ABQ RAIL TRAIL

PUBLIC ART

FRAMEWORK PLAN

ABQ RAIL TRAIL

March 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the City of Albuquerque's Public Art Urban Enhancement team, artists, community members, consultants, and others who thoughtfully engaged in the Rail Trail Public Art Framework Plan process and thus enabled the creation of this document.

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Introduction

[The Albuquerque Rail Trail](#) is a 7-mile urban multi-use pathway that will connect downtown Albuquerque to nearby neighborhoods, cultural destinations, and entertainment districts. The Rail Trail is a transformational initiative that will enhance connectivity, promote economic growth, and celebrate the city's diverse cultural heritage.

The Rail Trail is comprised of 11 major sections, forming a loop with scenic, recreational, cultural, and retail stops along the Rio Grande and throughout the city. An important feature—particularly relevant to this Rail Trail Public Art Framework Plan (RT PAFP)—is the integration of public art (temporary and permanent; traditional and digital/new media) installations.

The City of Albuquerque's Rail Trail project has been many years in the making, and has involved a diverse group of stakeholders, including government agencies, architects, community organizations, and private sector partners. Key participants include:

- City of Albuquerque Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)
- City of Albuquerque/Mayor Tim Keller's Administration
- Pland Collaborative
- Architect Antoine Predock
- Community Stakeholders & Public Input
- New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT)
- Albuquerque City Council
- Private and Nonprofit Organizations
- Local Law Enforcement & Public Safety Officials

The Rail Trail is part of a broader city-wide effort to enhance connectivity, promote economic development, and celebrate the city's cultural identity. Key motivations for this project include:

1. Urban Connectivity & Walkability
   o The Rail Trail is designed to create a safe, pedestrian- and bike-friendly corridor, transforming underutilized areas to link Downtown, Old Town, Sawmill, Barelas, Rail Yards, and the Rio Grande.
   o It aims to connect key attractions, including the ABQ BioPark, National Hispanic Cultural Center, and the Rail Yards Market.
2. Economic Development & Revitalization
   o The trail is expected to stimulate economic activity by attracting new businesses, restaurants, and tourism along the route.
   o It supports the city's broader effort to revitalize Downtown Albuquerque, making it more appealing to residents, visitors, and investors.
3. Cultural & Historical Celebration
   o The trail incorporates themes of Albuquerque's railroad history, Indigenous heritage, and unique desert landscape.
4. Public Safety & Infrastructure Improvements
   o The trail includes enhanced lighting, security cameras, emergency call boxes, and bike police patrols to improve safety in historically underutilized areas.
   o The project addresses long-standing pedestrian and cyclist safety concerns in a city that has historically been car-centric.
5. Environmental & Recreational Benefits
   o Encouraging walking and biking reduces traffic congestion and carbon emissions.
   o The trail will provide green spaces, public art, and shaded rest areas, making it an inviting recreational space for the community.
6. Leveraging Funding Opportunities
   o The city has secured $39.5 million in funding, including federal, state, and local sources.
   o The Rail Trail aligns with state and federal urban renewal priorities, allowing Albuquerque to capitalize on available grants and investment opportunities.

Timeline: Highlights / Phases

Phase 1: 2015-2019 | Conceptualization and Initial Planning
Community leaders and city planners began exploring the idea of a multi-use urban trail to connect Albuquerque's downtown with surrounding neighborhoods and cultural sites. Initial versions were called the Ale trail and was envisioned to link only the core of downtown to the Sawmill District. See Map below: The Ale Trail was presented in a 2021 [Rail Trail Spur Feasibility Study](#).
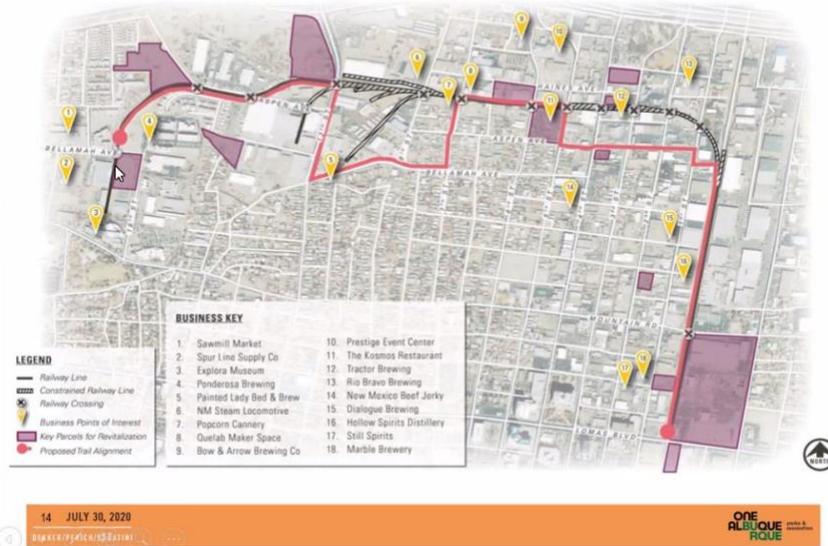
Phase 2: 2020 | Developing a Vision for Urban Design, Community Engagement, and Implementation
In 2020, the Albuquerque Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency selected Pland Collaborative, in partnership with Wilson & Company, to play a key role shaping the design, gathering community input, and ensuring it met long-term urban development goals. Their expertise helped create a plan that balances cultural significance, economic growth, and sustainable infrastructure.

Phase 3: 2021-2022 | Community Engagement and Design Finalization
Extensive community engagement activities, including walking tours, design charrettes, surveys, and public meetings, were conducted to gather input from residents, business owners, and stakeholders. This feedback shaped the vision, goals, and design recommendations for the trail. Additionally, the City's Public Art Program commissioned ten artists to develop public art themes through an intensive "time travel" process engaging hundreds of residents in their interactive installations at three different events along the proposed Rail Trail corridor.

While construction funding was being sourced, and the design team of Antoine Predock Associates were hired to expand the Rail Trail to the Cultural Loop project, the City's Department of Innovation and Technology in partnership with the CNM Fuse Internet of Things Coding Bootcamp and the Public Art Program, funded three cohorts of artists, sixteen total, to develop technology infused temporary public art prototypes. The IOT Artists Course was supported in part by an OurTown grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Phase 4: 2025 and Beyond | Ongoing Development
Construction began in January 2025, focusing on completing the first section of the trail: the Sawmill section. The entire 7-mile loop is envisioned to be completed over the next several years, with the city continuing to secure additional funding and support.

Purpose of This Plan

Why Is a Public Art Framework Plan Important?

This plan has been developed to better understand this project's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. This Rail Trail Public Art Framework Plan will help guide the integration of art into urban infrastructure that will help celebrate local history and improve public spaces.

This plan provides two important types of guidance for public art on the Rail Trail. First, it offers broad direction by outlining goals for public art for the Rail Trail. Second, it outlines the tools and processes necessary, and already used, for identifying, planning and implementing public art on the Rail Trail. It is also an important milestone because it will help kickstart the work of developing a complete plan for public art and arts programming on the Rail Trail.

The intention of including public art as an integral part of the Rail Trail is to:

- enhance placemaking by creating unique, vibrant, and culturally rich spaces.
- support economic development by attracting tourism and local investment.
- encourage community pride and engagement in public spaces.
- ensure that art projects are sustainable, well-maintained, and aligned with long-term city planning.
- provide arts programming that will attract visitors to the public art installations along the trail.

The Public Art Urban Enhancement Division

Albuquerque is a vibrant and culturally rich city, known for its deep history, diverse communities, and stunning Southwestern landscapes. The City's Art in Municipal Places Program (Public Art Program) was established in 1978 to enhance public spaces through dynamic and meaningful artwork, reflecting the city's unique identity. The program is guided by the Albuquerque Arts Board and managed by professional arts staff with decades of public art experience.

Albuquerque's Public Art Collection

The City of Albuquerque boasts a rich and expansive public art collection that significantly enhances its urban landscape. Key highlights include:

- Extensive Collection: Over 1,800 indoor and outdoor works of art, including nearly 400 traditional outdoor artworks such as bronze and other durable materials sculptures, ceramic tiles mosaics, and murals.
- Program Oversight: Managed by a professional team within the Department of Arts and Culture and overseen by the City of Albuquerque Arts Board.
- Diverse Partnerships: Originally focused on artwork on City property, the program has expanded over the past two decades to include collaborations with local arts and cultural organizations as well as private property projects.

Rail Trail Initiatives: In preparation for the Rail Trail development, significant investments have been made, including:

- Funding from a [National Endowment for the Arts grant](#) to create temporary, technology-infused public art installations.
- Partnering with the [City's Department of Technology and Innovation](#) and [CNM Deep Dive Coding](#) to train 20 artists on Internet of Things (IOT) technology that can be integrated into experimental and interactive public art.
- Support for 10 artists through a time-travel process to develop guiding themes for the Rail Trail public art.
- Community Engagement: Findings from the city's first-ever Public Art Census reveal that residents not only embrace creativity in their surroundings but also contribute to small-scale installations that evoke a unique sense of place.
- Maintenance and Conservation: The program prides itself on robust maintenance and conservation efforts, ensuring that public art throughout Albuquerque remains in excellent condition.

This comprehensive approach highlights Albuquerque's commitment to fostering an art-rich environment that celebrates its cultural diversity and community spirit. Building on the 46 years of best practices for public art in Albuquerque, this Rail Trail Public Art Framework Plan suggest several key strategies to assure that Public Art along the Rail Trail is not just in keeping with the quality of the overall collection but also utilizes innovative opportunities for artists.

The Rail Trail Public Art Framework Plan is designed to guide the integration of public art along the Rail Trail, a transformative project that connects downtown Albuquerque with surrounding neighborhoods. This plan serves as a roadmap for the next phase of public art development, ensuring a cohesive vision that celebrates Albuquerque's history, culture, and creative spirit. However, as a living document, it remains adaptable to evolving priorities and new opportunities that arise over time.

Public Art Research that Contributes to this Plan: The [2024 Albuquerque Bernalillo County Public Art Census](#)

The 2024 Albuquerque, Bernalillo County Public Art Census Report highlights the importance of walkability and public art in fostering community connectivity and equity in public spaces. Mapping public art in walkable areas indicates that the general Rail Trail area is both pedestrian-friendly and rich in public art.

The report outlines key walkability factors (p. 44), including:

- Pedestrian-oriented design and right-of-way considerations
- Dense networks of streets, trails, and greenways
- Mixed-use environments with organized centers
- Direct and comfortable access to frequent transit
- Managed parking for improved accessibility

The Rail Trail goals specifically address several of these walkability factors and advocate for significant investment in public art to enhance the space. A key recommendation from the Public Art Census is to "continue to invest in artworks at sites of intervention," such as public institutions, infrastructure, and amenities (p. 64). The Rail Trail is a perfect example of "sites of intervention" ripe for public art. The census also emphasizes the need to prevent the deterioration of public artworks. While most countywide artworks are in excellent condition, a public art maintenance plan is crucial for sustaining a vibrant sense of place and community (p. 64). Maintaining public art along the Rail Trail will require a strategic plan with adequate resources to ensure its longevity and impact.

02 Goals

Goal A: Ensure Public Art is an Integral Part of the Rail Trail

Maintain the tradition of excellence that the Public Art Program has established during its 45 years of existence. Traditional forms of public art, which are also unique elements to this program, are: murals, mosaics, and pedestrian-scale installations that reflect the City's history, culture(s), and landscape.

While maintaining the traditions that have made the program successful, it is important to incorporate new art forms/media/mediums, and support emerging artists through programs like: Time Travel and IoT.

Technology Infrastructure for Public Art on the Rail Trail

The development of technology infrastructure along the Rail Trail is essential for enhancing accessibility, safety, and user experience, but also providing for innovative public art experiences. Integrating smart technologies can improve connectivity, wayfinding, and public engagement through public artworks designed and implemented by artist who have technology training. To date, 16 local artists have completed the partnership Deep Dive Coding Internet of Things Course at CNM Fuse. These artists have developed prototype, technology infused art concepts for further refinement for appropriate Rail Trail applications. From data driven artistic visualizations to sensory sculptures, these prototypes, funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, reveal a robust appetite for artists' opportunities to employ technology in unique, experimental outdoor settings.

Key components of the Rail Trail's technology infrastructure that can support public art may include:

- Smart Lighting & Surveillance: Implementing energy-efficient LED lighting and security cameras to enhance visibility and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

- Call Boxes with CCTV & Wi-Fi: The initial Sawmill Rail Trail segment will include two Call Boxes along the 1,300-foot pathway. These Call Boxes will be equipped with CCTV surveillance and Wi-Fi connectivity, providing an added layer of security and digital access. This is part of the technology infrastructure being installed by DTI (Department of Technology & Innovation).

- Expanded Wi-Fi & CCTV Coverage: DTI anticipates extending Wi-Fi and CCTV applications along the entire Rail Trail, ensuring comprehensive coverage for safety and digital accessibility.

- Interactive Wayfinding & Signage: Utilizing digital kiosks and mobile apps with real-time navigation, historical information, and transit schedules.

- Environmental Monitoring: installing air quality sensors and weather monitoring systems to track environmental conditions and inform users.

- Public Art & Augmented Reality (AR) Integration: Enhancing the trail with AR experiences that bring murals and sculptures to life through interactive storytelling.

- Smart Infrastructure Management: Using IoT (Internet of Things) technology for real-time maintenance tracking, such as detecting damaged pathways, lighting failures, or graffiti.

- Sustainable Energy Solutions: Incorporating solar-powered charging stations and smart benches to support eco-friendly initiatives.

A well-planned technology infrastructure will not only enhance the Rail Trail's usability but also promote safety, sustainability, and public engagement, making it a more inclusive and innovative urban space.

Goal B: Continue to Strengthen Collaboration Amongst Departments, Agencies, and Community Institutions, Organizations, and Local Artists

The Rail Trail process has brought together a wide variety of interests, expertise, and exploration previously listed in the Introduction of this report. Future work, incorporating public art as an integral component of the Rail Trails requires that this engagement and dialogue continue.

Goal C: Building on Planning and Design Investments to Guide All Future Work in Rail Trail Arts in the Public Realm

Much work has been completed over the past five years, from initial feasibility studies to adventurous plans and designs for Rail Trail arts and culture, architecture, landscape, and infrastructures – many of which are incorporated in this report as appendices. This framework plan aims to continue these working relationships such that public art aligns both with Rail Trail plans and designs, and the mission of the Public Art Program.

Goal D: Establish Near-term, Long-Term, and Ongoing Activities that Engage Key Players and Stakeholders

Use this document as a working document to review on an annual basis and thus add and re-prioritize yearly tasks and strategies.

Integrate public art into all work moving forward. It is imperative that a fair and transparent process is continued—as established by the Public Art Program—such that there are clear criteria for selection of sites and artists.

ABQ RAIL TRAIL

Indian Pueblo Cultural Center

Sawmill District

Old Town

BioPark

Convention Center

Zoo

Alvarado Transportation Center

Historic Rail Yards

National Hispanic Cultural Center

- - - Alignment Study Complete
- - - Alignment Not Finalized
───── Existing Trail

03 Implementation

Yearly Work Plans

This Framework Plan sets the stage for reviewing annual activities at the end of each year and developing work plans for implementation in the following year.

The City of Albuquerque's Public Art Program Staff should establish meetings of the annual workplan task force, where workplans are reviewed and recommended for inclusion in the City's Capital Budget, and are open public comment. In order to keep all stakeholders informed, and to encourage community members and city staff to share ideas and priorities, the Public Art Program staff could host an annual open house to celebrate recently completed projects and projects in development, and under construction. This informal setting would allow community members to share their ideas and priorities for public art along the Rail Trail.

Furthermore, regular program evaluations are essential to the growth and effectiveness of the Public Art Program on the Rail Trail. It is recommended that the program undergo an evaluation within five to seven years of the plan's approval. The specific evaluation process and methodology should be determined at the time of the review, with consideration of the following guidelines:

- The evaluation should assess the extent to which the goals outlined at the start of this plan have been achieved.

- It should include an external review focusing on public perceptions of public art along the Rail Trail.

- The evaluation process should be facilitated by an independent consultant.

Annual Report

The Public Art Framework Plan should produce annual reports to ensure transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in the management and development of public art initiatives. Annual reports serve as essential tools for evaluating the progress, impact, and effectiveness of the plan's strategies and objectives. They provide valuable insights into the success of ongoing projects, highlight areas that require improvement, and showcase achievements to stakeholders, including the public, funding bodies, and governmental agencies.

Continued Community Engagement

Throughout the planning and design process the Public Art Program staff have gained a clearer understanding of its role within the community and the importance of fostering community support for the Rail Trail Public Art Program. The commitment to developing unique partnerships and developing programs and projects that have been centered on local arts and community events has elevated the Public Art Program's visibility, while also educating the public about its activities and goals.

Moving forward, this community outreach should continue, especially as the Public Art Program works with other City agencies and departments to implement the PAFP plan along the Rail Trail in the coming years. To the extent resources allow, the Public Art Program should actively work to enhance public awareness and engagement with the art collection along the Rail Trail.

The Public Art Program should consider organizing inclusive events such as lectures, panel discussions, tours, and other opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds to learn about and discuss public art practices. Additionally, efforts should be made to strengthen the Program's identity and online presence to broaden its reach and impact.

04 Conclusions & Recommendations

The Albuquerque Rail Trail project is an ambitious infrastructure endeavor in a city that lacks substantial private philanthropic support. While its full realization may take decades, sections designed as functional connectors present an excellent opportunity to experiment with and expand a robust public art program along the trail. As infrastructure investments progress, the goals outlined in this framework plan will continue to evolve. Ultimately, the appointment of a dedicated staff member to oversee public art and arts programming along the Rail Trail will be essential to ensuring its long-term success.

In conclusion, this PUBLIC ART FRAMEWORK PLAN for the ABQ Rail Trail will only be successful through collaboration, cooperation, and thinking in the near-term, the long-term, and via the ongoing/daily work of making public art happen along the Rail Trail.

While the Rail Trail has many benefits, **there are some challenges that need to be addressed,** which can be dealt with via the previously stated goals, implementation strategies, and recommendations (see below):

1. High Costs & Budget Concerns
   - The project is estimated to cost $39.5 million, and future expansions could require even more funding. Funding opportunities just for public art will need to be explored on an ongoing basis as the 1.5% for Public Art Funds will not be enough to fully implement a comprehensive Rail Trail Public Art Plan.
2. Maintenance & Long-Term Sustainability
   - Large infrastructure projects require ongoing maintenance, which could become a financial burden. If the city does not allocate funds for upkeep of the actual trail and the public art, the trail could fall into disrepair, making it unsafe or underused. Protecting the value and condition of works of public art is critical to a healthy creative economy
3. Safety & Crime Issues
   - There are worries that the Rail Trail could become a hub for crime, loitering, or vandalism, especially in under-patrolled areas. Addressing ongoing crime and homelessness issues, and other safety issues are paramount to the success of the Rail Trail and its public art.

4. Limited Use & Accessibility
   - Many people in Albuquerque (e.g., commuters) still rely on cars. It will be important to encourage and incentivize use of the trails by commuters, recreational cyclists and pedestrians.
5. Displacement & Gentrification
   - Infrastructure projects like the Rail Trail can increase property values, potentially pushing out lower-income residents and small businesses; therefore, work needs to be done with neighborhoods that abut the Rail Trail. There is a great deal of scholarly literature and white papers that provide strategies for reducing the potential of displacement and gentrification.
6. Prioritization of Other Transportation Needs
   - The City has made some significant investment in public transit; therefore, the Rail Trail should be incorporated into future public transit initiatives, making it and integral part of how locals—and visitors—move through and around the city.
7. Environmental Concerns
   - As the City develops the Rail Trail and integrates public art into shared public spaces, it is essential to balance creativity and accessibility with environmental stewardship. Going forth, the City should mandate minimization of ecological impact by preserving natural habitats, promoting biodiversity, and implementing sustainable practices throughout the planning, construction, and maintenance phases. By fostering collaboration between artists, environmental experts, and the community, The City can create vibrant, culturally enriching spaces that honor and protect the natural beauty that makes this City—and this Rail Trail—special.

Recommendation #1
Consider Public Art and Arts Programming Management Scenarios for the Albuquerque Rail Trail

Public train/rail trails across North America increasingly emphasize amenities that blend infrastructure with art and community spaces. These trails provide multi-use greenways, seating areas, lighting, signage, and most importantly, public art that reflects local culture and identity. Amenities aim to enhance user experience while promoting sustainable transport options and community engagement. Therefore, first and foremost, the Rail Trail needs an Arts Coordinator under the Public Art Urban Enhancement Division to ensure that public art is an integral part of the Rail Trail, and that the vision for the public art program aligns with the Rail Trail Vision and associate planning initiatives. A dedicated staff person that can oversee and implement various types of permanent and temporary public art, along with coordinating other arts and cultural programming will be key to the long term success of the Rail Trail.

For Albuquerque's Rail Trail, a joint municipal-nonprofit partnership model offers the ideal approach, combining municipal resources with nonprofit flexibility and community-driven programming. This model would support Albuquerque's goals of cultural representation, sustainable funding, and long-term maintenance. Please see the Case Studies section of this report for examples of other trail management programs based on this model.

Through structured public art selection and funding processes as established and utilized citywide by the Public Art Program, Albuquerque can establish a Rail Trail that authentically represents its community while maintaining the vibrancy and sustainability essential for a public art trail project. An excellent example of this type of inter-departmental project management is the recent Sunport/Public Art process which resulted in over a dozen large-scale and monumental works from a special $3M public art allocation. Implementing a dedicated Rail Trail Arts Coordinator within the city's Public Art Urban Enhancement Division would ensure consistent, community-focused art programming and sustained care for trail installations, enhancing the Rail Trail as a dynamic cultural asset for Albuquerque. Please refer to Appendix A: Case Studies in Management Models for Public Art/Rail Trails.

Staff Recommendation for Public Art Coordination on the Rail Trail

Regardless of the overarching management model, Albuquerque should designate a Rail Trail Arts Coordinator under the Public Art Urban Enhancement Division, as either an FTE or a full-time contractor who reports to the Division to oversee arts programming and public art management along the Rail Trail. This role would follow the Arts Board guidelines for equitable engagement, established maintenance protocols, and documented care. Because the city's funding towards public art on the Rail Trail will most likely come from the regular 1.5% for Art G.O. Bond funds, all Rail Trail public art should follow the program's 46-year history of best practices as enabled by the Art in Municipal Places Ordinance.

Proposed Staff Responsibilities

Define the Vision & Purpose of Public Art on the Rail Trail
- Define the role of public art in shaping the identity of the Rail Trail
- Align public art with community values, history, and cultural narratives.

Consider Site Selection & Integration
- Determine where public art will be placed and how it will interact with its surroundings.
- Ensure art is accessible, visible, and meaningful to the community.

Explore Traditional and Contemporary Types of Public Art
- Sculptures & Installations: Permanent or temporary three-dimensional works.
- Murals & Paintings: Large-scale wall art that reflects local culture.
- Interactive Art: Digital, kinetic, or participatory installations; continue partnerships with education and innovation collaborators.
- Functional Art: Artistic elements integrated into infrastructure, such as benches, lighting, or pathways that remain artists inspired and driven are appropriate permanent elements for the Rail Trail.

Encourage Artist & Community Engagement
- Encourages collaboration with local artists, cultural organizations, and residents.
- May include public input sessions, artist residencies, or community-led design initiatives.

Identify Funding & Create Actionable Annual Budgets
- Identify multiple funding sources, such as government grants, private sponsorships, or developer contributions. Voter approved public art funds will need to be augmented if the Rail Trail itself is funded outside of the regular G.O. Bond cycles.

Create a Maintenance & Conservation Plan
- Establishes a plan for ongoing care, cleaning, and repair of artworks on the Rail Trail.
- Addresses potential issues like weather damage, vandalism, or material deterioration.

Recommendation #2
Align With Other CABQ Planning Initiatives

As mentioned in Goal B of this document, the Public Art Program should continue to strengthen existing partnerships and explore new collaborative opportunities with other City departments, agencies, and community institutions/organizations, and local artists. Additionally, the Public Art Program should work with City leadership to establish broader support for arts and culture.

There are many current planning initiatives underway in Albuquerque; as well, there will be many in the future. The Public Art Program staff should be included at initial meetings for all initiatives related to the Downtown Development and the Rail Trail. For example, as work moves forward with the Downtown Albuquerque Wayfinding Plan, Rail Trail and Public Art Program staff should be involved in the design, placement, and development of the wayfinding plan document such that wayfinding in downtown is aligned with and complements the wayfinding along the Rail Trail.

Recommendation #3
Develop Yearly Work Plans

Creating yearly work plans is essential for establishing clear goals and prioritizing initiatives for the year ahead. These plans define specific projects, timelines, budgets, and resource allocations, offering a structured roadmap for implementation. By promoting efficiency, coherence, and adaptability, work plans help ensure that the overarching goals of the Public Art Framework Plan are consistently translated into actionable steps.

Recommendation #4
Share Annual Reports

Implementation an annual reporting process to maintain the credibility and sustainability of the Public Art Framework Plan, fostering greater collaboration, and inspiring continued investment and participation in public art initiatives.

Producing annual reports helps build public trust by demonstrating a commitment to openness and responsiveness. Regularly documenting outcomes, budgets, community engagement efforts, and artistic contributions creates a historical record that guides future planning and decision-making. It also supports advocacy efforts by clearly articulating the value of public art in enhancing cultural identity, promoting inclusivity, and stimulating economic growth.

05 Appendix

A. Case Studies in Management Models for Public Art/Rail Trails

Projects within the [High Line Network](#) provide useful models for the Albuquerque Rail Trail, showcasing varying management approaches such as public-private partnerships, nonprofit stewardship, and municipally managed projects. For example:

1. **Public-Private Partnership (PPP):** The High Line in NYC is managed by a nonprofit, Friends of the High Line, in partnership with the city. This nonprofit-led approach prioritizes private funding and public engagement, allowing for dedicated programming and unique art installations that foster community connection.

2. **Municipal Management:** The Atlanta BeltLine is managed as a public project by Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. This structure provides direct municipal oversight, ensuring alignment with city goals like transit access and community green space while balancing public accountability.

3. **Nonprofit-Municipal Collaboration:** The Buffalo Bayou Park in Houston, TX, is co-managed by the City of Houston and the Buffalo Bayou Partnership (BBP), a nonprofit. This collaborative model enhances flexibility and community programming while integrating public support for long-term maintenance and ecological care.

For Albuquerque's Rail Trail, a joint municipal-nonprofit partnership model offers the ideal approach, combining municipal resources with nonprofit flexibility and community-driven programming. This model would support Albuquerque's goals of cultural representation, sustainable funding, and long-term maintenance. Through structured public art selection and funding processes, Albuquerque can establish a Rail Trail that authentically represents its community while maintaining the vibrancy and sustainability essential for a public art trail project. Implementing a dedicated Rail Trail Arts Coordinator within the city's Public Art Urban Enhancement Division would ensure consistent, community-focused art programming and sustained care for trail installations, enhancing the Rail Trail as a dynamic cultural asset for Albuquerque.

Introduction

The High Line Network's website highlights various North American public works projects that focus on community-centered urban revitalization. These projects employ diverse management approaches, including public-private partnerships, non-profit stewardship, and community engagement models, each tailored to meet specific local needs. Notable examples include the 11th Street Bridge Park in D.C. and Chicago's Bloomingdale Trail, emphasizing collaborative management, sustainable development, and community-driven planning. For further details, please visit the High Line Network projects page.

Typical Management Models for Public Art in Trail Projects

1. Public-Private Partnerships (PPP or P3)
In PPPs, public entities collaborate with private companies to design, build, finance, and sometimes operate and maintain public projects. This approach leverages private sector expertise and funding for public infrastructure, though it can involve complex structures and higher financing costs.

2. Municipally Managed Projects
Municipal management, as seen with the Atlanta BeltLine, typically involves direct oversight by a city entity or a nonprofit created by the city. This structure provides a structured, long-term management framework that ensures public accountability and aligns with urban goals like economic development and green space enhancement.

3. Private Non-Profit Managed Projects
Non-profit management, as exemplified by New York City's High Line, involves a nonprofit overseeing day-to-day operations, maintenance, and programming while working closely with the city for oversight and planning. This model often supports more flexible, community-focused programming and funding through private donations and grants.

4. Partnership-Managed Projects
A hybrid approach, such as Houston's Buffalo Bayou Park, combines municipal ownership with a nonprofit partner responsible for maintenance and programming. This model benefits from the stability of municipal resources alongside the nonprofit's community-driven and flexible approach.

Recommended Arts Management Model for the Albuquerque Rail Trail

1. Joint Municipal and Non-Profit Partnership
For the Albuquerque Rail Trail, a partnership management model appears to be the most effective. This structure combines municipal stability with nonprofit flexibility, aligning with Albuquerque's needs for public engagement, diverse funding sources, and sustainable maintenance. Key benefits include:

- Community Engagement and Cultural Relevance: A nonprofit partner could organize culturally relevant programming and events, resonating with Albuquerque's rich cultural heritage.
- Sustainable Funding Sources: The city can fund foundational infrastructure, while the nonprofit focuses on fundraising and private donations for operational and programming costs.
- Public Accountability and Oversight: Municipal oversight ensures alignment with Albuquerque's larger urban goals like accessibility and environmental sustainability.
- Long-Term Stewardship and Environmental Care: The nonprofit could prioritize sustainable practices and long-term ecological care along the trail.

Case Study
Mirroring the Buffalo Bayou Park model in Houston, TX, Albuquerque could establish a local nonprofit, similar to a "Friends of the Trail" organization, to manage programming,

community outreach, and day-to-day maintenance, while the city focuses on infrastructure and funding.

2. Public Art Management under a Joint Partnership Strategy

A partnership management approach supports a collaborative, community-centered method for selecting, funding, and maintaining public art on the Rail Trail. Expected impacts include:

- Enhanced Community Input: Local engagement sessions could involve artists and cultural organizations, ensuring artwork reflects Albuquerque's unique identity.
- Diverse Funding for Art Projects: While the city funds infrastructure, the nonprofit could seek additional funding for art through grants, sponsorships, and donations, supporting both permanent and rotating exhibits.
- Curated, Thematic Art Programs: With a nonprofit leading programming, the Rail Trail could host rotating, themed exhibitions, fostering dynamic art experiences.
- Maintenance and Preservation: Dedicated resources for art maintenance ensure installations are well-preserved over time.
- Interactive and Educational Art Experiences: Nonprofits' focus on engagement could support interactive and educational installations that highlight Albuquerque's history and culture.

Challenges to this approach include complex decision-making, potential funding conflicts, and sustainability concerns. Clear governance and collaboration can mitigate these issues.

Other public and/or private rail trail projects, such as Santa Fe's Railyard and Denver's South Platte River Trail, demonstrate successful partnership models that engage communities, secure diverse funding, and maintain cultural programming. These examples underline the effectiveness of combining municipal stability with nonprofit adaptability.

Best Practices for Public-Private Partnership Models in Art Selection and Programming Management

Private non-profit tasks:

- Community Engagement: Conduct forums and surveys to gather public input on themes that reflect community values.
- Curate and manage event-based programming long the Rail Trail, establish guidelines for vendors, busker and other creative economy opportunities.
- Market and promote all activities along the Rail Trail through established city outlets such as ABQToDo and VisitABQ.
- Assist with sourcing grants and leveraging other funds for programming in partnership with the City.
- Assist with "eyes on the trail" to identify and rectify maintenance issues with public art or other infrastructure elements to assure timely cleanliness and protection of public art investments.

City tasks:

- Transparent Artist Selection: Establish selection committees with representatives from public and private partners, including community members.
- Funding and Budgeting: Leverage city funds, grants, and donations to support installation, maintenance, and future restoration.
- Ongoing Maintenance: Formalize sustainable maintenance responsibilities, often with nonprofits handling day-to-day upkeep, see above.
- Rotating and Permanent Art: Mix permanent installations with rotating exhibitions to reflect evolving community narratives.
- Documentation and Evaluation: Regularly document installations and assess feedback to adapt selection and management practices as needed.

B. Time Travel Artist Engagement

The "Rail Trail Time Travel" project was an initiative of the City of Albuquerque Public Art Program; the intention was to engage local artists and the community in envisioning art for the Albuquerque Rail Trail with an eye towards the long term future, but with reverence and respect for Albuquerque's past.

Ten artists were selected to explore and initiate conversations about public art along the Rail Trail. They received training in creative placemaking and "placeknowing" through workshops and site visits. The artists developed temporary interactive stations, pop-up displays, and small-scale installations to engage with the public and gather feedback about public art on the Rail Trail.

Through this work, ten themes emerged:

- Shade + Stars: Creating spaces that offer protection from the sun and opportunities to appreciate the night sky.
- Earth + Form: Incorporating natural landscapes and nature-based forms, such as rammed earth, for rest areas and viewing spots.
- Nature + Plants: Featuring plant species, gardens, and nature-based educational opportunities.
- Celebrating Wildlife: Highlighting wildlife habitats or motifs of animals, birds, and insects.
- Design: Utilizing native and indigenous motifs.

- Being Alone, Together: Creating intimate spaces that can be experienced individually amidst others.

- Rest + Play: Designing elements that invite visitors to sit, rest, watch, listen, learn, and engage in playful interaction.

- Wholistic Nourishment: Focusing on aspects like food, tranquility, cleanliness, and safety.

- Icons + Events: Incorporating cultural symbols, interactive art, and spaces for hosting cultural events.

- WiFi + Light: Creating art that indicates free Wi-Fi access and features projection mapping.

- Prosperity + Flight to the Future: Emphasizing accessibility, respect for nature, happiness, and balance.

The Time Travel artists themes were fully integrated and celebrated in the initial Rail Trail Planning report created by the MRA in 2021. While additional work has been done to develop a comprehensive Rail Trail experience by subsequent consultants, these themes remain relevant for future artists to explore for individual public artworks commissioned in the future

C. The Internet of Things Prototpes

The Rail Trail Art & Technology Internet of Things (IoT) Bootcamp was an initiative by the City of Albuquerque's Public Art Program, in collaboration with the Department of Technology & Innovation and CNM Ingenuity's IoT program. The goal of this multi-partner collaboration was to help artists learn about and find creative ways to incorporate technology into their work/practice.

The Internet of Things (IoT) Bootcamp was an intensive 10-week program offered by CNM Ingenuity, designed to teach participants the fundamentals of rapid prototyping and smart product design. The bootcamp focused on creating and coding smart connected devices using low-power computer chips, sensors, and microcontrollers. Participants learned to develop devices that respond to their environment and collect data, gaining hands-on experience in areas such as circuit design, C/C++ programming, 3D modeling, and rapid prototyping.

The bootcamp also provided participants with opportunities to test their newly learned technologies in real-world settings: The art created during the IoT bootcamps is also considered for permanent installation along the Rail Trail, enhancing the trail's appeal and reflecting Albuquerque's vibrant history and cultural diversity.

In collaboration with the City of Albuquerque's Department of Technology & Innovation and the Public Art Program, the IoT Bootcamp was tailored to integrate technology into public art. Selected local artists participated in a specialized version of the bootcamp, where they learned to blend public art concepts with internet-driven technology. The goal was to equip artists with the skills to incorporate digital and technological components into their traditional art practices, leading to the creation of interactive, tech-infused public artworks.

Themes that emerged out of the IoT Artist engagement:
- Nature/Place
- Interactive Art
- Hidden Smart City
- Live Performance Enhancement
- Art as Safety

For a more complete description of themes that emerged from the Internet of Things Artist Engagement, please see Addendum A, where each artists' project included a QR Code link to their recorded class presentation.

The level of impact the Public Art, DTI and CNM collaboration has had on the IOT artists had been, as several have said, "life changing." Artists with virtually no technology experience have emerged with skills and visions ready to populate the Rail Trail with exciting and informative public art experiences that can spark wonder and joy. At the time of this report, the partnership is launching it's 4th cohort of artists to receive the internet of things training. Additionally, the team is expanding the program to include UNM's School of Architecture and Planning, Predock Center for Design + Research so that artists can apply to receive more coaching and experimental resources for upscaling their initial Rail Trail Public Art concepts.

D. Pland Collaborative | Feasibility Study and Alignment Plans: Part V – Public Art + Cultural Programming, March 2022

Link to online document: https://www.cabq.gov/mra/documents/part-v-public-art-cultural-programming.pdf

albuquerque RAIL TRAIL

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The development of this Framework Plan included a robust multi-faceted community engagement process. A steering committee and public sector working group were established to guide the project. Public meetings and a community survey were facilitated to solicit community input.

648 Survey Responses

5 Design Charettes

115 Meeting Attendees

12 Steering Committee Members

FIGURE 2. Lomas Gateway

Both concepts are results from the design charettes organized as part of this project.

Art Gateway Feature with Overlook

Public meeting participants commenting on project boards

FIGURE 3. Marquette Crossing

MARQUETTE OVERPASS

Marquette Crossing
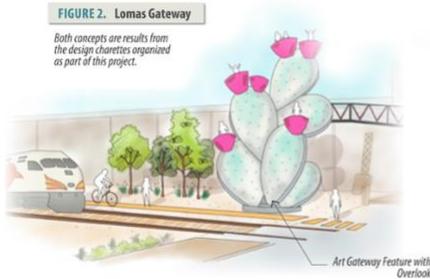APD Sub-Station
Pop-Up Vendors / Restrooms
Development Opportunity

12

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

E. Antoine Predock Architects PC | Trail of Enchantment

Link to online document: https://www.cabq.gov/mra/rail-trail/design