

Chapter 5 Recommendations

This chapter contains recommendations and strategies for the Plan area that were developed through analysis of existing conditions, the application of relevant city policies and input received at community workshops and agency meetings.

The chapter is divided into the following sections:

1.0 Transportation contains recommendations regarding roadway improvements, transit, bikeways and multi-use trails. These recommendations are relevant to both governmental agencies as well as the individual developer.

2.0 City Facilities and Services contains recommendations for fire, libraries and community centers.

3.0 Drainage contains recommendations for both structural improvements as well as implementation of Low Impact Development practices.

4.0 Utilities contains recommendations for water and sewer, gas and electricity and telephone.

5.0 Parks contains recommendations for future parks.

6.0 Open Space contains recommendations for the Bosque access and enjoyment.

7.0 Trails contains recommendations for open space and MRGCD trails.

1.0 Transportation Overview

Transportation improvements in the West Central corridor are essential to promoting and incentivizing the development efforts that will further community and City goals. The investment in improvements such as new streetscapes, permanent transit infrastructure and enhanced pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will be a building block for increasing development marketability and encouraging private redevelopment. It is important that these transportation improvements coordinate with the urban design and land use goals for the distinct areas which make up the corridor. This is particularly true in areas which are identified for pedestrian oriented development, where a key building block is the creation of “complete streets” which are identifiable by their pedestrian enhancements and transit accessibility.

The following are recommendations for transportation improvements in the West Route 66 corridor. The recommendations are based on an analysis of specific issues detailed in Chapter 3, Existing Conditions combined with a strategy for transportation improvements to support the Plan’s zoning and land use proposals.

1.1 General Overview, Segment 1: 106th Street to Coors Blvd.

The intent of the Segment 1 transportation recommendations is to preserve the sense of openness and expansive views, and to coordinate streetscape improvements and street design with the land use objectives for the area. In addition, it is important that future development in the area consider improving roadway connectivity in anticipation of increased vehicular, transit and bicycle and pedestrian use.

When travelling east, there are impressive views of the City of Albuquerque in the valley below and of the Jemez, Sandia and Manzano Mountains in the distance. When moving west the traveler gets a sense of the wide open spaces so typical of the West and becomes aware of the rugged high desert landscape that is an integral aspect of the identity of Albuquerque.

Coordinating transportation improvements with land use objectives includes creating a unique and marketable multi-modal identity for the Major Activity Center and creating appropriate multi-modal accessibility along the frontage road and sections of the corridor.

1.1.1 Segment One Transportation Recommendations

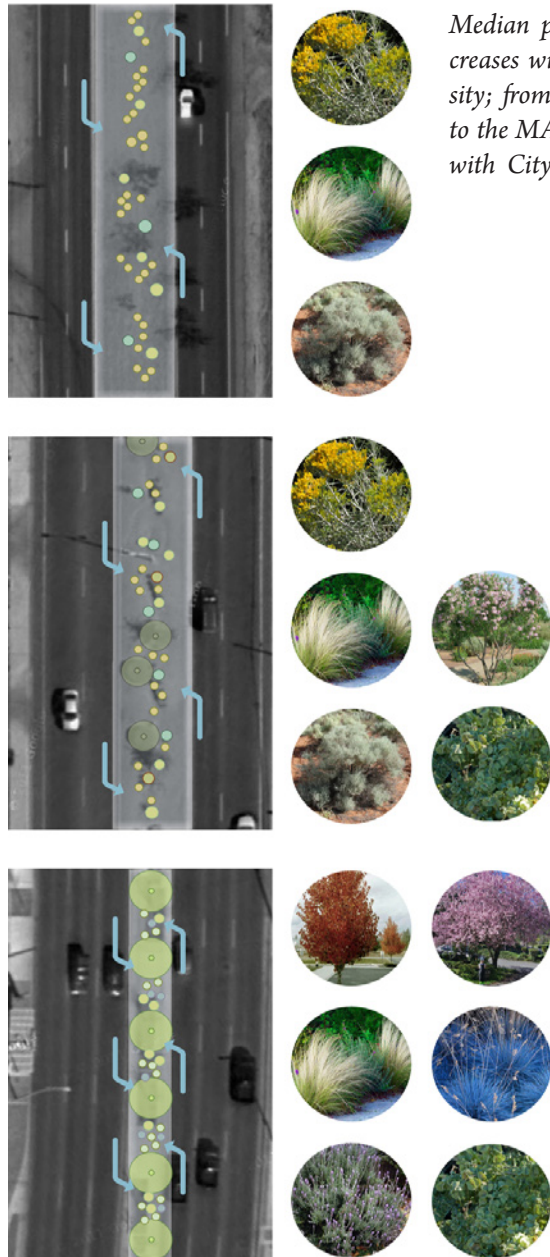
- a. **Streetscape improvements:** Plan streetscape improvements along entire length of this segment so that as development occurs, streetscape is coordinated and reflective of distinct development conditions of this segment of Central Ave.

1. Create unique streetscape identity for the Major Activity Center (MAC), with wayfinding elements highlighting arrival into the MAC.
2. Design and implement streetscape improvements for the corridor outside of the MAC, including landscaping that is sensitive to views and the area's natural setting.

3. Increase opportunities for multi-modal connectivity by promoting biking, walking and transit use through physical improvements to the roadway.
4. As development occurs, the City should enforce its Sidewalk and Street Tree Ordinances. Areas where development has occurred and sidewalks were not constructed should be put on a CIP list in order to achieve continuous sidewalks throughout the segment. Sidewalks should be free of obstructions such as utilities, lighting and fire hydrants. Planting strips should be at the curb as required by the Street Tree Ordinance.



General Transportation Recommendations: Segment 1



Median plantings. Intensity of plantings increases with associated development intensity; from more open, less developed areas to the MAC. Design of plantings to comply with City Median Prototypes.

- b. Median improvements:** The unimproved medians located between Victory Rd. and 98th St. should be landscaped with plant materials that are appropriate to the high mesa setting including trees and shrubs lower in height so that views are preserved. Median design should also include depressed drainage areas for storm water runoff.

The medians between Coors and Unser should be designed with plant material that reflects the high mesa setting at an intensity of planting and with other elements like public art, that reflect the more urban nature of the Major Activity Center. Generally, the intensity of planting should increase with intensity of development.

- c. Signal timing:** As part of plans for implementing bus rapid transit (BRT) and due to Central Ave.'s nature as a high capacity corridor, the MRCOG Management Process Matrix identifies traffic signal timing and coordination and traffic signal equipment modernization as high priorities for Central Ave.

Figure 43: Median Plantings

General Transportation Recommendations: Segment 1



Figures 44-46: Concepts for Multi-Use Trail in Different Settings: MAC, night, west of MAC

d. Frontage road improvements: Plan a trail or liner park along the Central Ave. frontage road, which runs from Unser Blvd. to the City limits, that celebrates Route 66 and provides much needed recreational opportunities for the area. This trail should be a priority for the corridor's development as it creates an immediate identity for the corridor and an area wide attraction. The trail should be designed with drainage swales to capture storm-water runoff to mitigate against flooding the area. A priority for the project design should be to maintain good vehicular access to properties along the frontage road.

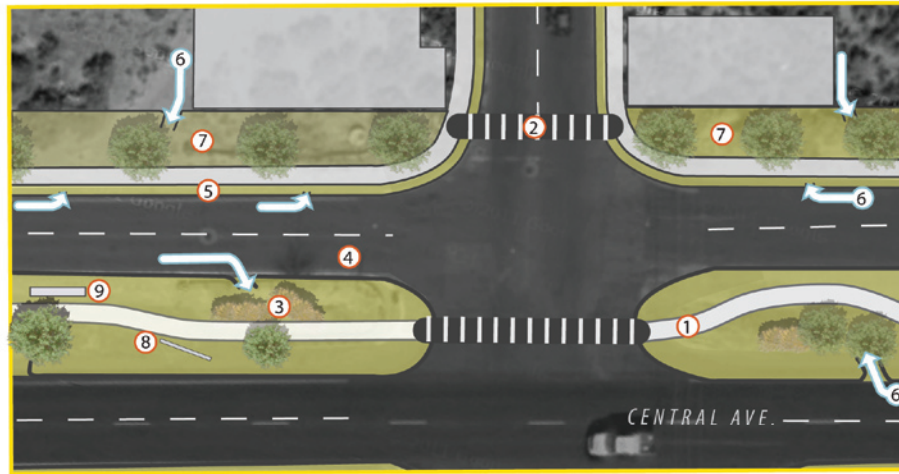
The frontage road right of way varies between of 62-72 feet wide. Within this right of way, plan for the following:

1. a 30 to 40 foot wide area which would include ponding, landscaping, public art and a 10 foot wide trail; two, 11 foot driving lanes; and a 4 foot wide landscape strip and a 6 foot wide sidewalk.
2. The 10 foot wide trail extending from Unser to 98th would initially take the place of missing sidewalks in this segment.
3. Public art celebrating Route 66, such as fun, sculptural elements (e.g.

painted old car parts lit up at night), could be located along the trail in the vegetated area between Central and the frontage road.

4. Design should include depressed drainage areas for storm water runoff.
5. Design should include crossfit stations.
6. Multi use trail would be available to pedestrians as well as recreational bicyclists, with the understanding that all intersections are stops, yielding right of way to turning vehicles. Bicyclists wanting the right of way at intersections would also have designated bike lane available to them along Central Ave.
7. Ensure coordination with the County to ensure that the multi-use trail extends west of 98th St. to connect with Atrisco Vista.
8. Ensure a connection with the north-south multi-use trail on Unser Blvd.

General Transportation Recommendations: Segment 1



1. multi-use trail
2. clearly striped crosswalks
3. landscape drainage swales
4. frontage road
5. landscaped setback
6. curb cuts and/or channeling to direct storm water to landscaped swales
7. 5'-15' landscaped setback
8. public art
9. cross fit station

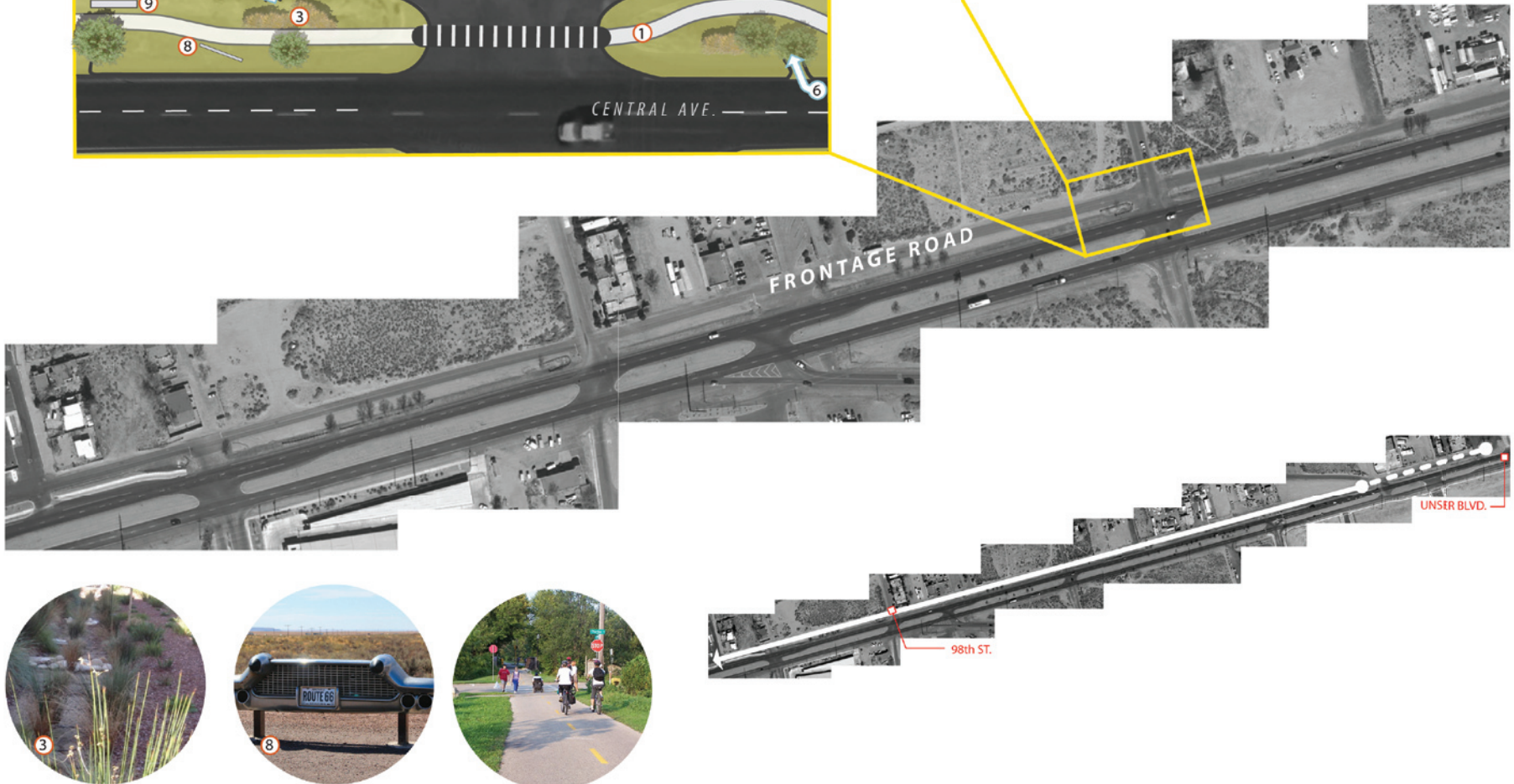


Figure 47: Concepts for Multi-Use Trail on Frontage Road

General Transportation Recommendations: Segment 1



1. continuous bike lanes
2. clearly striped crosswalks
3. enlarged and landscaped pedestrian refuges
4. narrowed turning lanes
5. landscaped buffers
6. continuous trail

Figure 48: Central and 98th Intersection

- i. **Intersection improvements at Central Ave and 98th:** This intersection has excess ROW between the drive lanes and in the right turn lanes. This excess ROW could be landscaped with low lying vegetation, sensitive to views to create pedestrian refuges. To improve public safety, landscaping, widened striping and median improvements should be implemented.

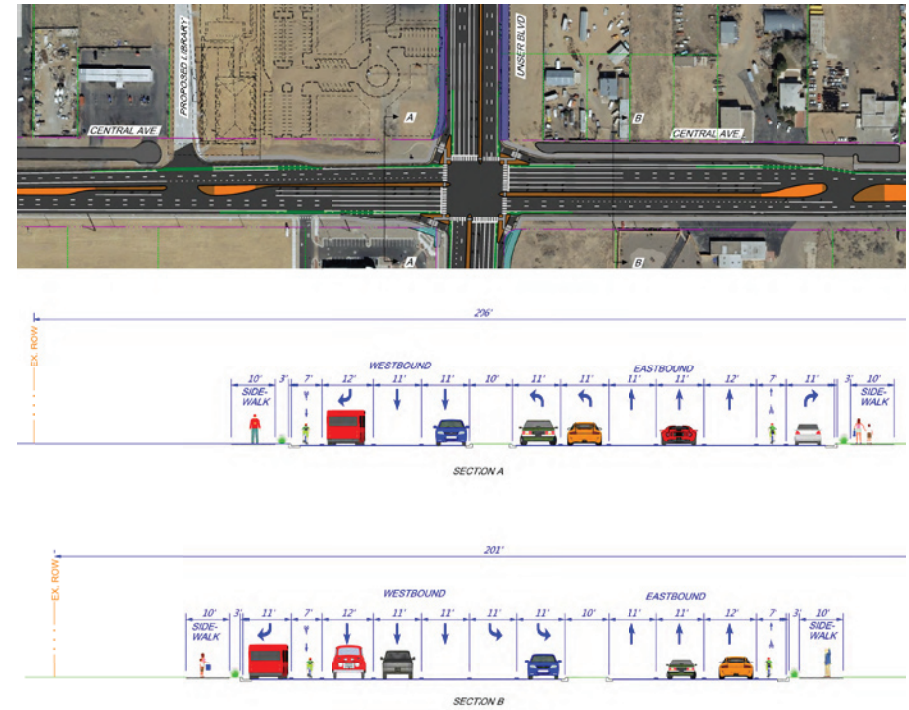
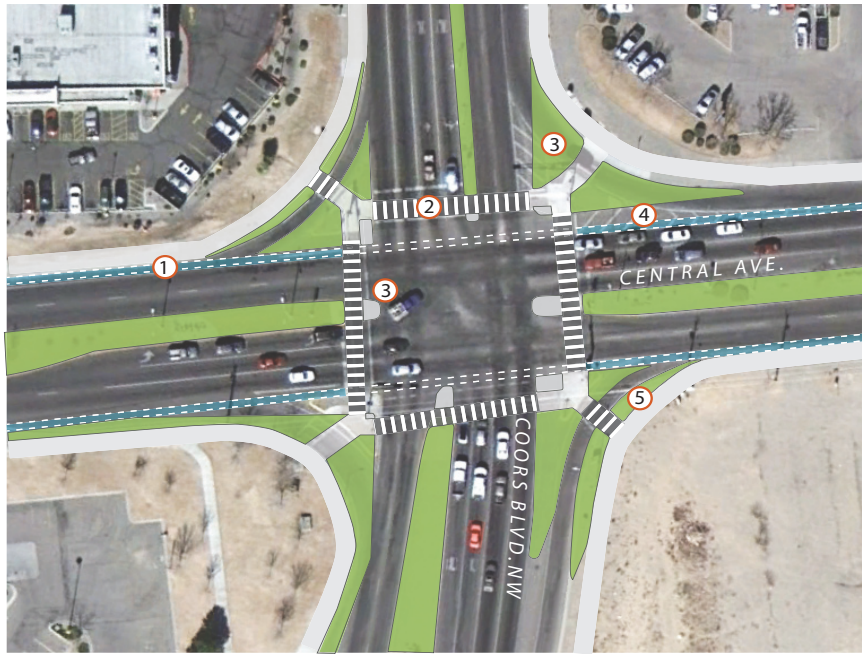


Figure 49: Central and Unser Intersection,
Credit: CoA DMD, Gannet Fleming West, Inc.

- j. **Intersection improvements at Central Ave. and Unser Blvd.:** Implement the 2009 Conceptual Design for the Central Avenue/Unser intersection. In addition the following improvements are suggested:
 - a. Consider adding landscaping to the striped areas located between the turning lanes and the thru lanes. This landscaping would help mitigate the intensity of the 6-lane Unser roadway and provide some visual interest to the intersection.
 - b. Ensure the project includes a connection between the multi-use trails on the Central frontage road and on Unser Blvd.
 - c. This is one of the primary intersections in the MAC; it should accommodate multi-modal traffic and include wayfinding and identity elements.



1. continuous bike lanes
2. clearly striped crosswalks
3. enlarged and landscaped pedestrian refuges
4. narrowed turning lanes/slip lanes
5. landscaped buffers

Figure 50: Central and Coors Intersection

k. Intersection improvements at Central Ave. and Coors Blvd.: This intersection should be improved with pedestrian striping, median improvements including the creation of clear pedestrian refuges, street trees/streetscape improvements, bike lane improvements and traffic calming design to slow excessive traffic speeds. The free-rights should be redesigned as right-turn slip lanes. As this is another primary intersection in the MAC, improvements should increase pedestrian safety, accommodate multi-modal traffic and include wayfinding and identity elements. A multi-use trail is proposed in the excess ROW on Coors Blvd. south of the Coors and Central intersection in order to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between the Central Ave. corridor and the Alamosa Multi-Service Center and surrounding neighborhoods. An intersection master plan should be developed for these proposed improvements.

General Transportation Recommendations: Segment 1

I. Improve MAC connectivity. Connectivity to and within the MAC should be improved to allow for improved circulation.

- i. The construction and continuation of Avalon Road along the north boundary is an important priority for new development. The formalization of Avalon Rd. as a continuous road will provide alternate travel routes in the area, distributing Central Ave. traffic and providing for improved access to area service and residential uses. 86th St. from the south of Central Ave. should be connected north to Avalon Rd., and a multi-use trail should be included in the 86th St. ROW in order to create north/south multi-modal access to the MAC and to connect to the informal trail that runs along the drainage basin north of Avalon Rd. in order to provide connectivity to Jimmy Carter Middle School.
- ii. A pedestrian/bike connection across Coors Blvd. at Bjarne Rd. to facilitate movement between residential neighborhood, MAC and the Alamo Community Center.

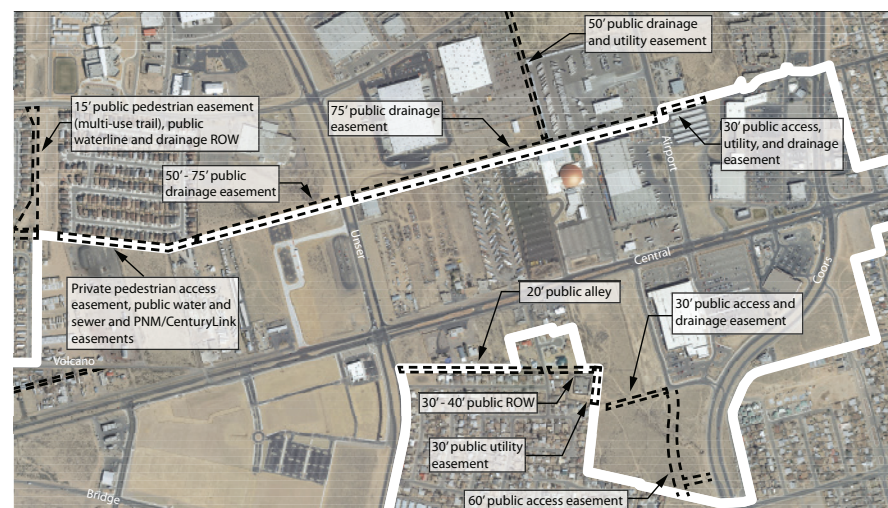


Figure 52: Existing Easements



Figure 51: Proposed Connectivity

General Transportation Recommendations: Segment 1



Figure 53: Concept for MAC with Improved Connectivity

General Transportation Recommendations: Segment 2

1.2 General Overview Segment 2: Coors Blvd. to Rio Grande Blvd.

The goals for recommendations in Segment 2 are to build upon the existing finer grained development patterns and narrower street widths and to coordinate transportation improvements with the land use objectives for the segment, including coordinating streetscape and street design to support the more pedestrian oriented development patterns in the Community and Special Activity Centers. A key component of the improvements are enhancements that reflect the identity and landscape of the valley.

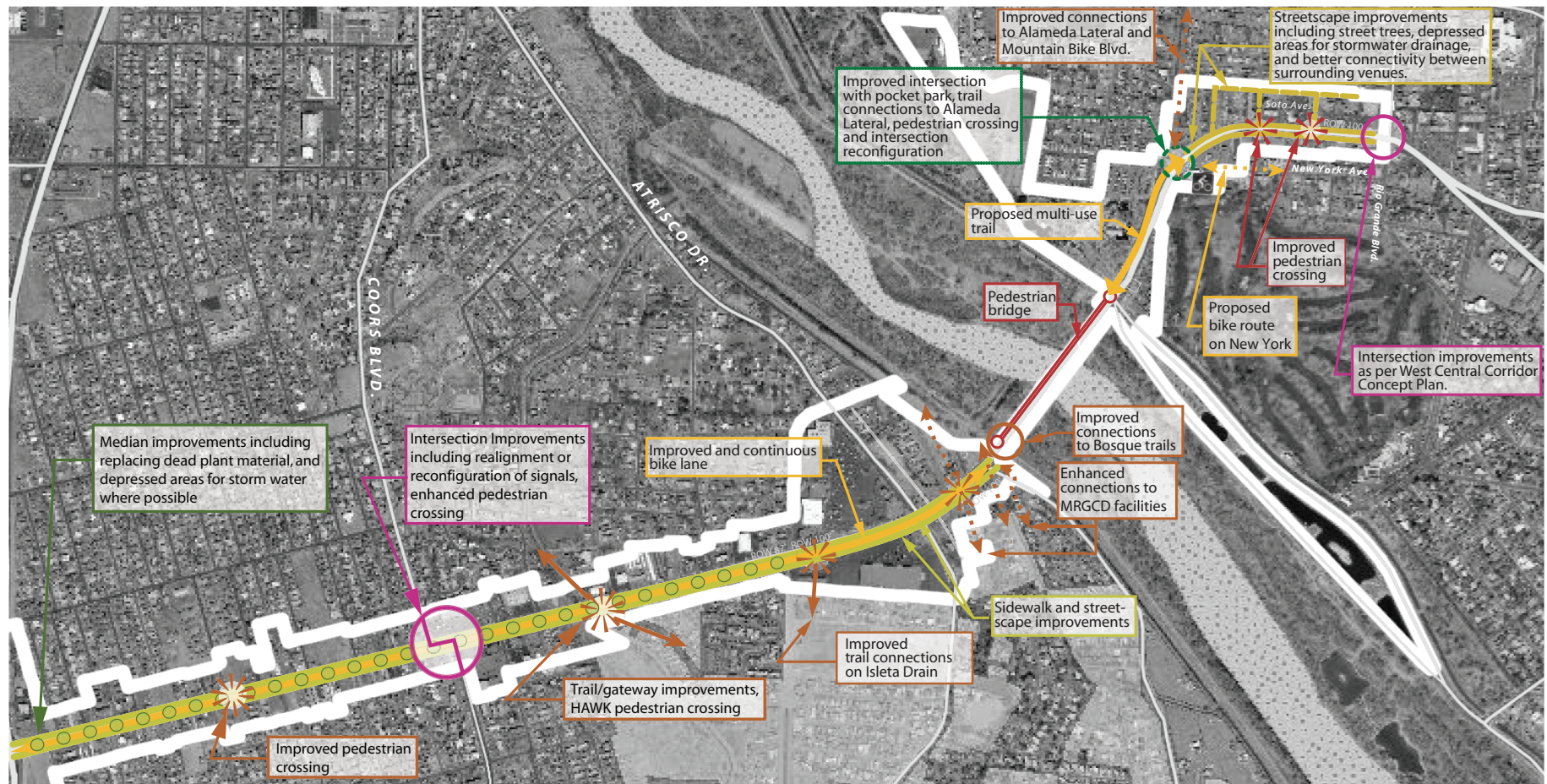


Figure 54: Segment Two Transportation Recommendations

General Transportation Recommendations: Segment 2

1.2.1 Segment 2 Recommendations:

- a. **Median improvements:** The medians from Old Coors Rd. to 58th St. should be improved, where plant materials have died, with new landscaping that is appropriate to the high desert, mid mesa setting and does not obstruct views. Medians should be retrofitted to include depressed drainage areas for storm water runoff.
- b. **General Intersection Improvements from Coors Blvd. to Rio Grande Blvd.:** The MRCOG Congestion Management Process Matrix identifies traffic signal timing and coordination and traffic signal equipment modernization as a high priority for Central Ave.
- c. **General Streetscape improvements:**
 - 1. Design and implement streetscape improvement plan that utilizes excess ROW from Coors to Arenal Canal. Landscape materials should provide a transition from the high desert to the valley setting.
 - 2. Design and implement streetscape improvement plan from Arenal Canal to Central Bridge. Landscape materials should reflect the valley setting. Streetscape improvements should become more concentrated as they approach the CAC.
 - 3. Design and implement streetscape improvement plan from Central Bridge to Rio Grande Blvd. Landscape materials should reflect valley setting. Streetscape improvements should focus on promoting pedestrian activity.
 - 4. Follow 2010 West Central Corridor Concept Plan: multi use trail, bike lanes on New York with improved intersection at New York.
 - 5. Install pedestrian lighting along Central Ave. from Old Coors to the river and from New York to Rio Grande Blvd.
 - 6. Implement streetscape/street tree improvements for the entire length of segment. Streetscape improvement should reflect the land use and landscape transition from west to east; from a more naturalistic treatment of medians and landscaping that transition into denser plantings with street trees, wider sidewalks and other amenities intended to provide a comfortable environment for the pedestrian.
 - 7. Develop plan for consolidating driveways. Restrict new curb cuts unless consolidating multiple curb cuts.
- 8. Implement wayfinding and identity elements to connect Old Town, the BioPark, Tingley Beach, the Bosque and Atrisco Plaza areas.
- d. **Intersection improvements at Old Coors and Yucca:** Facilitate vehicular and other traffic movements through this off-set intersection, including the option of a pedestrian crossing zone that extends from Old Coors to Yucca Dr. This might take the form of a large striped area with landscaped median.
- e. **Arenal Canal trail access/bus stop:** Install a HAWK (high intensity activated crosswalk) pedestrian activated signal as an opportunity to connect the informal trail to surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- f. **Atrisco Drive/intersection:** Plan streetscape improvements that facilitate pedestrian use and recognize the street's location and function in the activity center. Ensure improvements utilize opportunities for place making and way-finding such that the unique history and identity of the area is recognized and celebrated. The forced right should be redesigned to slow turning traffic.
- g. **Atrisco Lateral/Drain/Ditch:** The Atrisco Ditch provides a unique opportunity to connect Central Ave. pedestrians to the agricultural traditions of the Rio Grande valley. On the north side of Central Ave., the Atrisco Lateral runs through the site owned by the City's Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency and could be incorporated into the development program of the site. The Lateral goes underground under Central Ave. and resurfaces just south of Central Ave and west of Sunset Blvd. At this location it is recommended that a gateway to the south valley be developed. There is an unimproved trail along the Ditch that could be developed into a multi-use trail that would connect the plan area with Albuquerque's south valley, subject to MRGCD permitting.
- h. **Central Ave. Bridge Crossing:** Provide more opportunity for place making/identity/public art that links Route 66 and cultural/outdoor destinations and draws pedestrians over the bridge. Provide a pedestrian bridge parallel to the vehicular bridge. See Multi-Use Trail Recommendations for more information.
- i. **Multi-Use Trail at the BioPark.** Plan street improvements that encourage pedestrian connectivity between Old Town and BioPark including a multi-use trail along Central's north side at the BioPark. Ensure trail connectivity to Mountain Rd. Bike Boulevard via Panmunjon/Alameda Lateral.

General Transportation Recommendations: Segment 2

j. **Central Ave. from New York Ave. to Rio Grande Blvd.:** This section of roadway acts as a de facto gateway to some of Albuquerque's premier destinations with the BioPark, Bosque, Tingley Beach and Old Town attracting locals and visitors alike to the area. However, the run-down appearance of the area and lack of streetscape improvements make this section appear unsafe and unpleasant. Improvements to this section are critical to the redevelopment of this area as well as to the creation of a gateway from the east and north which attracts visitors not only to City destinations but across the River as well.

1. Plan streetscape improvements that create wider sidewalks with landscaping at the curb where possible for pedestrian buffering from fast moving, high volume traffic. Pedestrian improvements should also include private setback improvements that create a wider pedestrian realm and reduce lane widths through this section.
2. Specific strategies for streetscape improvements should include: reducing lane widths to gain more width for sidewalks. Currently, the street section is 85.5 feet curb to curb. This width could allow the following street section which keeps the the same number of lanes, but allows for 4 additional feet of sidewalk/planting areas at the curb. A gain of 4 feet allows for planting pits for smaller grasses and shrubbery at the street edge, softening the edge and creating a more pleasant walking environment.

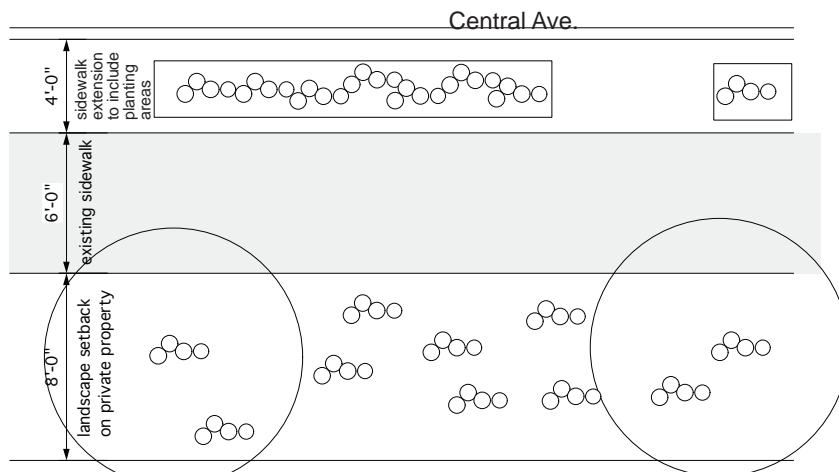


Figure 55: Sidewalk Expansion Concept

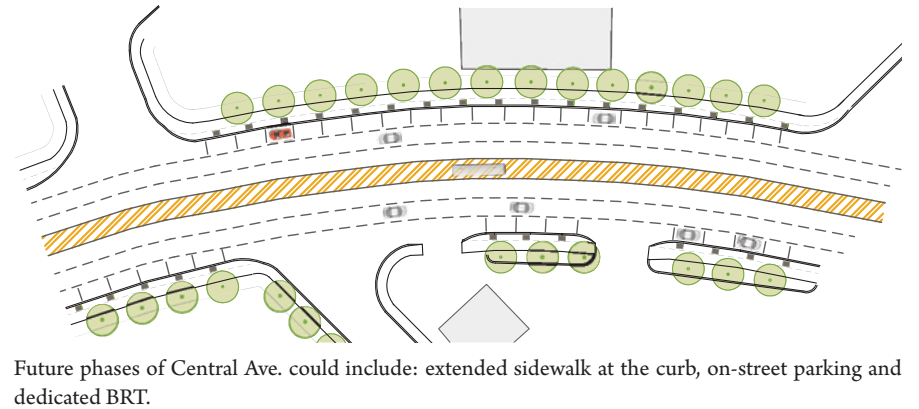
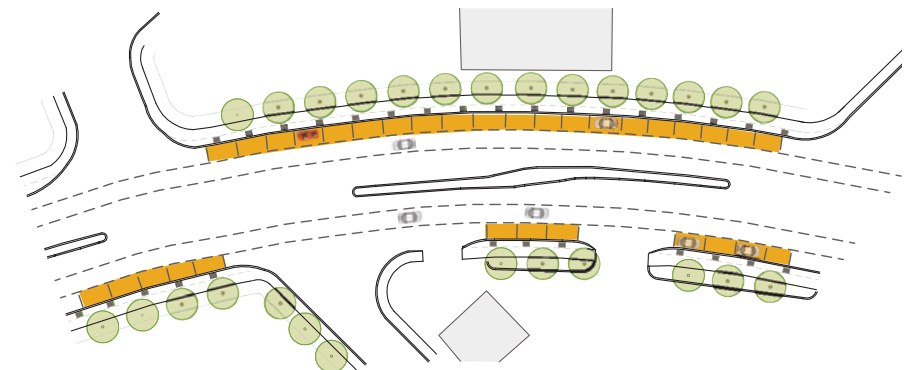
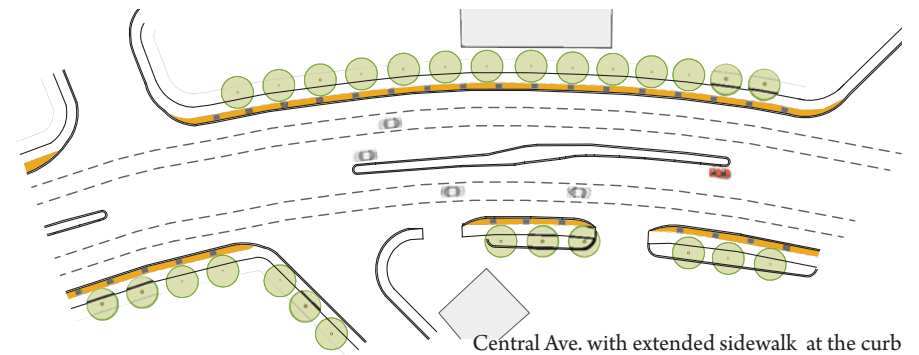


Figure 56: Concepts for Street Section Improvements

General Transportation Recommendations: Segment 2

3. Ensure a street canopy in the landscape setback area off the sidewalk. This setback ranges from 5-8 feet on the north side and 0-8 feet on the south-side of Central. By requiring street tree planting that is coordinated and continuous, a tree canopy can be developed that provides for sidewalk shading and generally improves streetscape aesthetics.
- j. **R.O.W. Acquisition:** Develop a plan to acquire additional rights-of-way between New York Ave. and Rio Grande Blvd in key areas. This plan should detail existing rights of way and locations for additional right of acquisition. Pursue right of way acquisition in strategic locations such as at bus stops in order to provide space for transit while still leaving space for pedestrian movement.
- k. **New York intersection:**
 1. Plan intersection improvements that facilitate pedestrian use and vehicular turning into the BioPark. Improvements should include pedestrian safety refuges.
 2. Reconfigure south side of intersection in coordination with City owned MRA site redevelopment.
- l. **Rio Grande Blvd. intersection:** Enhance the intersection's function as a transition/gateway between Old Town, Downtown, cultural facilities and the Bosque by implementing pedestrian safety and streetscape improvements. The pedestrian signal timing for the crosswalks across Central Ave and across Rio Grande Blvd. needs to be increased. The cross walks should be striped to clearly distinguish them as a pedestrian realm. This intersection needs signage that alerts drivers of the increase in pedestrians in the area and that notifies them that pedestrians have the right of way in crosswalks.
- m. **Clayton Street intersection:** Create a signalized intersection at Central Ave. and Clayton St. This will foster pedestrian activity in this area by providing a crossing between New York Ave. and Rio Grande Boulevard.
- n. **Pedestrian connectivity:** Per the 2010 West Central Corridor Concept Plan, plan a multi-use trail between the River and New York Ave.
- o. **Implement the the West Central Corridor Concept Plan (2010):** (See Chapter 4, Transportation Conditions)
1. **Reduce curb cuts.** There is an abundance of curb cuts along Central Avenue between 47th St. and Rio Grande Blvd; driveways should be narrowed and curb cuts consolidated where possible in order to create a more comfortable pedestrian environment. This recommendation is in line with the Albuquerque/ Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan policy recommendation of a spacing of one to two drives per 300 feet of frontage on principal arterials.
2. **Pedestrian improvements for the Central Avenue/Rio Grande Blvd. intersection.** Provide a two-to-five second leading pedestrian signal in order to give pedestrians a head start when crossing Central Avenue; extend the median on the west side of the intersection in order to provide pedestrians a small refuge; eliminate the westbound turn lane in order to provide a larger median refuge and landscaping; and restripe the crosswalks.
- p. **Improve area drainage, connectivity and access to local services.** Soto Ave. from Simmonds St. to Rio Grande Blvd.: The alley that runs behind the north of Central Ave. between New York Ave. and Rio Grande Blvd. currently has issues with stormwater drainage. This alley could be improved with landscaping and LID techniques, in order to solve the drainage issues, and used as an alternative pedestrian and bike route that connects Old Town with the BioPark.

General Transportation Recommendations: Segment 2



Figure 57: SAC Network Improvements

1.3 Transit Overview

Public transit plays a key role in the transportation system of the West Route 66 plan area. West Central Avenue has been identified by the Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) as a Priority Transit Improvement Corridor. This designation identifies the West Central corridor as “well suited for further evaluation and development of potential high frequency and high volume transit service over the coming decades”. Portions of the Corridor are further designated as either an “Enhanced Transit Corridor” or “Major Transit Corridor” by the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan. The segment of Central Avenue within the plan area is also of particular regional interest because of the Rio Grande bridge crossing which will be facing increased congestion based on projected growth trends. To reduce projected vehicular crossings, the 2035 MTP has identified a mode share goal of 10% of all river crossing trips to be taken by transit by 2025 and 20% of all trips by 2035.

The following transit recommendations were developed through an analysis of existing conditions, adherence to City and regional policy, and input received at community visioning sessions. For more information on existing conditions, see the Transit Context in Chapter 3.

The intent of the recommendations for Transit is to meet the stated community goal: *“Improve transit by increasing frequency and efficiency of service,”* and to improve the perception of transit by investing in permanent transit infrastructure that not only improves the functionality of the transit system, but also signals an investment by the City of Albuquerque in the development of this area as a recognized transit corridor punctuated by vibrant pedestrian - and transit-friendly activity centers.

The following transit recommendations were developed through an analysis of existing conditions, adherence to City and regional policy, and input received at community visioning sessions. For more information on existing conditions, see the Transit Context in Chapter 4.

1.3.1 Recommendations

- a. Plan for a Park and Ride facility in segment 2a of the plan area. An ideal location for a park and ride is one that is easily accessible by automobile and con-

veniently on the way for morning commuters. Specifically, sites near major intersections and on the “in-bound” side of the transit route are preferable. Investigate potential incentives to private landowners in exchange for allowing park and ride use of a portion of their parking.

- b. Improve bus stops at locations that are lacking seating, shade, and ADA accessibility .
- c. Consider the future integration of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service with such features as dedicated lanes, raised platform stations, signal prioritization, queue jumpers, and off-board fare collection. (At time of adoption of this plan, ABQ Ride is engaged in the federally-required Alternatives Analysis for such a system.) Consider locating dedicated BRT in the median ROW in the section from the River to Rio Grande Blvd. to preserve opportunities for pedestrian streetscape improvements and traffic calming features in outside lanes. This Sector Plan further supports preliminary concepts which would locate dedicated BRT lanes through the medians for the entire length of the Corridor, as this would preserve the opportunity to implement much needed pedestrian and streetscape improvements along the street edge.
- d. Coordinate structural improvements, on- and off-road, to ensure a balance between the needs of vehicles, transit, cyclists, pedestrians, including persons with sensory or mobility impairments.
- e. Ensure coordination between the Planning Department, ABQ Ride and MRCOG/Rio Metro regarding the creation of a transit system that integrates transit needs with land use and development goals and pedestrian streetscape improvements.

Transportation Recommendations: Bikeways and Multi-Use Trails

1.4 Bikeways and Multi-Use Trails

Good bicycle infrastructure and networks are an important part of creating a truly multi-modal environment. In order to encourage more trips to be by bicycle in the Plan area, it is necessary to ensure that not only is there good bike lane connectivity along Central Ave. and the intersecting north/south streets but also good connectivity regarding access to and within activity centers and popular destinations located along the corridor. There are three types of bicycle facilities within the Plan area: bike lanes maintained by DMD, multi-use trails maintained by the Parks Department, and multi-use trails maintained by the Open Space Division.

Recommendations for bike lanes and multi-use trails maintained by the Parks Department are outlined below. For information on the existing conditions these recommendations were based on, see Bikeways and Trails Context in Chapter 3. Please see the Parks, Open Space and Trails Recommendations for information on Open Space and MRGCD trails.

The intent of the recommendations for Bikeways and Trails is to create a safe and well connected bike and trail network that helps to make Central Ave. a truly multi-modal corridor that is safe for bicyclists, and to ensure trail and bikeway connectivity from Central Ave. to and within adjacent development and activity centers.

1.4.1 Recommendations:

- a. **Multi-Use trail along frontage road.** Plan a multi-use trail along the frontage road on the north side of Central Ave. from 106th St. to Unser Blvd.
- b. **County Coordination.** Coordinate with the County to continue the Old Route 66 Multi-Use Trail to Atrisco Vista. It is essential that this trail system be continued as land develops in the county to ensure connectivity with Atrisco Vista. Besides providing needed recreational opportunities for the area, this multi-use trail is a key component of establishing a unique identity for West Central Ave.
- c. **Bike lane completion:**
 - 1. Bike lane sections missing on Central Ave. along the frontage road should be striped.
 - 2. Complete missing sections of bike lanes on the south side of Central Ave.

from 98th St. to 86th St. Bring bike lanes up to the DPM standard of 7 feet for principal arterials with posted speeds of 40 mph or greater and complete multi-use trail on Unser Blvd. north of Central Ave.

- c. **Improvements to bike lane along New York Ave. from New York to Rio Grande:** Relocate the Central Ave. bike lane along New York, as the preferred bike route, due to issues of safety and limited lane options on Central in its current configuration.
- d. **Pedestrian Bridge:** Plan a multi-use trail that runs on a pedestrian bridge spanning the river at Central. A bridge at this location would have a tremendous effect on improving pedestrian and bicycle access across the river, act as another major amenity for the area, and draw people across the bridge to the activity center, on both sides of the river.



Figure 58: Concept for Pedestrian Bridge