



## Albuquerque RAIL TRAIL

# PART I - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NOVEMBER 2021 - *Public Comment Draft*



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# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

*City of Albuquerque*  
**Mayor Tim Keller,**  
**Councilor Isaac Benton,**  
**Lawrence Rael, COO**

Karen Iverson, *Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency*  
 Ciaran Lithgow, *Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency*  
 Sherri Brueggemann, *Public Art*  
 Andrew DeGarmo, *ABQ Ride*  
 Timothy Brown, *Traffic*

## Public Sector Work Group

Anthony Villanueva, *City of Albuquerque*  
*Department of Municipal Development*  
 Bill Craven, *New Mexico Department of*  
*Transportation, Rail Bureau*  
 Christina Sandoval, *City of Albuquerque Parks*  
 Grant Brodehl, *Mid-Region Council of Governments/*  
*Rio Metro Planner*  
 Jose Garcia, *AMS Global/Convention Center*  
 Nathan Molina, *Councilor Benton's Office*  
 Richard Meadows, *Bernalillo County*  
 Robert Fine, *New Mexico Department of*  
*Transportation, Rail Bureau*  
 Whitney Phelan, *City of Albuquerque Parks*

## Steering Committee

Mayling Armijo, *Bernalillo County*  
 Dale Armstrong, *TLC Plumbing*  
 Lola Bird, *Downtown Mainstreet*  
 Ed Garcia, *Garcia Automotive Group*  
 Seth Gardenschwartz, *JS Brown Building*  
 Johanna Gilligan, *Homewise*  
 Maria Griego-Raby, *Contract Associates*  
 Dennis Gromelski, *Fusion Theatre*  
 Frank Martinez, *Citizens Information Committee of*  
*Martineztown*  
 Tim Nisly, *Barelas Community Coalition*  
 Jay Rembe, *REMBE Design and Development*  
 Matt Tinney, *Albuquerque Police Department*  
 Laura Trujillo, *Valley Area Crime Prevention*  
 Kelly Ward, *Innovate ABQ*  
 Richard Yates, *Zydeco & Springer Square*

## Consultant Team

Greg Miller, *MRWM*  
 Rob Loftis, *MRWM*  
 Emily Rogers, *MRWM*  
 Katrina Arndt, *MRWM*  
 Noreen Kramme, *MRWM*  
 Ben Bachwartz, *Wilson & Co.*  
 James Lopez, *Wilson & Co.*  
 Scott Perkins, *Wilson & Co.*



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# PART I - TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENT .....</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>EQUITY + INCLUSION .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>PART I - TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>5</b>	Equity Principles.....	12
<b>VISION.....</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>RAIL TRAIL FRAMEWORK PLAN .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>GOALS.....</b>	<b>7</b>	Rail Trail Alignment.....	14
<b>COMMUNITY OUTREACH .....</b>	<b>10</b>	Trail Oriented Development Opportunities .....	20
<b>RAIL TRAIL TIME TRAVEL.....</b>	<b>11</b>	Art + Amenities.....	22
		Landscape .....	24
		Look + Feel .....	25
		<b>IMPLEMENTATION .....</b>	<b>26</b>

# VISION

*The Albuquerque Rail Trail will transform Downtown's rail corridor into a vibrant and artistic urban trail that creates opportunities for economic development, healthy recreation, and cultural expression. The Trail will connect the diverse communities it travels through and build bridges across those that have been disconnected. Following an ancient path created by footsteps and expanded over centuries by the wheel, the Rail Trail is the next expression of this essential trade route, embracing a resilient future for Downtown Albuquerque.*



# GOALS

## EQUITY + COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Ensure that the local community benefits from the Rail Trail and develop diverse community support through ongoing engagement activities.

## SAFETY

Develop a trail that is safe, accessible, and welcoming to users of all abilities.

## CULTURE + ART, HISTORY + FUTURE

Honor and celebrate the unique culture, history, and future of the Rail Trail Corridor by creating numerous opportunities for permanent and temporary art within the trail corridor.

## CONNECTIVITY

Provide effective connections to the trail from surrounding neighborhoods, transit stations, and bike networks.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Create a sustainable trail that manages stormwater, utilizes local and recycled materials, features native plant species, and offers habitat for pollinator species.

## PROGRAMMING ACTIVATION

Ensure the Trail is continuously activated by identifying a management and operations body to steward the Rail Trail.

**FIGURE 1. Trail Corridor Context**



## DESIGN & MATERIALS

Celebrate the unique natural and cultural experience of New Mexico by using locally identifiable building materials inspired by our diverse history, culture, and natural landscapes.

## OPERATIONS

Create an operational public-private partnership strategy that recognizes the need for enhanced safety, affordable, durable, and efficient maintenance, and incorporates smart technologies.

## ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT

Encourage adjacent buildings and projects to activate and engage with the trail.



*The Rail Trail corridor will be a densely shaded reprieve in the heart of Downtown Albuquerque featuring a mile of art and attractions.*



Shade trees

Artistic shade structure

Artistic wall panel / rest area

Native landscape / pollinator friendly

Trail shoulder / impact surface



## MARQUETTE CROSSING





# 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.

 **456** Survey Responses

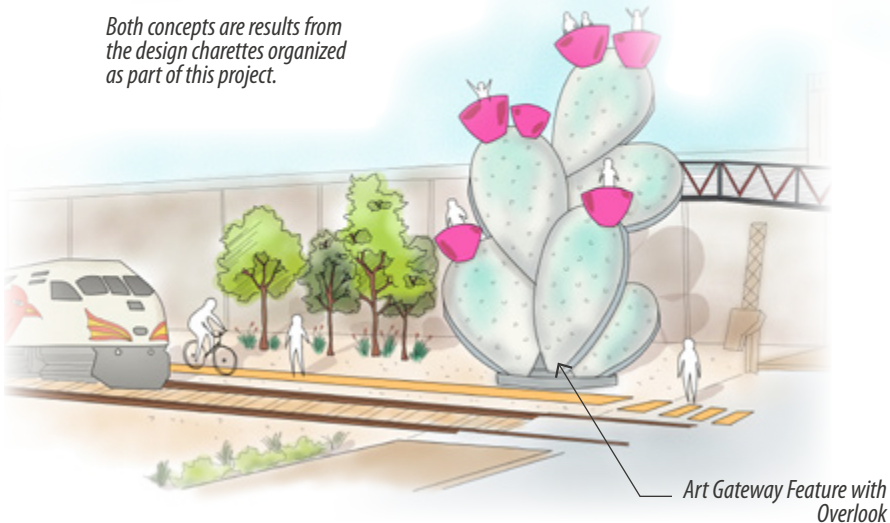
 **5** Design Charettes

 **115** Meeting Attendees

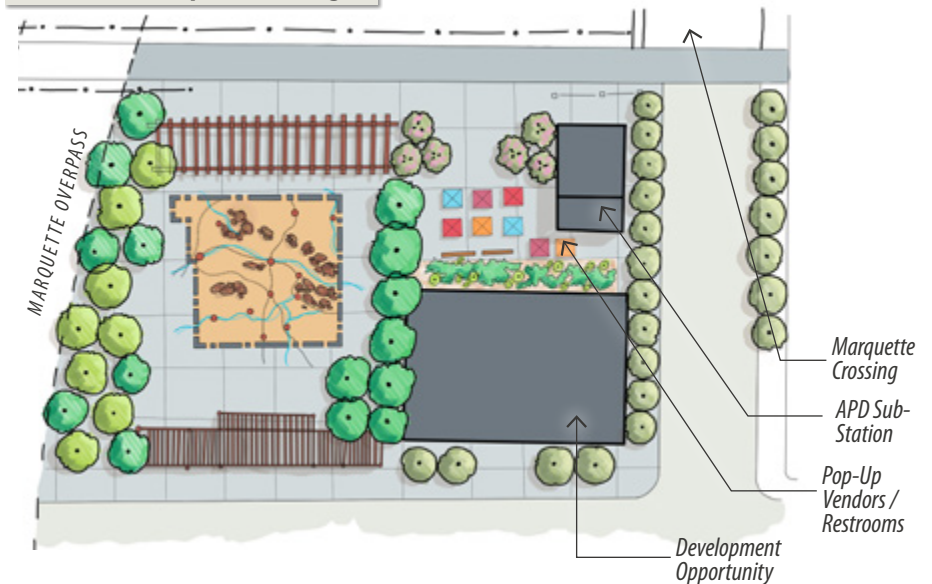
 **12** Steering Committee Members

**FIGURE 3. Lomas Gateway**

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



**FIGURE 2. Marquette Crossing**



# RAIL TRAIL TIME TRAVEL

The “Rail Trail Time Travel” project engaged local artists and community members to explore themes and ideas for the trail corridor. Ten artists developed interactive “stations”, pop-up style displays, and small-scale installations to engage the public and gather feedback. The following themes were identified:

- **Shade + Stars:** Places that protect from the Sun and showcase the stars.
- **Earth + Form:** Natural landscape and nature-based forms (rammed earth) for rest areas, viewing, and photo opportunities.
- **Nature + Plants:** Plants species, gardens/herbs, wetlands and ponds, and nature-based educational opportunities.
- **Celebrating Wildlife:** Wildlife habitat and/or animal, bird, or insect motifs.
- **Design:** Native/indigenous motifs.
- **Being Alone, Together:** Intimate spaces and objects that can be experienced alone while others are around.
- **Rest + Play:** Elements that invite visitors to sit, rest, watch, listen, learn, and to write and create art that allows for playful interaction, or motivates visitor to move/dance and listen to music.
- **Wholistic Nourishment:** Food, quiet, peacefulness, light, clean, safe.



Time Travel team and Mayor Tim Keller

- **Icons + Events:** Cultural symbols that change (murals/projections), hardscape games, art that can be interacted with, take something (an experience) or leave something behind (like a bad day), outdoor movies, and spaces for hosting cultural events, ie. Chinese New Year.
- **WiFi + Light:** Art that indicates where free wifi access is, projection mapping onto unique surfaces that changes.
- **Prosperity + Flight to the Future:** Accessibility for all, respect for nature, happiness, balance, and drone racing.



10 Time Travel Artists



3 Time Travel Events



500+ Time Travelers

# EQUITY + INCLUSION

The addition of linear parks can significantly change land values and uses in surrounding areas, leading to both economic and physical growth. However, this change can also result in the displacement of existing business and residents, leading to a loss of community cohesion and cultural identity. Greenway parks with an active transportation component near downtowns have a high correlation to increased property values.

The City of Albuquerque is committed to creating a Rail Trail that drives inclusive and sustainable development that creates opportunities for surrounding residents, uplifts the local economy, and provides culturally relevant amenities. This can be achieved by working collaboratively with community members, stakeholders, government officials, business owners, and policy experts to identify community needs and appropriate projects/programs for the area.

## EQUITY PRINCIPLES

A next step of this framework plan is to develop a Rail Trail Equity Plan that addresses the following:

- *Authentically celebrating the history and culture of the local community;*
- *Incorporating community generated programming ideas that serve the existing residents;*
- *Prioritizing the hiring of neighborhood residents for job opportunities;*
- *Supporting new and existing local small businesses; and*
- *Ensuring that existing residents surrounding the Rail Trail can continue to afford to live in their neighborhood once the trail is built.*

## EQUITY PLAN PLAY BOOK

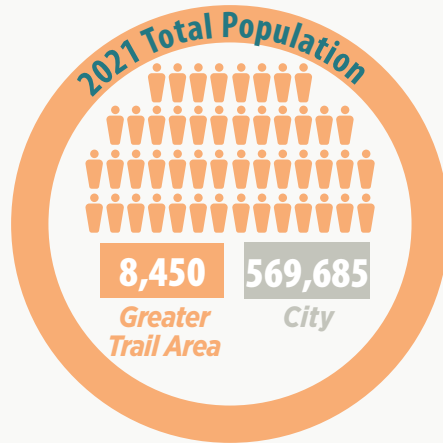
- *Develop an equity plan early*
- *Assemble data to make informed decisions*
- *Be intentional to ensure diversity*
- *Tap into the social capital of community stakeholders and partners.*
- *Tackle equity opportunities with a multi-sector team*
- *Create a dashboard with clear, measurable goals*
- *Evaluate impact and course correct as needed*
- *Embrace an iterative process*

Source: 11th Street Bridge Equitable Development Plan



## Existing Community Demographics

The Greater Rail Trail Area is a historically underserved community and has suffered from decades of disinvestment. The residents in the Greater Rail Trail Area are more likely to be in poverty, more likely to be renters, and more likely to have a non-vehicular commute.



### 2021 Median Household Income



# RAIL TRAIL FRAMEWORK PLAN

## RAIL TRAIL ALIGNMENT

The Rail Trail is located along the existing railroad corridor in the heart of Albuquerque. It travels past the Alvarado Transportation Center, crosses the historic Route 66, and the historic alignment of El Camino Real De Tierra Adentro. The historic communities of Barelas, South Broadway, and Martineztown are located adjacent to the corridor. The trail also connects a number of community assets, both public and private.

### LEGEND

- Cycle Track
- Pedestrian Facility
- Multi-Use Trail - Shared Facility

FIGURE 7. Rail Trail Alignment

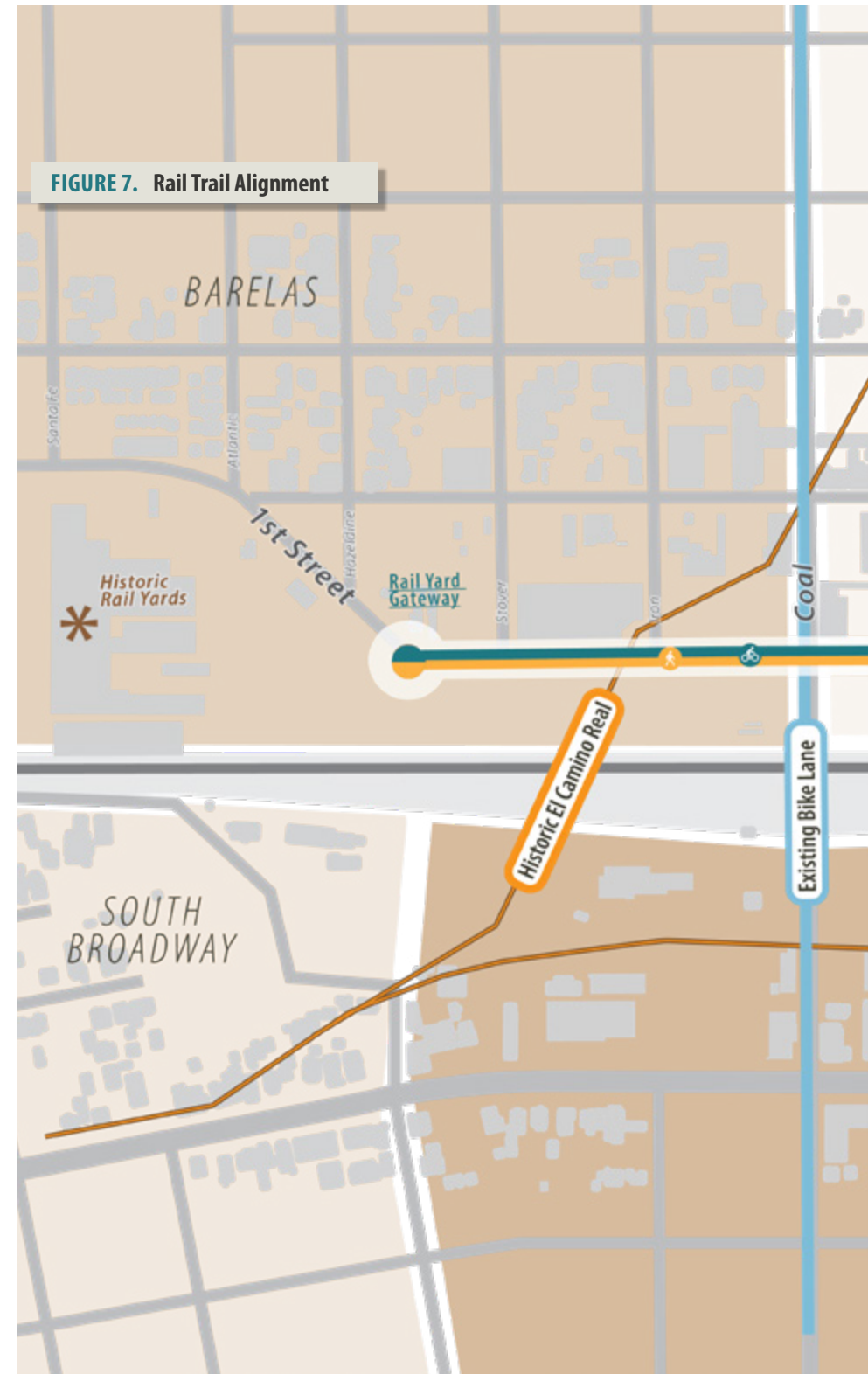
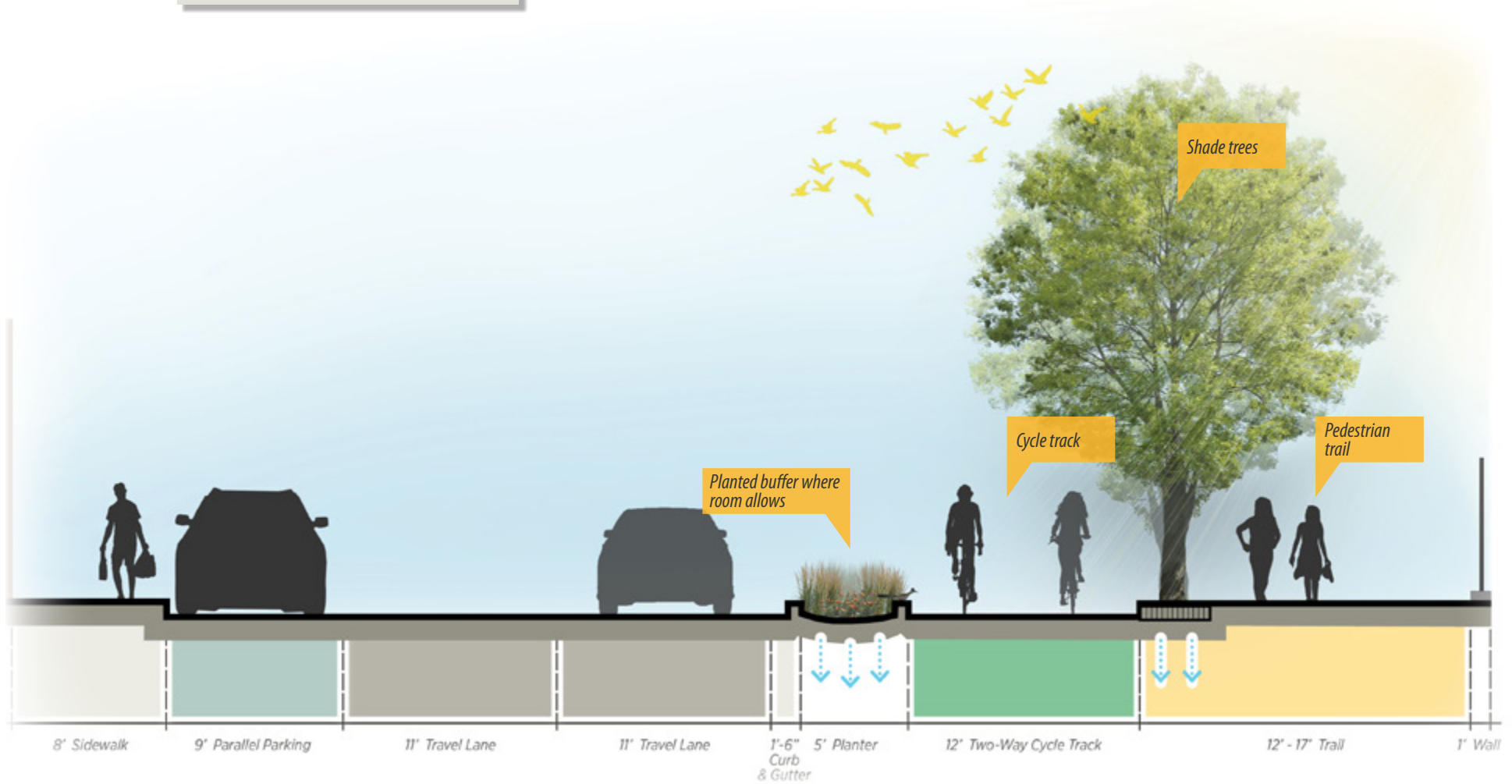




FIGURE 8. Typical Section 1<sup>ST</sup> Street

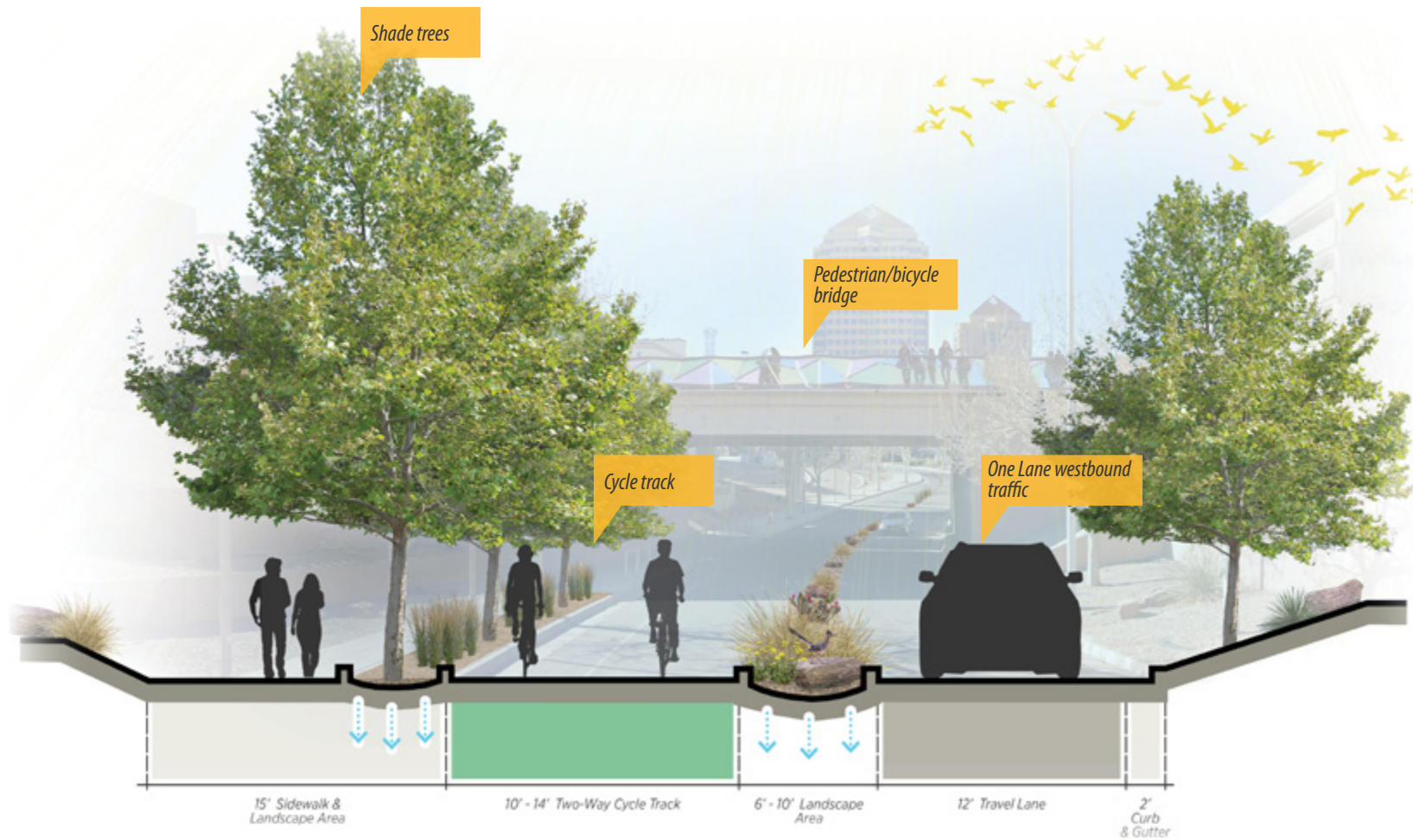


*From the Rail Yards to Central Ave, the trail will have a separated pedestrian and bicycle path along 1<sup>ST</sup> Street bringing people to and from Alvarado Transit Station.*

Looking North on 1<sup>ST</sup> Street





**FIGURE 9.** Typical Section Tijeras

Looking West on Tijeras Avenue

***At Tijeras, the route splits bicycle users into a dedicated two-way cycle track from the rail corridor to 1<sup>ST</sup> Street.***

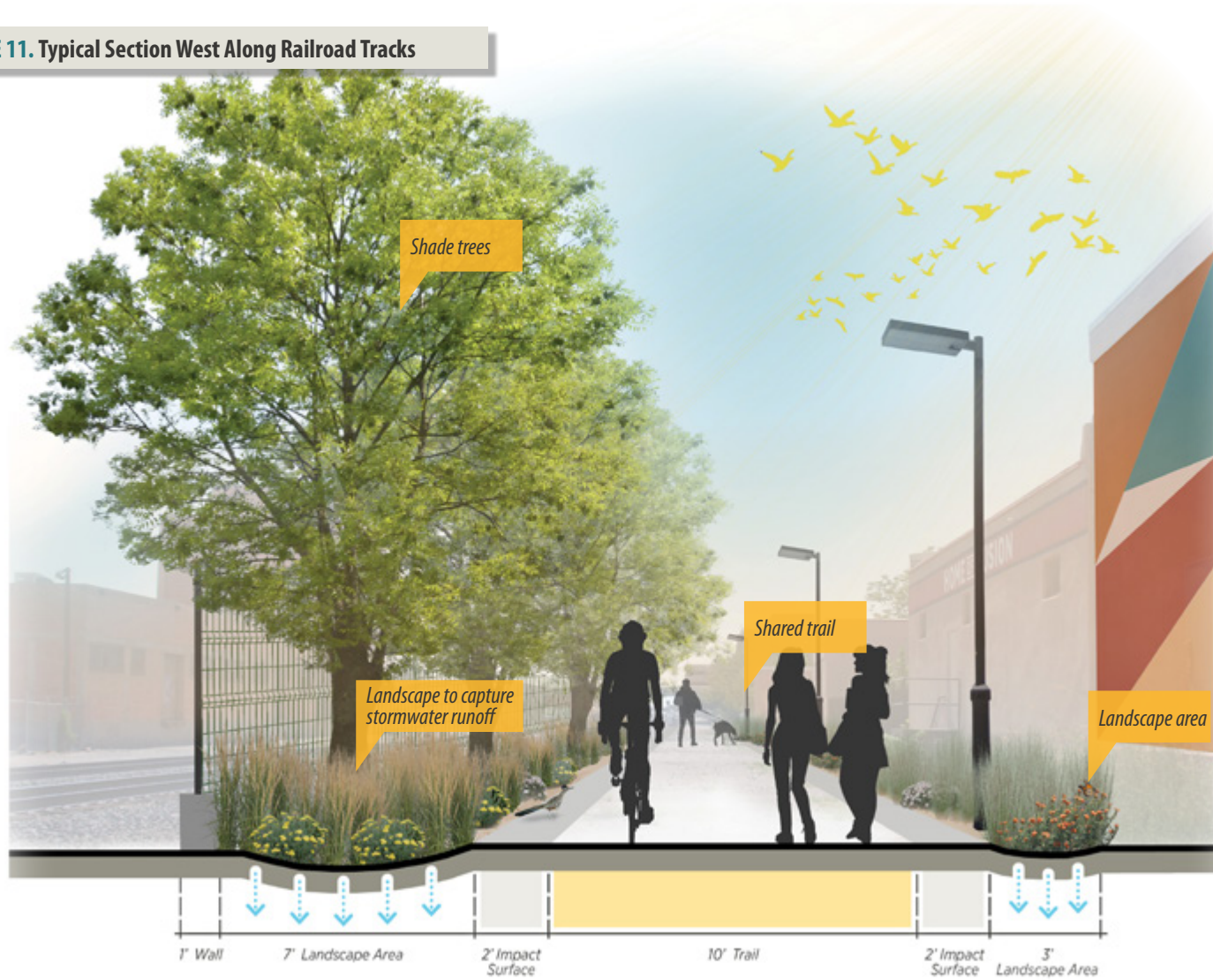
**FIGURE 10.** Typical Section East Along Railroad Tracks



Looking North along the railroad tracks



**FIGURE 11.** Typical Section West Along Railroad Tracks

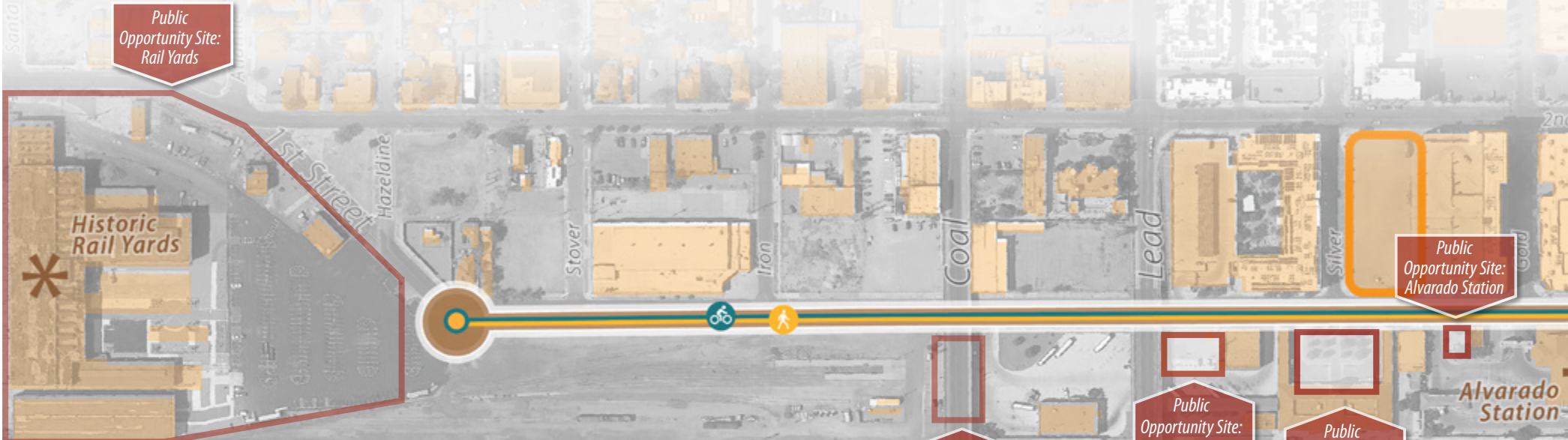


Looking South along west side of the railroad tracks

*From Central Ave to Lomas Blvd, the trail will be within the rail alignment, showcasing the historic buildings and activating the adjacent properties.*



FIGURE 12. DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES



## TRAIL ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There are numerous parcels and businesses along the trail that can take advantage of the trail activities with trail-oriented developments (TODs). Bringing more people to the area through added amenities and programming will support local businesses, increase eyes on the street, and help activate the rail corridor and downtown core. In addition, there are publicly owned sites that can be used as a parks or redevelopment sites, including shady bridge underpasses.



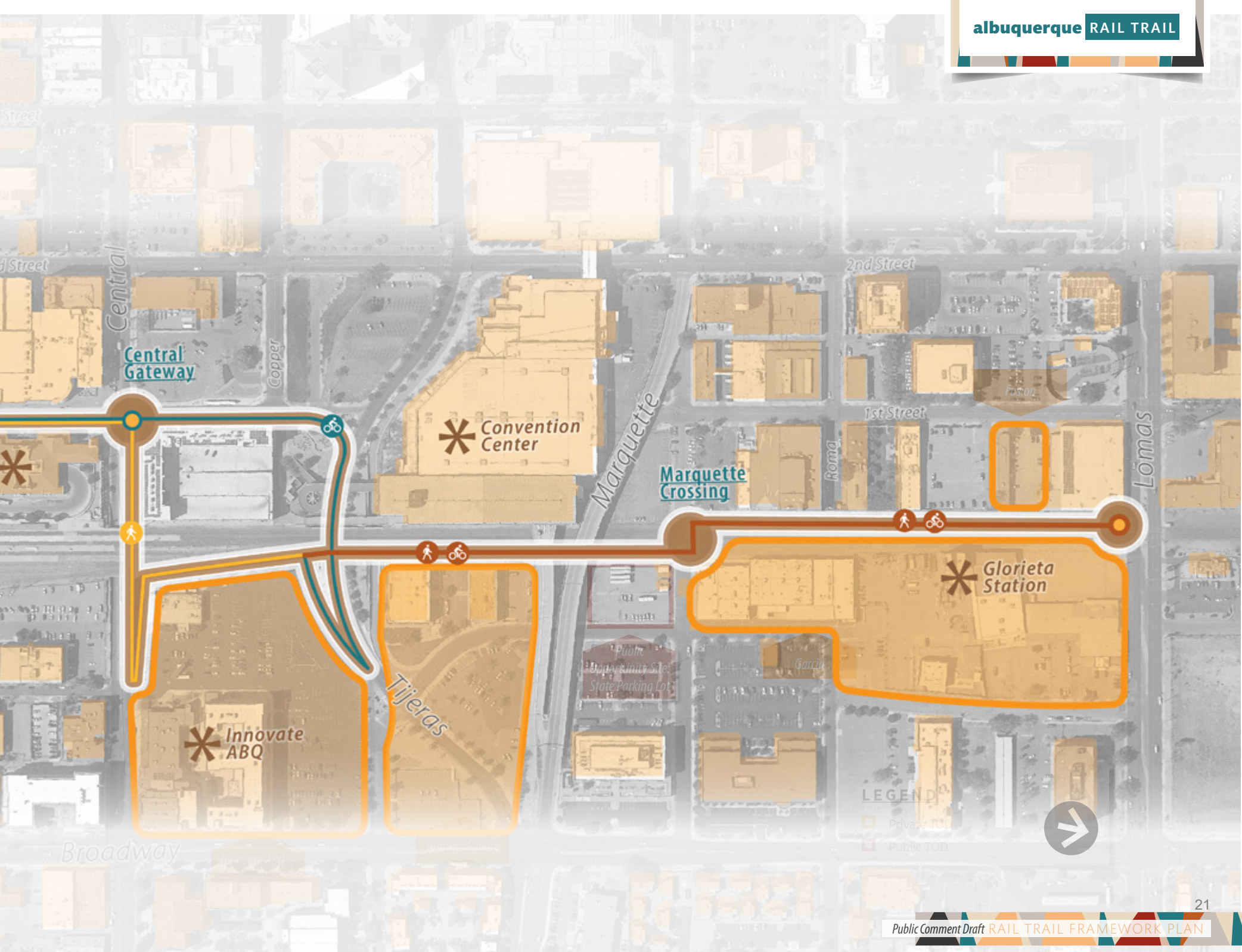
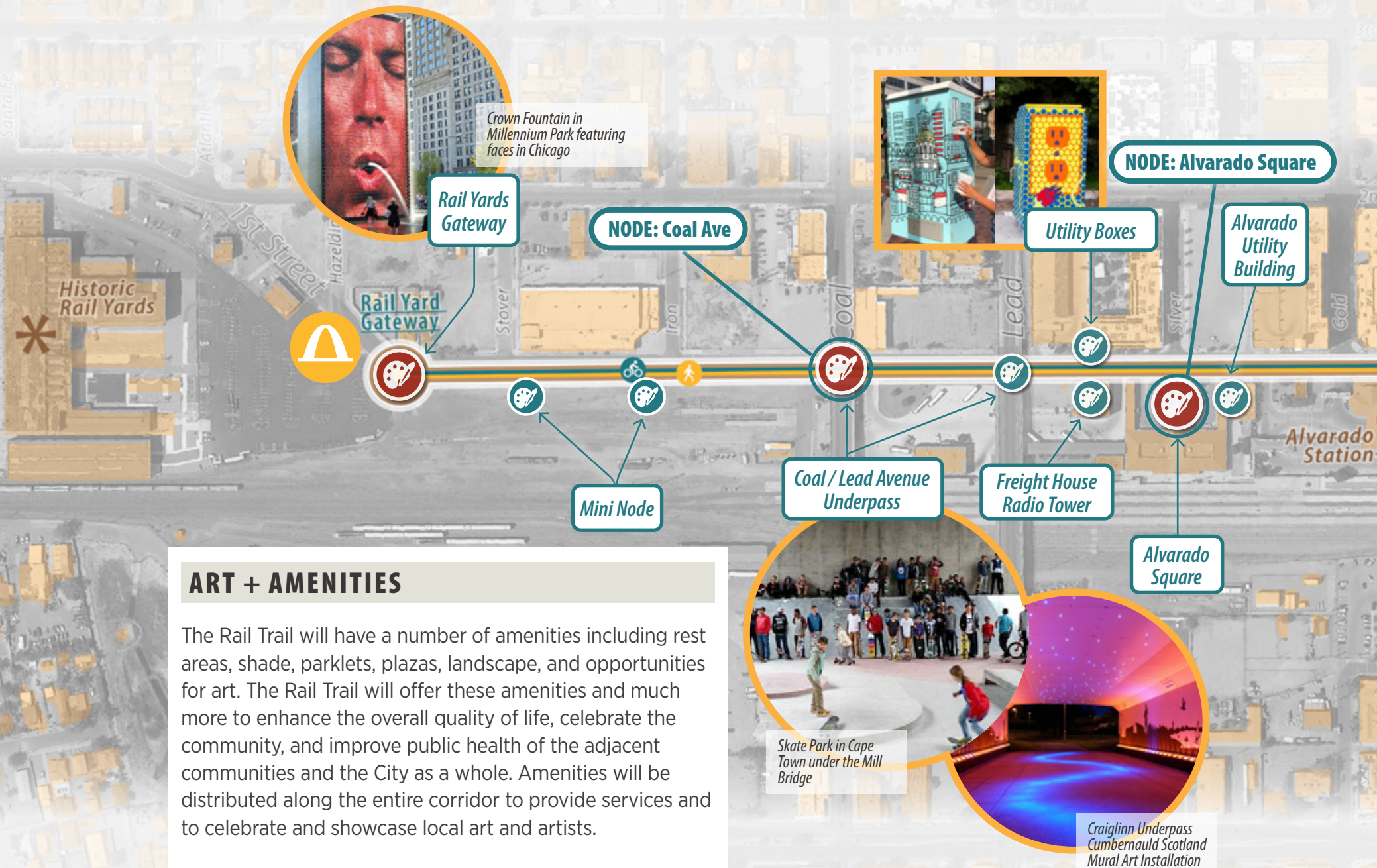




FIGURE 13. ART + AMENITIES





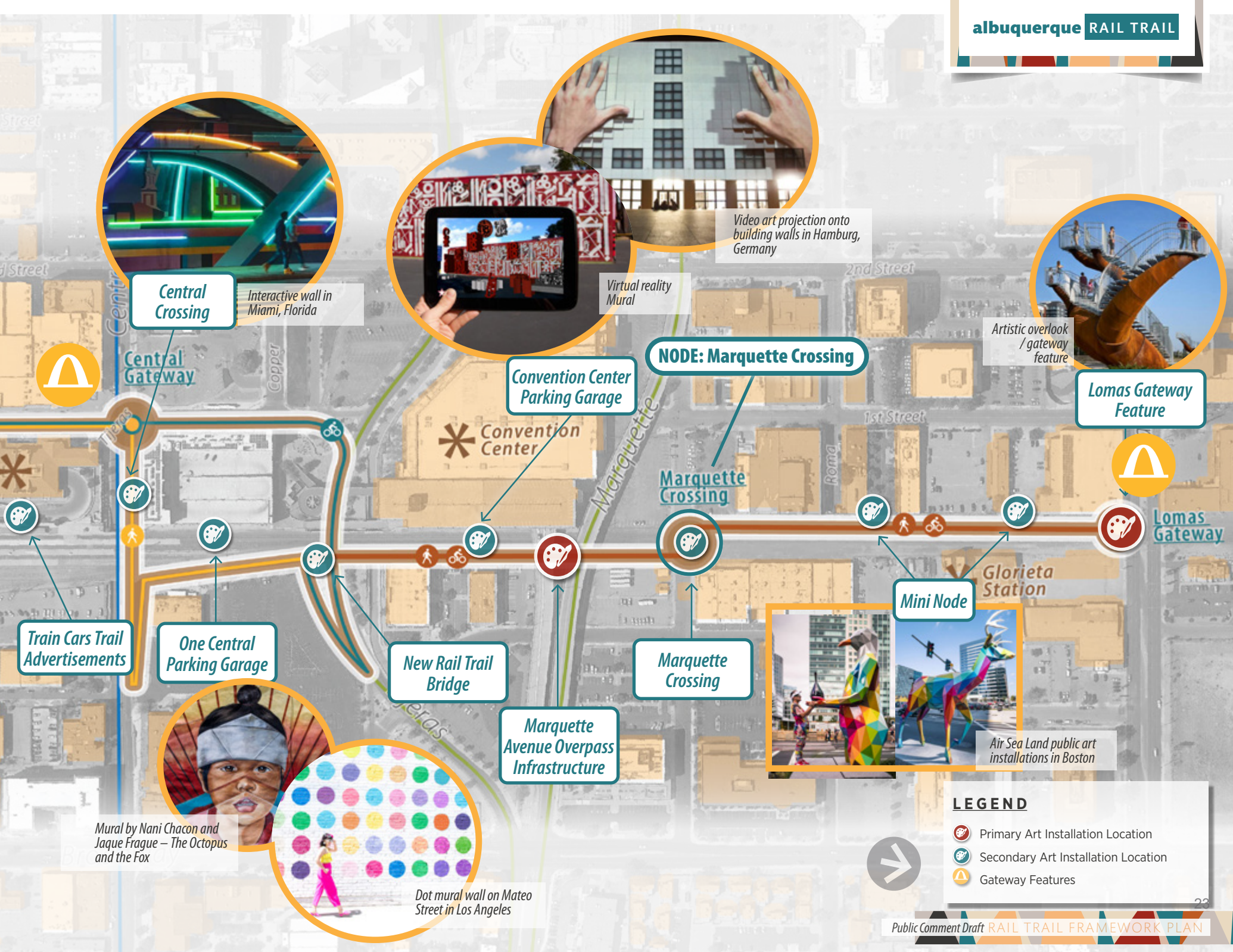




FIGURE 15. 'Meadow' landscape Palette

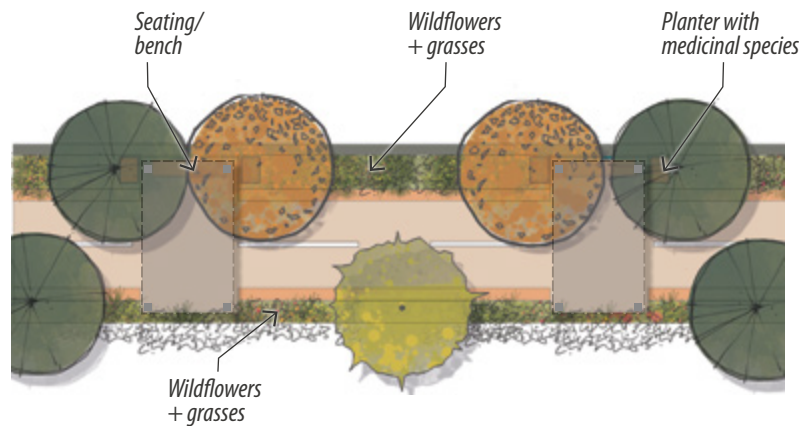
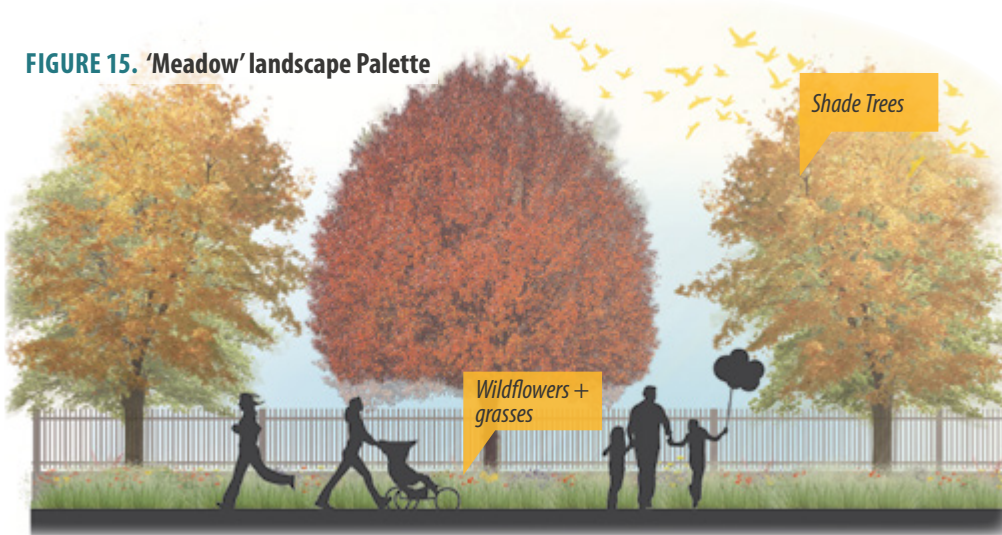
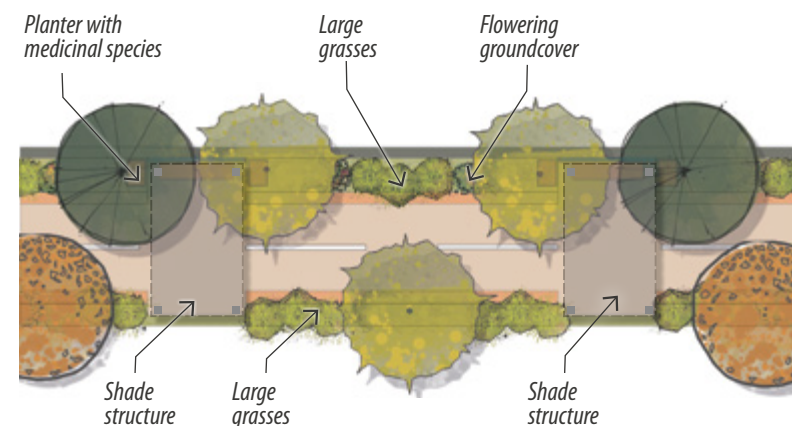
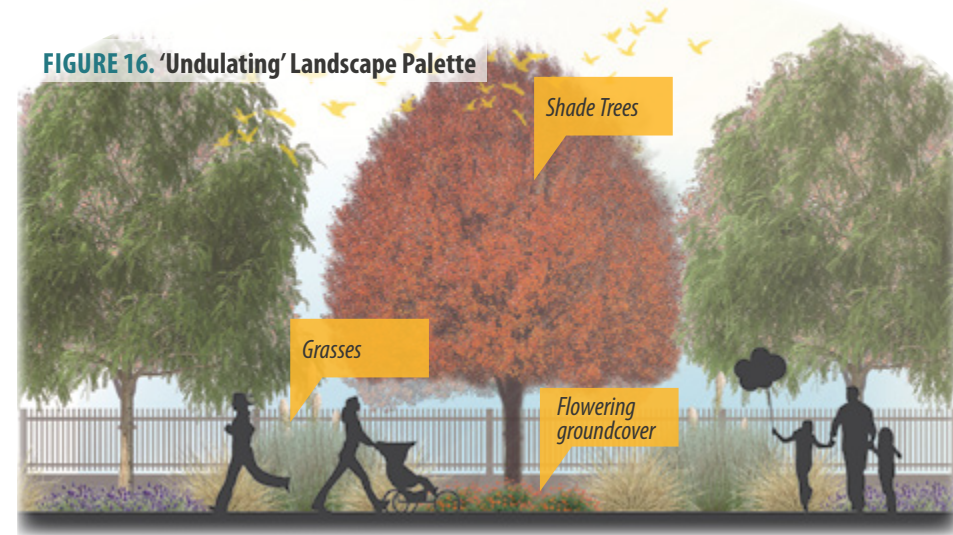


FIGURE 16. 'Undulating' Landscape Palette



## LANDSCAPE

The Rail Trail landscape is comprised of **native and locally adapted species** that provide consistent shade, environmental benefits, and habitat while highlighting traditional and cultural uses. **Shade trees** provide a

comfortable experience for trail users while helping to sequester carbon and manage stormwater within the trail corridor. The plant palette includes a number of native grass species, wildflowers, and groundcovers that provide a variety of textures and colors along the trail while creating habitats for pollinators.

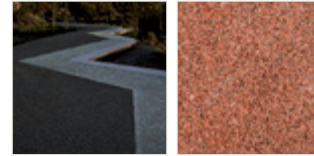
*The overall theme is identified as Nuevo Eco-Industrial; where Nuevo stands for New Mexican, Eco represents its sustainable aspects, and the Industrial for the urban and railroad-inspired look and feel.*

## LOOK + FEEL

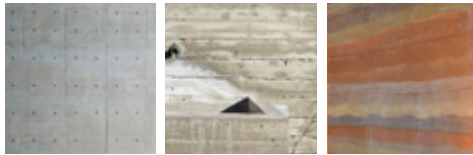
### TRAIL PAVING PALETTE



### SHOULDER PALETTE



### WALL PALETTE



### FENCE AND DECORATIVE PANEL PALETTE



### SEATING



### LIGHTING



### ARTISTIC SHADE STRUCTURES



### COLOR PALETTE



# IMPLEMENTATION

**TABLE 1. Implementation Matrix**

Element	Goal	#	Action
<b>EQUITY + COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>	Ensure that the local community benefits from the Rail Trail and develop diverse community support through ongoing engagement activities.	1	Develop an equity dashboard to establish baseline metrics and monitor the impact of the trail on key issues such as affordability, income, commercial vacancy, etc.
		2	During future design and development phases engage adjacent communities and property owners of Barelás, South Broadway, and Martineztown. Invite key stakeholders to decision making meetings.
		3	Develop a Rail Trail equity plan addressing principles outlined in Part III Outreach.
<b>SAFETY</b>	Develop a trail that is safe, accessible, and welcoming to users of all abilities.	4	Explore the feasibility of a bicycle police substation with bicycle repair.
		5	Further define 'Smart Cities' infrastructure and identify best practices for responsible video surveillance for safety and analytics.
<b>CULTURE + ART, HISTORY + FUTURE</b>	Honor and celebrate the unique culture and history of the Rail Trail Corridor by creating numerous opportunities for permanent and temporary art within the trail corridor	6	Engage an artist as part of the design team to create enhanced paving patterns, fencing, shade structures, and other trail infrastructure elements.
		7	Implement temporary art along the trail alignment to bring people to the site even before it is built, creating excitement and garnering public support.
		8	Develop interpretive sign themes and curate the text and graphics.
		9	Include public art commission with each phase of trail development.
<b>CONNECTIVITY</b>	Provide effective connections to the trail from surrounding neighborhoods, transit stations, and bike networks.	10	Study the following connections: Central crossing for improved pedestrian and bicycle access. Barelás, South Broadway, Martineztown, Silver Bike Boulevard, Lead/Coal bike lanes, MLK bike lanes, Bosque Trail, 50-mile loop, and I-40 trail, and develop strategies to enable easy and safe access between routes.
		11	Install directional signage to connecting trails, neighborhoods, and destinations. Connections are identified in Part VI, Wayfinding and Signage .
		12	Conduct a feasibility study and cost estimate for the Greater Downtown Urban Trail.
<b>PROGRAMMING ACTIVATION</b>	Ensure the Trail is continuously activated by identifying a management and operations body to steward the Rail Trail.	13	Develop a strategic plan for Friends of the Rail Trail and hire an executive director.
		14	Develop an online presence to build a Trail following and way for interested parties to engage and contribute.
		15	Implement programming events before trail is built to create momentum and a "buzz".
		16	Develop a Rail Trail programming plan that creates a roadmap for events, art, and trail related activities. Events should be focused on recreation, arts, culture, and education. The Rail Trail programming plan should be updated on an annual basis.
<b>DESIGN &amp; MATERIALS</b>	Celebrate the unique natural and cultural experience of New Mexico by using locally identifiable building materials inspired by our diverse history, culture, and natural landscapes.	17	Engage design team to develop full design and engineering documents.
		18	Explore Central Crossing alternatives and resolve outstanding concerns with NMDOT.

**TABLE 1. Implementation Matrix**

Element	Goal	#	Action
<b>OPERATIONS</b>	Create an operational public-private partnership strategy that recognizes the need for enhanced safety, affordable, durable, and efficient maintenance, and incorporates smart technologies.	19	Develop a maintenance manual/schedule for the trail/trail landscape and contract responsible parties.
		20	Support the formation of a private sector partnership group to provide additional security and manage programming of Rail Trail.
		21	Determine maintenance responsibilities for City Department and Friends of the Rail Trail.
<b>FUNDING</b>	Identify construction and art funding to ensure enhanced design for optimal user experience.	22	Seek capital outlay appropriation from the State.
		23	Identify a variety of construction funding sources including GO Bonds, Department of Transportation grants, Rails to Trails Conservancy, and private funders.
		24	Identify and apply for funding for public art.
		25	Identify funding for installation of fiber optics along the trail.
<b>ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT</b>	Encourage adjacent buildings and projects to activate and engage with the trail.	26	Issue an RFP for adaptive reuse of the Freight House.
		27	Review trail alignment and consider zoning changes that will require adjacent development to orient and design their buildings towards the trail.
<b>PROPERTY ACQUISITION</b>	Acquire key easements and properties required to construct the trail and implement the Framework Plan.	28	Obtain easement for required trail width adjacent to Innovate ABQ property.
		29	Obtain easement for required trail width adjacent to Springer Square property.
		30	Work with State to transfer ownership of Tewa parking lot at Marquette and Commercial.
		31	Work with leaseholder to negotiate utilization of Marquette underpass.
		32	Acquire Coal underpass from BNSF.



# COST ESTIMATE + PHASING

The Opinion of Probable Construction Costs outlined in Part VI is based on the Design Recommendations and Technical Analysis. It is intended to establish funding targets for the aspirational vision contained in the Framework Plan. While the opinion of probable costs aims to be comprehensive, it cannot contain each and every bid item that may be necessary to build the trail due to the preliminary nature of this document. Costs included in this opinion are based on the current market conditions in October 2021. Due to volatility in the construction market a 20% contingency has been included in all phases. Options to adjust the phasing limits and/or reduce overall construction costs may be considered as funding is secured for the trail.

**TABLE 2. Opinion of Probable Construction Costs Quantity Summary**

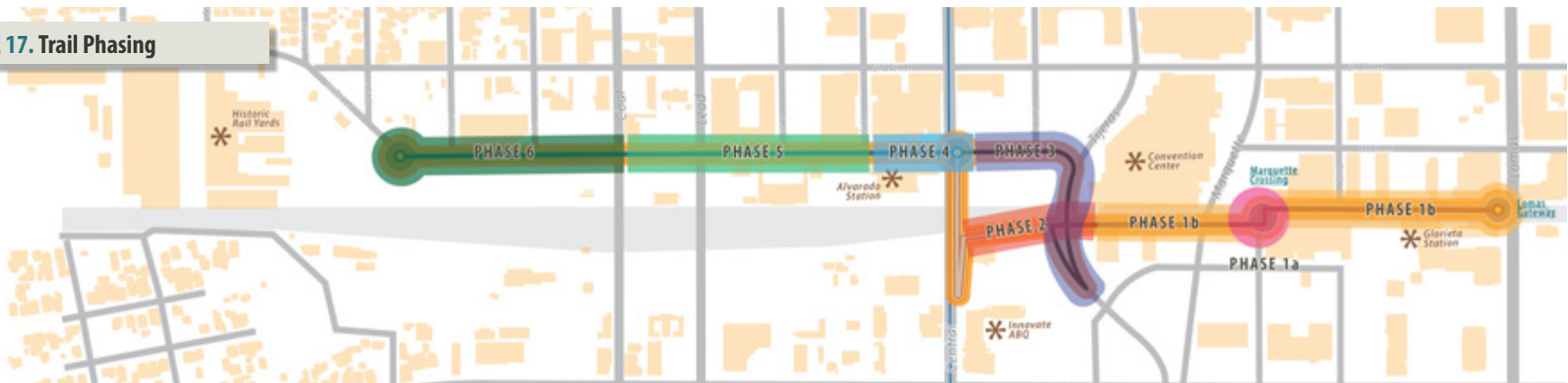
Phase 1a: Marquette Crossing	\$2,000,000	<i>Under construction</i>
Phase 1b: Lomas - Tijeras	\$2,886,000	
Phase 2: Tijeras - Central Ave	\$1,988,000	
Phase 3: Tijeras Access + 1 <sup>ST</sup> Street to Central Ave	\$2,424,000	
Phase 4: Alvarado Station	\$990,000	
Phase 5: 1 <sup>ST</sup> Street - Gold Ave to Coal Ave	\$2,371,000	
Phase 6: 1 <sup>ST</sup> Street - Coal Ave to Rail Yards	\$2,580,000	

<b>Total</b>	<b>\$15,239,000</b>
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**TABLE 3. Funding Sources:**

City Transportation Funds (committed):	\$3,000,000
City Lodgers Tax (committed):	\$2,000,000
State Legislative Request:	\$5,000,000
Federal Infrastructure Grant:	\$5,239,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$15,239,000</b>

**FIGURE 17. Trail Phasing**







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