



Albuquerque City Council District 5 Windows Project Study Report-Final Draft

A project that connects the trails to existing and proposed destination sites.



Project of Albuquerque City Council
Councilor Cynthia D. Borrego, MPA, District 5

Dineen & Associates LLC, Architects AIA
Torres & Associates

Richard. Dineen Architect
Robert Torres Architect

Director David Simon, Albuquerque Parks & Recreation
Associate Director Tom G. Menicucci, Albuquerque Council Services
Albuquerque Council District 5 Policy Analyst Susan Vigil, Planner
GIS Coordinator/Planner Rachel M. Sanchez, AGIS Division

December 2021

Table of Contents

Background

Albuquerque City Council District 5 Map

AGIS Interactive Map

Legislation Authorizing Windows Project

Sites and Maps

Window Site Amenities, Possible Improvements, and Next Steps

Acknowledgements

Background

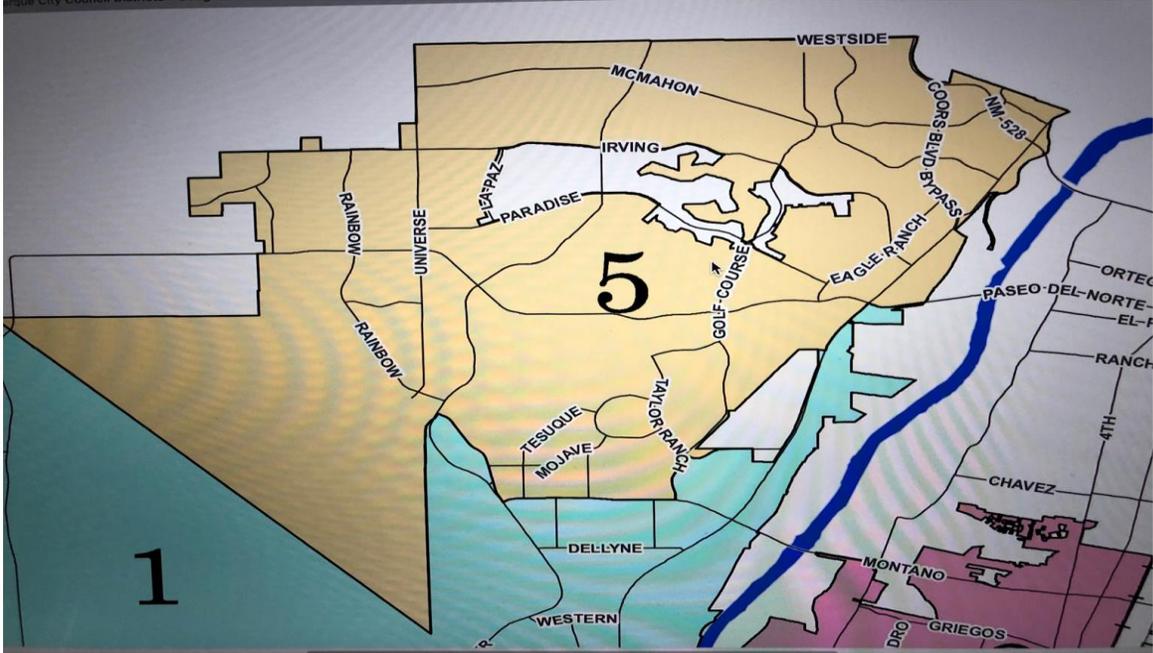
The *Albuquerque City Council District 5 Windows Project* is undertaken to identify and celebrate unique characteristics and places of Albuquerque's Northwest mesa. Albuquerque City Council appropriated \$525,000 to the *Albuquerque City Council District 5 Windows Project* sourced from 2020 City of Albuquerque Lodgers Tax revenue to "plan, design, and construct a gateway entrance into the Northwest Mesa and access to the Petroglyph National Monument." The total cost of the *Albuquerque City Council District 5 Windows Study* is \$53,900. Albuquerque Council District 5 general boundaries are from Montano, West of Taylor Ranch/Golf Course Rd. to the Western City limits traveling North to La Orilla. North of La Orilla, areas both to the West and East of Golf Course developments are largely enfolded into the District, excluding properties East of Coors Blvd. and some unincorporated Bernalillo County area. At Coors and Paseo del Norte, District 5 extends both East and West of Coors, traveling North to end in the Bernalillo/Sandoval County line, and terminating at the Town of Corrales/City of Albuquerque North-Eastern juxtaposition. District 5's Western boundary is delineated by City of Albuquerque incorporated areas' transition to unincorporated County lands.

Potential sites for a District 5 Windows Project celebratory features are ranked by their accessibility to bicyclists, pedestrians, and motor vehicle operators. The project map illustrates connected trails and pathways among District 5 Open Spaces, Petroglyph National Monument, the Rio Grande, and identified Windows' sites, several of archeological significance (Map at www.tinyurl.com/CABQNorthwestWestWindows). Other equally important ranking criteria include breathtaking views of the Sandia and Manzano Mountain Ranges, the Las Tres Hermanas Volcanoes, the Rio Grande, and the Petroglyph National Monument. Existing and potential amenities and land management are also weighed in the studies ranking criteria. Many of the sites remain in their natural states, connected by trails to small, neighborhood tucked 'vest' pocket parks adjacent to arroyos like Calabacillas.

Over the course of the study, it was determined that the character and identity of the Northwest Mesa is not expressed by a single location, but instead by numerous vantage points

located throughout District 5, connected by community neighborhoods, archeological records, and recreational trails of historical significance. All of the eight identified Window's sites, therefore, are considered places that inspire unique perspectives of the District, and offer features that celebrate and connect the Northwest mesa to its people-- both its past and present inhabitants. Exemplifying this interweaving, District 5 is located at the center of the popular Petroglyph National Monument, which, according to a Google search, welcomes over 356,000 visitors/year. The Petroglyph National Monument is at the center of the most widely used trail entrances on the west side of Albuquerque.

Additionally, the *Albuquerque City Council District 5 Windows Project* will enhance the experience of visitors to the Petroglyph National Monument and increase dollar circulation on Albuquerque's Northwest mesa by visitor spending and promote Albuquerque's educational and economic development. Council District 5 is connected to three of five bridges in Albuquerque spanning the Rio Grande and provides direct trail connections to the Rio Grande State Park. The eight identified Council District 5 Windows' sites are: #1 Arroyo de las Calabacillas; #2 Piedras Marcadas Canyon; #3 Mariposa Basin Park; #4 Boca Negra Dam and Overlook; #5 Grandma's Pond (AMAFCA Track 2B); #6 Paradise Blvd. Site; #7 Los Metates; and #8 La Cuentista Open Space, respectively discussed in numerical order in this report.

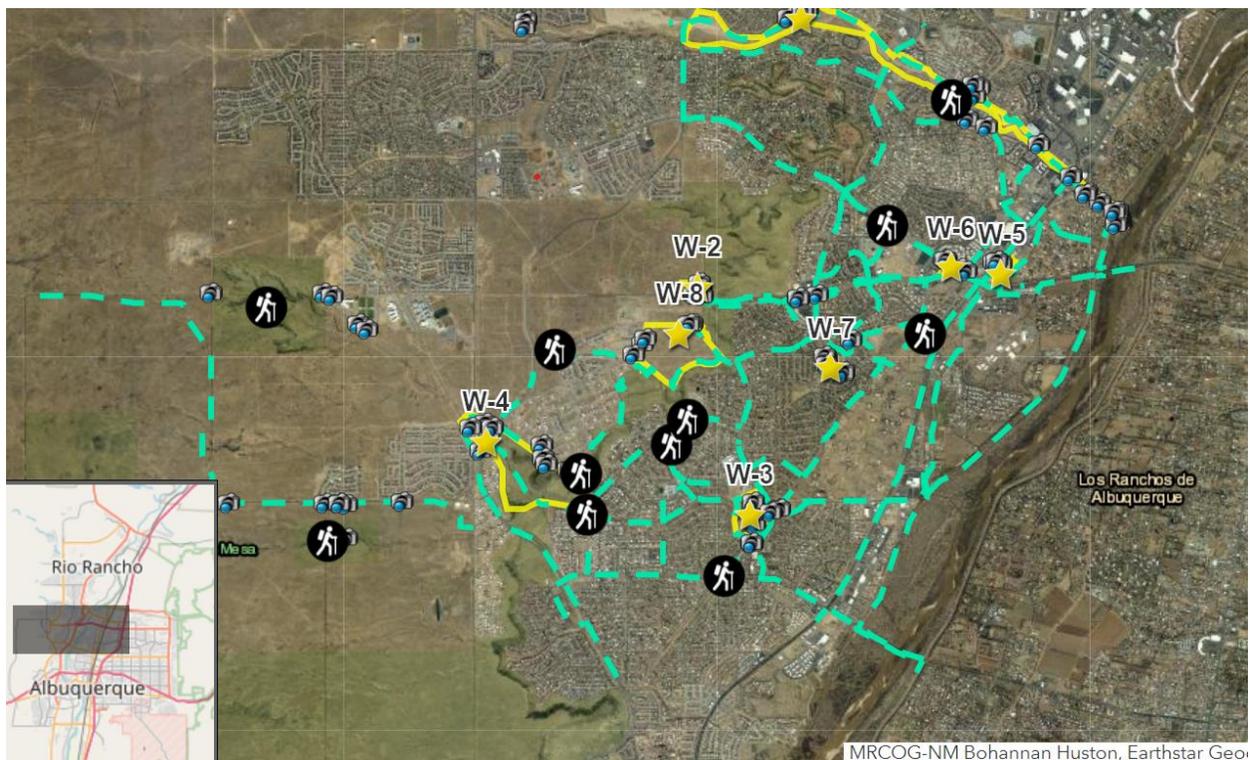


AGIS Interactive Map

The interactive map of the Window's project identifies Windows' sites and wayfinding features to be explored and invested in, as well as bicycle, pedestrian, and open space trails. The interactive map may be accessed at www.tinyurl.com/CABQNorthwestWestWindows

It provides extensive information on the area and suggests opportunities sites, including:

- Recreation and activity centers for all age groups,
- Parking
- Covered shelter / activities for public and private parties
- Athletic fields
- Picnic tables and benches
- Rest areas
- Hiking and bicycle trails.
- Site and Wayfinding photo



City Legislation

On December 20, 2021, in addition to funding appropriation legislation for the Window's project passed in 2020, the Albuquerque City Council approved **R-21-28 (Borrego, Sena)**, resolving "THE CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE EXPRESSES ITS APPRECIATION FOR THE ACQUISITION OF THE LA CUENTISTA OPEN SPACE, ENCOURAGES THE CONSERVATION OF THE SITE AND DIRECTS THE ADMINISTRATION TO PREPARE A WEST MESA OPEN SPACE TRAILS PLAN." To support this Resolution, bond funding is already in place for the City of Albuquerque Open Space Division of Parks and Recreation Department to purchase La Cuentista (Windows site #8) identified in the report.

The West Mesa Open Space Trails Plan is a harmonized initiative by Councilor Cynthia D. Borrego, Councilor Lan Sena and the City of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation Department. Each of the Councilors authorized \$75,000 from their District 5 and District 1 General Obligation Bond Set Aside funds for a total of \$150,000 to fund the Trails Plan. The *West Mesa Open Space Trails Plan* seeks to enhance and develop new bicycle and pedestrian trails on the West Mesa and further connectivity explored in the *Albuquerque City Council District 5 Windows Study*. The West Mesa Open Space Trails Plan will address the loss of Petroglyph National Monument bicycle routes as mandated in the *Petroglyph National Monument Visitor Use Management Plan* by outlining existing and potential new West Mesa bicycle and pedestrian routes on lands where bicycling is welcome. It includes and describes pathway potentials through the Calabacillas Arroyo, Windows site #1, and La Cuentista, Windows Site #8 identified in this plan. **R-21-28** also includes the following WHEREAS clauses referencing the *Albuquerque City Council District 5 Window's Project*:

"WHEREAS, the City of Albuquerque desires to plan a sustainable and accessible trail system throughout the West Mesa Open Space properties that connects to the Petroglyph National Monument, Rio Grande Valley State Park and other "Windows" or points of interests throughout the West Mesa area and that would support low-impact activities, including mountain biking, horseback riding, hiking, walking and nature studies; and

WHEREAS, this plan coincides with the development of the Northwest Mesa Windows Plan Report, that will be completed in December of 2021. The report will identify the physical features and potential open-air improvements of the Northwest Mesa, including the open space lands on the volcanic escarpment, that provide a unique and aesthetic experience of this area of Albuquerque. The report will provide a framework to highlight these features and connect them by pedestrian and bike trails, which could be integrated with an open space trail network;" (page 2, line 11-24).

Another piece of legislation with implications for the implementation of the *Albuquerque City Council District 5 Windows Project* is **O-21-79**, passed by Albuquerque City Council on December 20, 2021. This legislation is sponsored by City Councilor Don Harris and focuses on three key items: 1) Amending the Open Space Trust Fund and Land Administration Ordinance to Authorize the Use of The Fund for Open Space Acquisitions; 2) Amending A Relevant Cross Reference Within the Open Space Advisory Board. Ordinance; and 3) Amending Section 2-12-1, Capital Improvements Program Intent and Scope, To Make Permanent the Two Percent CIP Set Aside for Open Space Acquisitions.

Councilor Borrego passed an amendment to O-21-79 stipulating 75% of the Open Space Acquisition Funds be used to purchase Open Space properties on Albuquerque’s Westside. According to the *City of Albuquerque Open Advisory Board. Space Priority Acquisition List*, updated and adopted by Albuquerque City Council in 2021, the major part of identified desirable open space properties in Albuquerque rest West of the Rio Grande—40%. Including properties outside the City limits, the total identified desirable open space properties West of the Rio Grande rises to 96.6%. *The Open Space Priority Acquisition List* outlines the following priorities which remain to be fully purchased:

Name	Acreage	West of River
Tijeras Arroyo Biozone	120	No

Manzano/Four Hills	145.5	No
Boca Negra Arroyo	32.91	Yes
La Cuentista	59.25	Yes
Northern Geologic Window (North 1/3)	80	Yes
Private parcels in the Petroglyph National Monument	10.51	Yes
Calabacillas Pueblo II	.5	Yes
Rio Puerco Escarpment	6,710	Yes (Outside of City limits)
Northern Sand Dunes	640	Yes (Outside of City Limits)

Sites and Maps

Window Site 1: Arroyo de las Calabacillas

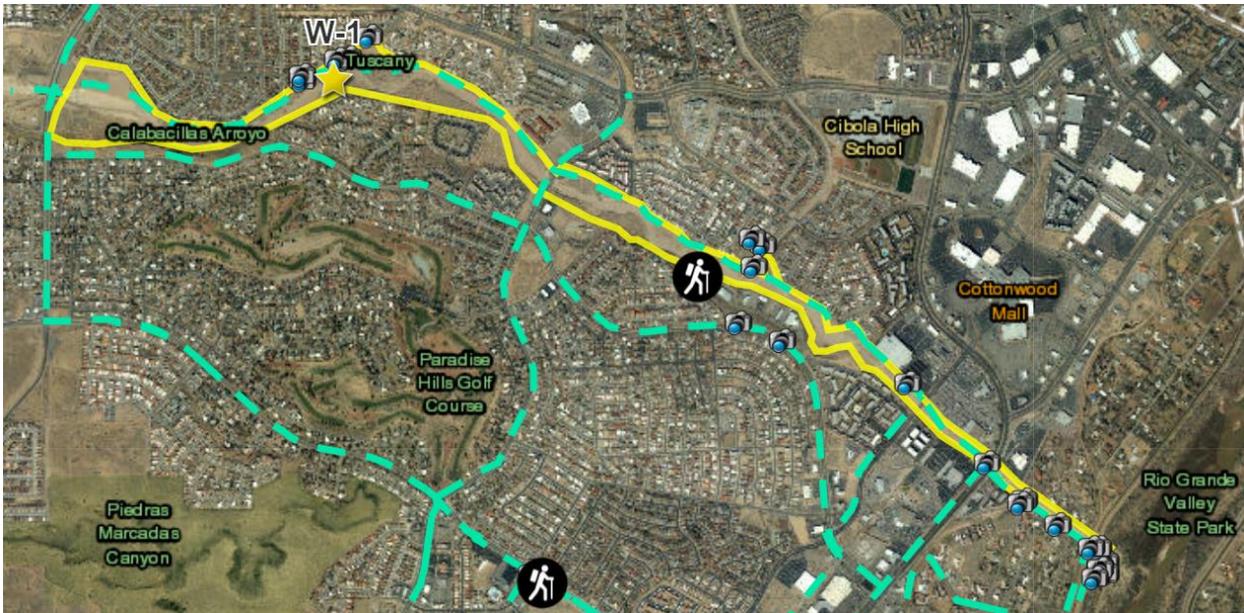
Approximately 17 miles in length, the Calabacillas Arroyo spans from Unser Blvd. to the West, past Coors Blvd. and ends just West of the Rio Grande River at the Rio Grande Valley State Park and Bosque Trail.

In December 2021, Councilor Borrego funded the *Calabacillas Arroyo Trails Design and Plan* with \$75,000 in District 5 GO Bond Set Aside funds, which is being matched by Parks and Recreation Department funding. The Calabacillas Window is a shared site of interest to the *West Mesa Trails Plan*, funded in **R-21-28**. As such, Calabacillas Arroyo is a strong candidate for a follow up *Albuquerque City Council District 5 Windows Improvement Project*.

As the land is under the jurisdiction of the City of Albuquerque and Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo and Flood Control Authority (AMAFCA), it has no major acquisition costs. The arroyo is accessible from numerous major arterial streets and trails stemming from other District 5 identified Windows sites and beyond the District's boundaries. There is already an existing trail along portions of the arroyo, and it offers various small, neighborhoods adjacent to "pocket parks" with gates and parking facilities on the Calabacillas' North and South sides from which to access the Arroyo. Portions of the Arroyo are already managed by Albuquerque's Open Space Division. The Calabacillas Arroyo's Eastern terminal rests at the gateway to the Rio Grande Valley State Park, a hub location for bosque bicycle and pedestrian ditch bank trails. *Calabacillas Arroyo Trails Design and Plan* will identify trail improvements and other amenities such as clear views of the mountains that increase benefits to the City and its residents.



View of Arroyo de las Calabacillas with rainwater flowing under Unser Blvd. Bridge



Window Site 1: Arroyo de las Calabacillas

Calabacillas Arroyo major perimeter streets are Coors Blvd., McMahon Blvd. NW, Unser Blvd. and Irving Blvd.

Window Site 2: Piedras Marcadas Canyon

Though currently controlled by varied entities, including private land holders and AMAFCA, both administrators of the Petroglyph National Monument and the City of Albuquerque Open Space Division express interest in securing the property for preservation. The Eastern portion of the site is designated Open Space (NR-PO-B) in the adopted *Volcano Heights Sector Plan*. The Western portion is in private ownership and composed of vacant land zoned MX-T. The nearest cross streets are Paseo del Norte to the South and Calle Norteña to the South and perpendicular to the area's center.

The Piedras Marcadas Canyon site is of archeological significance in the context of the Petroglyph National Monument, offering evidence of historic indigenous presence. AMAFCA is planning to build a storm pond at the Piedras Marcadas Windows site and subsequently transfer the land to the City of Albuquerque. Though designs to improve the area should consider the location of the storm pond, and vice versa, the land transfer is an advantage to the City of Albuquerque, allowing the City to take partial control over its protection and preservation.

The Piedras Marcadas site is at the geographic hub of District 5, and, as such, is central to both the existing trails and other destination sites already in place or planned. Petroglyph National Monument administrators envision parking and trail head development at the site. The Piedras Marcadas Canyon Window is located along Paseo del Norte, a major auto thoroughfare and Rio Grande bridge crossing, currently planned for expansion. Paseo del Norte also connects to the City of Rio Rancho.

Piedras Marcadas Canyon is adjacent to a gate entrance and trail into the Petroglyph National Monument, which in turn, leads to a pedestrian bridge crossing over Paseo del Norte and to Petroglyph National Monument trail system, South of the Paseo Highway. It is located on the crest of a hill overlooking the Monument to offer excellent, uninhibited panoramic views of the Rio Grande Bosque, the City, and mountain ranges to the East of the area. The site connects to

bikeways and pedestrian trails on the South side of Paseo del Norte and to the Piedras Marcadas Dam. It connects to an existing arroyo trail system located behind the Petroglyph Plaza Shopping Center, at the Southwest corner of Paseo del Norte and Golf Course Road.

Additionally, Piedras Marcadas connects to other pedestrian trails and sidewalks along Golf Course Road traveling both North and South, and to Paseo del Norte to the East. Its location is on the Eastern edge of the *Volcano Heights Activity Center*, a future urban commercial center, planned and adopted in the *City of Albuquerque's Updated Comprehensive Plan*. It rests in a transition zone that could act as a buffer to future development's encroachment onto National Monument lands. The Piedras Marcadas site provides great views and opportunities for site enhancements to potentially include a central Windows feature such as a pedestrian viewing platform. Remaining *Albuquerque City Council District 5 Windows Project* funding is being assigned to the creation of a detailed plan for the site, in coordination with AMAFCA. The plan will include consideration of a road and parking area, fencing, a vantage point for viewing, connections to neighboring adjacent trails, revegetation and likely temporary irrigation for the disturbed lands, and an interpretive kiosk with signage for the historic, archeological or vegetative elements unique to the site.



View of Sandia Mountains and pedestrian bridge over Paseo del Norte Blvd. from Piedras Marcadas Canyon Window site.



Window Site 2: Piedras Marcadas Canyon

Piedras Marcadas is located along North side of Paseo Del Norte Blvd. NW., and North of intersection of Calle Norteña NW.

Window Site 3: Mariposa Basin Park

Mariposa Basin Park is a hub of community activity on the Northwest mesa and for Council District 5. This site is a “dual use” facility; it is owned by AMAFCA and continues to serve as an important drainage/retention feature, while, through an agreement with AMAFCA, the City of Albuquerque has constructed and maintains a park with many features and activities. Bounded by Taylor Ranch Rd. to the East and North sides, it is a centrally located community amenity, connecting to existing trails that lead to other Windows identified sites. Geographically, Mariposa Basin Park is close to one of three Northwest Mesa Bridge crossings.

Other appeals of the Mariposa Basin Park Windows site include its proximity to the Don Newton Taylor Ranch Community Center, unobstructed views of the Volcanoes, shade structures, existing parking, restrooms, dog conveniences, and the Petroglyph Little League complex. It is also within walking distance to Sierra Vista Recreation Center. As a well-used and appreciated Westside park, Mariposa Basin already provides numerous amenities and would only require a few additional improvements, such as an information kiosk to stand out even further as a Northwest Mesa Windows site, specifically describing the site as a central hub of pedestrian and bicycle path ways, and a gathering point for community and biological activity. Remaining *Albuquerque City Council District 5 Window Project* funding has been allocated to create the kiosk, as well as fund the interpretive sign project already underway at Mariposa that is focused on environmental education info about the wetlands/native plants/pollinators, and a new Mariposa Butterfly sign at the entrance to the Park.



View shelter with benches at Mariposa Basin Park



Mariposa Basin Park Butterfly sign



Window Site 3: Mariposa Basin Park

This site is surrounded on East and North sides by Taylor Ranch Rd. NW.

Centrally located—it connects to existing trails: proposed Los Metates, Piedras Marcadas Dam, Boca Negra Dam, Mariposa Basin trail.

It is geographically located to one of three major bridge crossings: Montano Bridge.

Window Site 4: Boca Negra Dam and Overlook

Boca Negra Dam Site is under the management of the Petroglyph National Monument and, on some portions, AMAFCA. Councilor Borrego advocated for a volcanic rock memorial to the City of Albuquerque's children lost to violence on an AMAFCA controlled parcel. This memorial is entitled "El Agua de Los Niños," or "The Tears of The Children," and is found in the area of Boca Negra Dam. Boca Negra can be generally described as the area encircled by Unser Blvd. to the Southwest, Rainbow to the North, Tesuque to the East, and Atrisco Dr. to the South.

In the recently adopted *Petroglyph National Monument Visitor Use Management Plan*, the Boca Negra site is considered to be a site with significant development potential into a more elaborate visitor center for the Monument than is currently available. Collaborations between the City of Albuquerque and the Petroglyph National Monument to develop the site with unique signage and park amenities would benefit the new Petroglyph National Monument Visitor Center. The National Monument considers the site a trail hub for the Monument. The National Park service envisions new trail connections to the trails east of Unser on top of the escarpment, and also connections to continue the trail South to the Multi-use trail that is just south of the white-water tanks by Emerald drive.

Currently, The Boca Negra Windows site offers extensive trail connectivity to pathways into the canyon and a bikeway proposed for Unser Blvd., currently undergoing plans for expansion. Existing trails encircling the dam site are in place as are links to trails along Boca Negra Canyon Park and to the arroyo trail below leading to Mariposa Basin Park. There are numerous sites to view scenery along the rim of the canyon. The Boca Negra site presents no acquisition costs to the City as it is already under public ownership and jointly administered.



View of Downtown area from the Top of Boca Negra Dam



Window Site 4: Boca Negra Dam and Overlook

This site is surrounded along its North side by Rainbow Blvd. (Compass Dr. east of Unser Blvd. NW), and is bisected by Unser Blvd. NW.

Window Site 5: Grandma's Pond (AMAFCA Track 2B)

Grandma's Pond is located on the Northeast corner of Paseo del Norte and Coors Blvd. and is maintained by AMAFCA. Future work at the site will depend on degradation of the AMAFCA facility. There are no plans for improvements at this time. The City of Albuquerque controls a similar desirable location close to the Rio Grande State Park on the South side of Paseo del Norte, west of Coors, just to the South of Grandma's Pond called the Alamo site. Though the Alamo site provides excellent trail connectivity and river views, it was not considered a Windows site because of its weak potential for development of parking facilities and thereby enables pedestrian access.

Grandma's Pond offers excellent linkages for bicycle and pedestrian pathways. Several acequia bank trails meet at Grandma's Pond leading to the Rio Grande State Park. The site provides easy access to bicycle pathways surrounding the site and described in the *2015 City Bikeways & Trails Facilities Plan*. For instance, Grandma's Pond is adjacent to the bike trail running North along Coors Blvd., easily reached from this site. Additional pathway linkages are offered from Grandma's Pond to the Arroyo de las Calabacillas via Valley View Dr. to Irving/Eagle Ranch Rd., then on to the arroyo trail on the East side of Costco. Grandma's Pond is also accessible from the existing pedestrian and bike trails along the East side of Coors Blvd.

The site could be developed to include pedestrian and bicycle observation trails potentially joined to an existing perimeter trail around the pond. Grandma's Pond Window site would be enhanced by improvements to parking in the area. Traveling on the Paseo del Norte off ramp onto Coors, Grandma's Pond provides a highly visible location for a District 5 Gateway feature. Grandma's Pond site is already in public ownership and used seasonally during the Balloon Fiesta as a landing/departure space. Grandma's Pond provides a great opportunity to develop a more formal Balloon observation and/or landing site in Council District 5.



View of Grandma's Pond and Sandia Mountains



Window Site 5: Grandma's Pond (AMAFCA Track 2B)

The site is located at the NE intersection of Paseo del Norte Blvd. NW and Coors Blvd. NW with connections to trails both to the North and South, into the Bosque along irrigation canals, and the trail located on the South side of Paseo del Norte which connects to the Open Space area and bird refuge. Existing limited parking is already in place.

Window Site 6: Paradise Blvd. Site (Tract A-1 100400 North of Eagle Ranch Rd.)

The Paradise Blvd. site is located on the Northwest corner of Coors Blvd. and Paseo del Norte along the South side of Paradise Blvd. It is privately owned. Automobiles take short cuts on Paradise Blvd. to the Plaza Paseo del Norte Shopping Center below located at Coors and Paseo del Norte, to travel on to Paradise Blvd. during peak hour traffic.

The Paradise Blvd. Window site is an odd triangular shape with a steep incline on its Eastern portion looking over a drainage outfall below. The outfall leads, via an underground culvert, under Coors to Grandma's pond on the East side of Coors Blvd.

The site is central to the existing trail system found along Paradise Blvd. to the West, along Eagle Ranch Road to the South, to the Piedras Marcadas dam site on the North, and to the Arroyo de las Calabacillas to the North. Crossings by sidewalks along Paseo del Norte, and other pathways leading from the Paradise Blvd. Window site link to Golf Course Road and pathways exist leading to the Petroglyph National Monument. The Paradise Blvd. site provides sweeping views of the City and partial views of the Sandia Mountains.

On the North side of Paradise Blvd., some pedestrian and landscaping improvements are in place along the sidewalk on the North side of Paradise Blvd. A pedestrian/bike path crossing over Coors Blvd. East from the Plaza Paseo del Norte Shopping Center trail would link the site to Grandma's Pond and then to the existing pedestrian and bike trails in the Rio Grande State Park as well as trail connections to the Arroyo de las Calabacillas.



View at east end of Paradise Blvd. Window site: view of outfall, Coors Boulevard, Grandma's Pond, and Sandia Mountains



Window Site 6: Paradise Blvd.

Located along south side of Paradise Blvd. NW, just east of Eagle Ranch Rd. NW, on north side of Coors access ramp to west bound Paseo del Norte Blvd. NW.
This parcel is on private ownership. The road connects indirectly to Coors Blvd. via auto access at shopping center below.

Window Site 7: Los Metates

The Los Metates site is a location of special archeological significance where numerous indigenous artifacts were discovered and recorded. It is owned and managed by the City of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation Department Open Space Division.

Because of the sensitive archeological nature of Los Metates, which includes special significance to tribes and pueblos, the site is fenced and public access to the site is presently restricted. Unmanaged or careless public access and use could damage cultural resources. In addition, the site is tightly surrounded by residential housing on three sides. As a major point of historical interest with excellent views, however, the site could benefit from some additional, limited amenities, including a small viewing/gathering plaza with educational signage which could be located at the Southwest corner. The vast majority of the site would stay in its present natural state and remain undisturbed.

Los Metates requires no additional acquisition costs and is zoned public open space (NR-P-B) to preserve the cultural and natural volcanic geology found there. This Window site location is central to many pedestrian, bicycle and hiking trail connections. The site networks trails to the Piedras Marcadas Dam trail along Golf Course Road (which also connects to Mariposa Basin Park), and the Piedras Marcadas Arroyo Trail from entrances off of Golf Course Road. It further connects to the Petroglyph National Monument behind the Petroglyph Plaza shopping center located on the corner of Paseo del Norte Blvd. and Golf Course Rd.

Due to the height of the flat portion on the crest of the site adjacent to Golf Course Rd., Los Metates is exceptional in offering some of the best unobstructed panoramic views of the City and Mountains. The views at Los Metates are additionally attributable to the *Northwest Mesa View Protection Overlay* that guided residential neighborhood developments surrounding the site to maintain unobstructed East and West views.

The *Albuquerque City Council District 5 Windows Project Study* proposes that only the Southwest corner of the site, adjacent to a residential walkway that connects the neighborhood to Golf Course Road, be developed with amenities such as benches, shade, and signage. The remaining part of Los Metates should remain inaccessible to visitors (except for guided tours) out of respect for the preservation of Los Metates cultural and geologic significance. At present, *Albuquerque City Council District 5 Windows Project* funds are reserved to create detailed plans for the viewing platform at Los Metates to include bicycle trail linkages and rest area off of Golf Course Road, a shade structure, a kiosk with interpretive signage regarding the archeological site, revegetation and potentially irrigation for the disturbed land, and other related site improvements. In order to protect the site's archeological substance, no Parking lot is planned at the location.



View of natural vegetation at Los Metates Window site



Window Site 7: Los Metates

The site is located between Gold Course Rd. NW and Calle Norteña NW, along Los Metates Rd. NW

Window Site 8: La Cuentista

Located at the intersection of Kimmick Drive and Rosa Parks Rd. NW with direct access North to Paseo del Norte, The La Cuentista Windows site is a priority for the City of Albuquerque to acquire according to two key pieces of legislation:

- O-16-13 (Harris) designates La Cuentista a City priority for Open Space purchase and placement into the Open Space Inventory;
- R-21-28 (Borrego, Sena) resolves “THE CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE EXPRESSES ITS APPRECIATION FOR THE ACQUISITION OF THE LA CUENTISTA OPEN SPACE, ENCOURAGES THE CONSERVATION OF THE SITE AND DIRECTS THE ADMINISTRATION TO PREPARE A WEST MESA OPEN SPACE TRAILS PLAN.”

The La Cuentista Open Space is 59.25 acres. Purchase of the land is taking place in three installments, with the third and final payment scheduled for March 2022 utilizing funds from the City’s 2021 GO Bond, approved by voters in November 2021. The total acquisition cost for La Cuentista amounts is 3.1 million.

La Cuentista is part of the complex of volcanic rocks adorned with petroglyphs forming the volcanic escarpment on the Northwest Mesa. The area provides a buffer between nearby residential development and the Petroglyph National Monument. It is zoned Major Open Space (MPO) in the City of Albuquerque *Integrated Development Ordinance (2018)*.

La Cuentista offers uninhibited panoramic views of the City of Albuquerque, and the Sandia and Manzano Mountains. The property is adjacent to the Petroglyph National Monument boundary and it is appropriate for a trail entrance to the Monument. Additionally, the La Cuentista site is connected to the established trail system leading to Northwest Mesa arroyo trails and several nearby residential communities. The City’s acquisition of La Cuentista provides opportunity for the expansion and improvement of the existing and very popular Canyon and Arroyo Trail Systems spinning from the hub of La Cuentista Windows site. The trail system could be

developed to provide neighborhood's direct pedestrian access to the site, its breathtaking views, and expanses.



View of Sandia Mountains and downtown Albuquerque, from La Cuentista Window site



Window Site 8: La Cuentista

La Cuentista is located just South of Paseo del Norte, east of intersection of Calle Norteña and Rosa Parks Rd. NW

Window Site Amenities, Possible Improvements, and Next Steps

The following tables outline the existing open space amenities and what additions might be envisioned to enhance each of the eight identified *District 5 Windows Project* sites. The next phase of the *Albuquerque City Council District 5 Windows Project* will be to identify funding and specific projects for the Windows Open Space Sites. Each site should be considered for future improvements, funding, and implementation as recommended

In conclusion, the *Albuquerque City Council District 5 Windows Project* can be expected to create from and follow this document. Enhancements to what is already offered at the eight identified locations, each exemplifying the unique character of District 5, should be molded and based on the recommendations of this *Albuquerque City Council District 5 Windows Study*, and formed in conjunction with the City of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation Department, its Open Space Division, The Petroglyph National Monument, AMAFCA, the District's communities, and other partnering agencies and stakeholders.

Window Site Selection Study Albuquerque West Mesa City Council District 5 Master list of existing amenities at eight (8) Window sites	Arroyo de las Calabacillas	Piedras Marcadas	Mariposa Basin Park	Boca Negra Dam and Overlook	AMAFCA	Paradise Blvd	Los Metales	La Cuentista
Viewing or rest stations along the trails	E		E	E			E	
To the west: historic volcanoes	E		E	E				E
To the east: Sandia and Manzano mountains, City skyline, and Rio Grande bosque.	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Rest areas with lighting, benches,	E			E				
Activity areas for all age groups: children, young adults, seniors	E		E	E				
Scattered small parking lots with limited number of parking spaces	E		E	E	E			
Bicycle racks along visitor areas, bicycle and hiking trails, etc.	E		E	E				
Signage: indicating name of Windows site	E		E	E				
Monument, kiosk, plaque								
Security lighting	E		E	E				
Security gate	E		x	E				
Viewing or rest stations along trails				E				
Rest area along trails; with benches, lighting	E		E	E				
Playground equipment for toddlers and older children	E		E					
Picnic tables and benches	E		E					
Covered shelter / activities for private parties			E					
Athletic fields			E					
Links to other nearby trails in District 5	E		E	E	E	E	E	
Other amenities: restrooms, fountains, poop stations, refuse			E					
None, this is a new proposed Window site								E

Window Site Selection Study Albuquerque West Mesa City Council District 5 Master list of future amenities at eight (8) Window sites	Arroyo de las Calabacillas	Piedras Marcadas	Mariposa Basin Park	Boca Negra Dam and Overlook	AlMAFCA	Paradise Blvd. NW	Los Metates	La Cuentista
Viewing or rest stations along the trails	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
To the west: historic volcanoes	F	F	F	F				F
To the east: Sandia and Manzano mountains, City skyline, and Rio Grande bosque.	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Rest areas with lighting, benches,	F	F		F	F	F	F	F
Activity areas for all age groups: children, young adults, seniors	F	F			F	F	F	F
Scattered small parking lots with limited number of parking spaces	F	F		F	s	F	F	F
Bicycle racks along visitor areas, bicycle and hiking trails, etc.	F	F		F	F	F	F	F
Signage: indicating name of Windows site	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Monument, kiosk, plaque	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Security lighting	F	F		F	F	F	F	F
Security gate	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Interpretive pedestal with maps to show nearby trail connections and other amenities.	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Viewing or rest stations along trails	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Rest area along trails; with benches, lighting	F	F		F	F	F	F	F
Playground equipment for toddlers and older children	F	F		F	F	F	F	F
Picnic tables and benches	F					F	F	F
Raised multi-level viewing platform	F	F		F	F			
Covered shelter / activities for private parties		F		F			F	
Athletic fields								
Links to other nearby trails in District 5		F						F
Other amenities: restrooms, fountains, poop stations, refuse	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F

Examples of Potential Future Improvements



Acknowledgements

We wish to express our sincere appreciation for assistance during the preparation of this study to the following individuals:

City of Albuquerque Councilor Cynthia D. Borrego, MPA, District 5
Assoc. Director of Capital and Community Projects Tom G. Menicucci, Albuquerque Council Service
Council District 5 Policy Analyst Susan Vigil, Planner, Albuquerque Council Services
Manager Michelle Gricius, AGIS Division, Albuquerque Planning Department
GIS Coordinator/Planner Rachel M. Sanchez, AGIS Division
Albuquerque Planning Department
Director David Simon, Parks & Recreation Department
Superintendent Colleen Langan-McRoberts, Open Space Division, Albuquerque Parks and Recreation Department
Planner Tricia Keffer, Open Space Division, Albuquerque Parks and Recreation Department
Executive Engineer Jerry Lovato, AMAFCA
Superintendent Nancy Hendricks, Petroglyph National Monument

Prepared by

Dineen & Associates LLC, Architects
2811 Bosque del Sol Lane NW
Albuquerque, NM 87120
(505)452-6857
r.dineen@icloud.com

Torres & Associates
5003 Calle de Cariño NE
Albuquerque, NM 87111
505/400-2446
torresarchitecdt@sbcglobal.net

