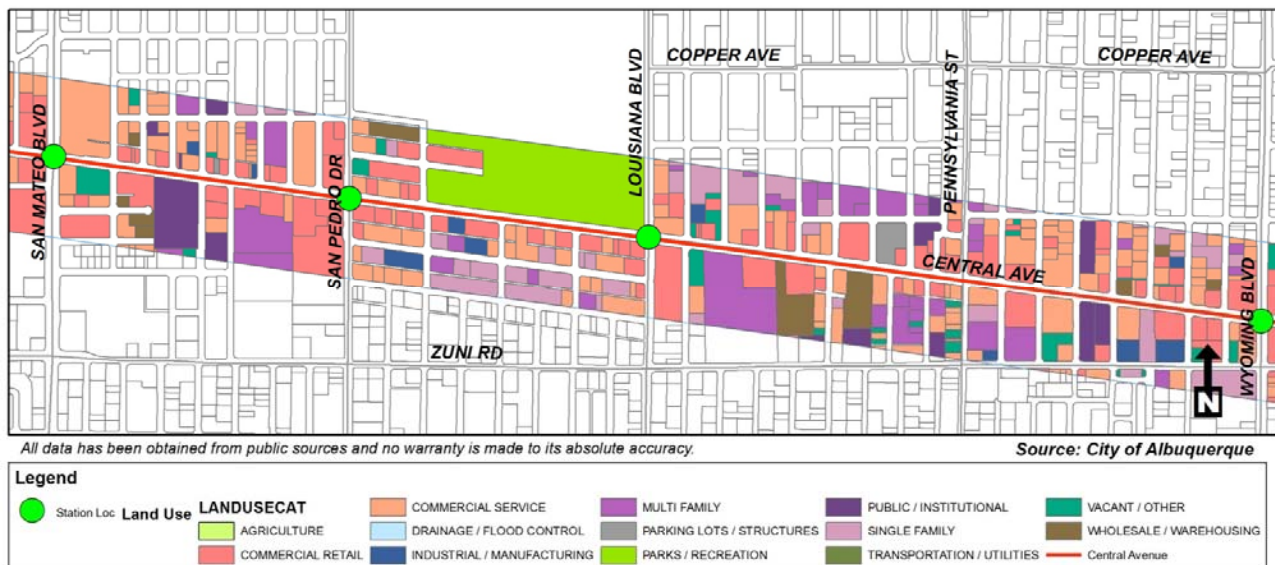
Zoning designations for this section facing Central Avenue are exclusively commercial. This section of the roadway is part of the Nob Hill District and has a potential for more intensive multi-use transit oriented development. The Nob Hill Hiland Sector Development Plan establishes Community Commercial/ Residential or CCR zones instead of the standard Commercial zones allowing for the mix of residential and commercial activity that is a major community goal for Central Avenue. The properties fronting Central Avenue will have a specific set of requirements that will be focused on enhancing their

role as an active pedestrian-oriented urban street. Regulated items include location of buildings and parking relative to the street, and conformance to architectural form and design requirements. The CCR zone eliminates some uses such as drive-up windows and adds high-density residential.

Zoning along Central Avenue as established by this plan has slight variations in requirements for the following sections of the roadway: 1) the Route 66 Historic Core (between Girard Blvd and Carlisle Blvd) is designated CCR-1; 2) the Emerging Nob Hill (between Carlisle Blvd and Washington St) is designated CCR-2; and 3) the Highland District (between Washington St and San Mateo Blvd) is designated CCR-3. A key element differentiating these sections is the 'Allowable Building Heights' with 3-stories allowed in CCR-1, 4-stories in CCR-2, and 5-stories in CCR-3. These regulations will assist in guiding transit oriented development associated with the BRT project.

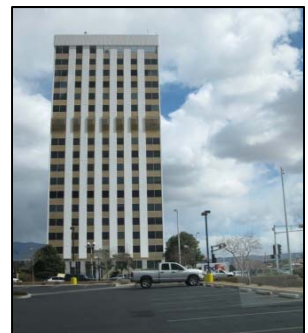
San Mateo Boulevard to Wyoming Boulevard

Land Use Maps / Existing Conditions



Segment 1 – San Mateo Blvd to Louisiana Blvd

This section of the corridor is varied with a large amount of commercial parcels, some vacant, public/institutional, transportation/utilities, and many parking lots. This section begins with one of the tallest multi-story buildings in the corridor – the Bank of the West building which was constructed when zoning foresaw the neighborhood becoming a much higher density than has been realized (see picture). The large parcel designated as parks/recreation is the Fairgrounds/Casino which leaves a large expanse of the corridor bordered by a parking lot visibly blocked by a solid wall in some sections and by a fence in others.

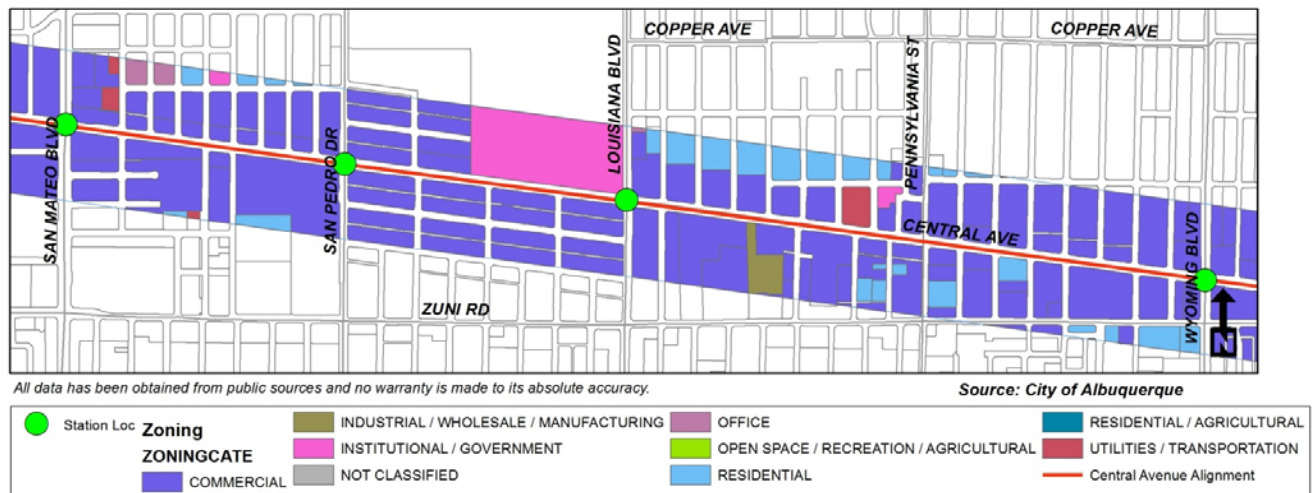


Segment 2 – Louisiana Blvd to Wyoming Blvd

This section of the Central Avenue corridor is characterized by large vacant parcels, used car lots, restaurants, gas stations, offices, mobile parks and a multi-family structure.



Zoning



Zoning in this section of the project corridor consists of almost all commercial. The large parcel designated Institutional/Government is the Fairgrounds/Downs Racetrack/Casino/Tingley Colliseum which may pose some obstacles to transit oriented development in the area.

La Mesa SDP - North side of Central Avenue between Louisiana Blvd and Wyoming Blvd

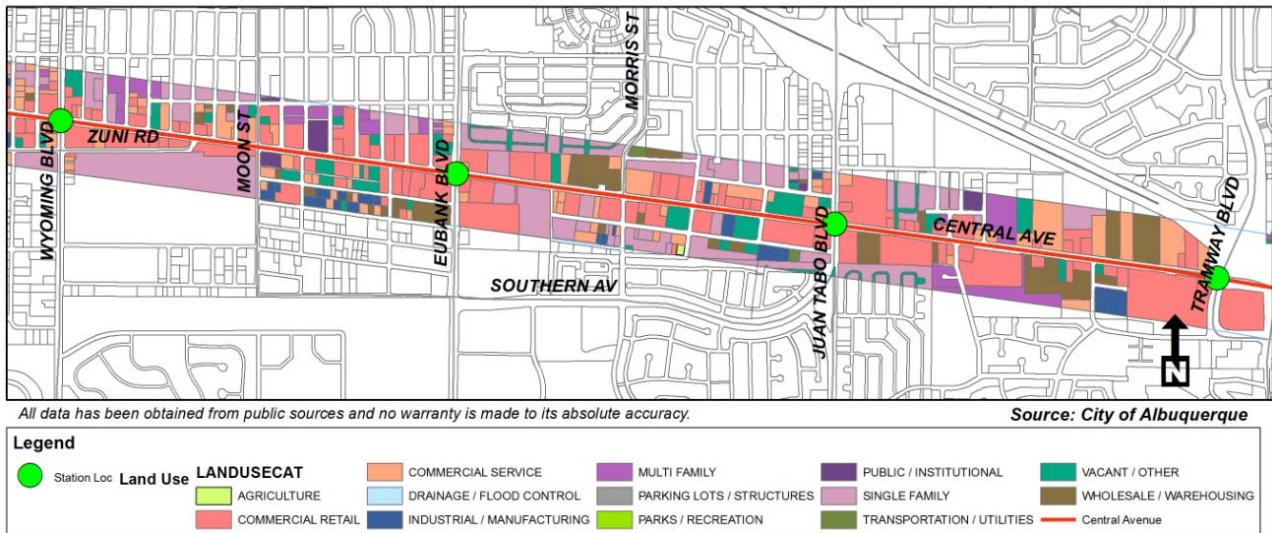
The Central Avenue corridor is primarily zoned commercial with the large Fairgrounds/Casino parcel zoned institutional/government. The interior of this plan area was previously zoned for single-family residential use, but in 1957 at the request of property owners, and subsequent to Planning Department studies, it was changed to multi-family residential zoning.

Trumbull SDP - South side of Central Avenue between Louisiana Blvd and Wyoming Blvd

Parcels along Central Avenue are zoned commercial, and behind Central Avenue, the majority of the area is zoned and developed with high-density residential, which has created overcrowding and parking issues that BRT could alleviate. The Trumbull SDP states that this area is not currently eligible for SU-2 zoning, however this plan recommends it for future consideration so that an updated sector development plan can guide uses as appropriate.

Wyoming Boulevard to Tramway Boulevard

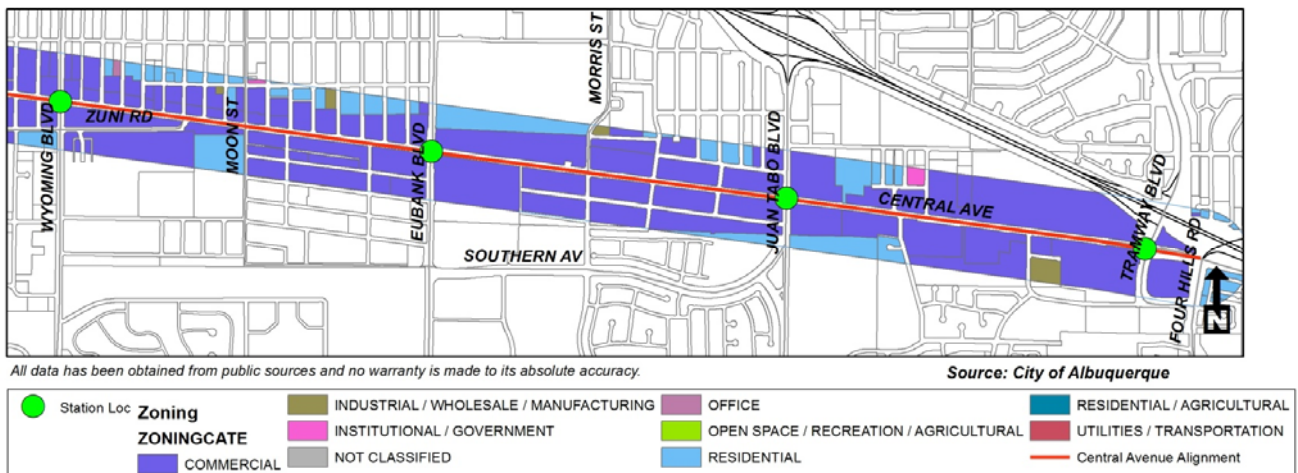
Land Use Maps / Existing Conditions



This part of the project area is characterized by large lots of commercial uses mostly strip mall in appearance with parking lots bordering the street and deep setbacks. Land development has been primarily auto-oriented and dominated by large regional commercial activities. Due to the area's historic position as an entrance point to the city from the east, there are many motels, some dating from the Historic Route 66 motor-court era. There are also several fast-food and sit-down restaurants. There are many lots with large item sales such as mobile homes, recreational vehicles, and boats, along with auto repair. The terminus of the project at Tramway Boulevard has a gateway feature/park and a large shopping center with a grocery store, restaurants, and a motel. There are some vacant older buildings and some vacant lots.



Zoning



East Gateway SDP - Central Avenue between Wyoming Blvd and Tramway Boulevard

The general zoning designation is exclusively commercial as shown in the figure above. The East Gateway Sector Development Plan which regulates the area of Central Avenue between Wyoming Boulevard and Tramway Boulevard establishes Special Neighborhood (SU-2) commercial zoning in order to clearly indicate that they are subject to special controls as set forth in this plan. This plan applies zoning districts to the major activity centers in the area and to properties abutting transit corridors to encourage a mixture of uses that enable people to live, work, shop, use local services, and take public transit. Three of the four special SU-2 zones created for East Gateway exist along Central Boulevard - the Community Activity Center Zone near Tramway, the Neighborhood Activity Center Zone near Wyoming and Juan Tabo, and the rest is part of the Corridor Zone. This allows a wide variety of uses for properties abutting Central Boulevard, and a more limited list of uses for community commercial properties inside residential neighborhoods near Central Avenue.

2.0 Conclusion

Land uses along the Central Avenue corridor are mostly commercial; and yet, the center of the project area has many intuitional uses, such as museums, government offices, and a school. It is expected that the BRT stations will be consistent with the existing land uses but may have to be sensitive to historic context. The expected conflict with commercial properties such as motels, restaurants, and gas stations, is primarily through the potential blocking of median access, which will most likely occur throughout the corridor, and will be determined as designs are further developed.

Most of the project area is developed and zoned according to existing land use patterns. The majority of the project area is governed by Sector Development Plans, which generally encourage transit oriented development and projects like the BRT onto Central Avenue with the intent of keeping major commercial development to the interior of the neighborhoods. Thus, this project is not expected to conflict with City zoning.

Land Use Summary

Given Central Avenue's long established position as the original key commercial route for the City of Albuquerque and the broad span of the project limits, land uses along the corridor are varied, but highly dominated by commercial uses. The parcels near the most western rural portion of the project consist of large vacant plots, however as the project travels east, properties become primarily commercial with few exceptions.

Although this creates exciting opportunities by offering transit services and transit oriented development to well established and relatively dense populations, there could be some potential conflict with access to commercial properties. Median access will most likely decrease throughout the corridor and will be determined as design further develops.

3.0 References

Downtown 2025 Sector Development Plan, City of Albuquerque Planning Department, Updated June 2014.

Downtown Neighborhood Area Sector Development Plan Update, City of Albuquerque Planning Department, Enacted June 2012.

East Gateway Sector Development Plan, City of Albuquerque Planning Department, Amended December 2013.

Huning Castle Sector Development Plan, City of Albuquerque Planning Department, Amended December 1993.

Huning Highland Sector Development Plan, City of Albuquerque Planning Department, Amended March 2005.

La Mesa Sector Development Plan, City of Albuquerque Planning Department, Adopted November 1976.

Nob Hill Highland Sector Development Plan, City of Albuquerque Planning Department, Amended June 2014.

Trumbull Sector Development Plan, City of Albuquerque Planning Department, Amended January 2003.

University Neighborhoods Sector Development Plan, City of Albuquerque Planning Department, Amended June 1991.

West Mesa Sector Development Plan, City of Albuquerque Planning Department, Amended May 1978.

West Route 66 Sector Development Plan, City of Albuquerque Planning Department, Amended March 2009.