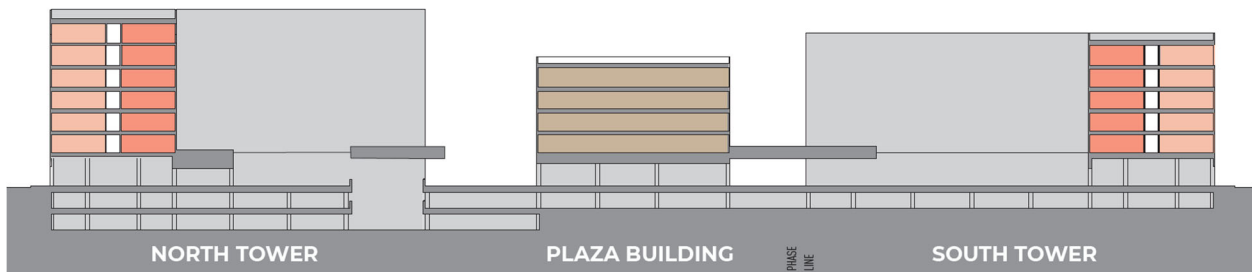


# Uptown Connect:

## The Uptown Transit Center Joint Development

Advancing transportation connectivity, access, and economic development through a Transit-Oriented Development in Albuquerque's Urban Center



Submitted by City of Albuquerque, New Mexico (ABQ RIDE)

February 2023

## Project Description

### Statement of Work:

#### Technical and Engineering Description:

Uptown Connect: The Uptown Transit Center Joint Development (Uptown Connect) is an innovative project led by ABQ RIDE, Albuquerque's Transit Department, in conjunction with a private developer. The project will ultimately encompass a 3-acre parcel in the City's densest employment, shopping, and entertainment district. The project will transform a large lot that currently only contains a park-and-ride lot, transit transfer platform, and private credit union into a vibrant, mixed-use development featuring a mix of affordable and market rate apartments, retail, and a reimagined transit plaza at its core.

There are essentially three core elements to this project, as follows:

- Phases I and II: These phases represent the Joint Development portion of the project and can be developed concurrently on the 2-acre portion of the lot that currently holds a parking lot and the Uptown Transit Center (UTC). This transit center is the northern terminus of the Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART) Route 766, and there are eight other routes that connect for transfer opportunities at this location.
  - Phase I: This phase comprises the bulk of the RAISE award request. It will encompass the reimagined transit center into a transit plaza. The plaza will be approximately 100-feet wide and contain 6 bus docks, covered waiting areas, benches, lighting, and other pedestrian amenities; 22,000 sq. ft. of commercial space; and 2 levels of underground parking with 402 total parking spaces. The project will not change current bus service.
  - Phase II: Consists of 215 affordable housing units in a seven-story tower and 19 apartments on the transit plaza that will be either market-rate housing or short-term rental units. Phase II improvements will not be funded by RAISE funds.
- Phase III: After the transit center and first housing and retail tower are completed, a separate and entirely private 1-acre development will fill in the remaining portion of the lot. This development will consist of 194 market rate dwelling units and over 6,000 square feet of commercial space. Because this aspect of the project required demolition of an existing credit union, it can only start after Phases I and II are complete.

Project Phases I and II represent a Joint Development between ABQ RIDE and a private developer. ABQ RIDE will contribute the land, along with design and construction costs for the transit plaza and other eligible expenses.<sup>1</sup> The project developer will design and construct the project in accordance with a development agreement. Phase III will be contractually and financially separate from the first two phases and will entirely privately funded, developed, and constructed.

There is physical integration and connection (e.g., overbuild) between all of the project elements. The entire design meets transit-oriented and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) design principles to ensure maximum passive surveillance and safety at the site. Structures will be designed to the following standards: LEED BD+C and LEED for Homes certification, WELL Building Standard, and the Sustainable SITES Initiative. The

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<sup>1</sup> FTA Joint Development Circular C 7050.1B

development will have electric bus chargers, as well as EV chargers in the parking lot for personal vehicles. The site will feature landscaping and green spaces to reduce the heat island effect, and design elements will follow the National Roadway Safety Strategy to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

There are two known technical challenges to this engineering and construction project related to utilities. Because these are known challenges, ABQ RIDE is working closely with local utilities to remedy them:

1. The existing 6” fire loop line will have to be expanded to approximately 14” on three sides of the property, or about 1,500 linear feet.
2. A Controlled Environment Vault for fiber-optics must be relocated as part of construction.

Aside from the minor utility considerations, the site itself poses no major challenges. The lot is amply-sized, flat, and zoned appropriately for the proposed project. ABQ RIDE has already started the NEPA environmental clearance process to ensure a quick start to this project if awarded. The project schedule allows an extra six months to accommodate any materials and construction delays that may arise.

#### Current Design Status:

The project is in the pre-development design stage. In August 2019, City Council selected a development partner to work with ABQ RIDE to create a transit-oriented development project at the Uptown Transit Center. Notice of Award to secure the private developer was issued in November 2019 and the Partnership Agreement was signed in January 2021. The first design charrette was held in January 2021, and developed through several iterations. The architectural design has been advanced through the Conceptual Design (10%) phase, as of January 2023. This is the basis for the project description, budget, and scope of work. The completion of the complete architectural design will occur shortly after notice of a RAISE award.

#### Transportation Challenges and Solutions:

In a western city like Albuquerque, bringing transit to residents as developments extend farther out from the core is both costly and inefficient due to lower population densities. To maintain an effective transit system that serves low-income diverse residents and connects them to jobs and services, the City must encourage density in the core where transit service is best and most frequent. The challenge underlying Uptown Connect is to envision a transit center that brings the people to the transit. This was one of the stated goals of the UTC when it was originally built, and remains a critical goal of ABQ RIDE.

Low-income people ride the bus in disproportionate numbers relative to people of higher income levels. By adding hundreds of units of affordable housing to a transit center, ABQ RIDE is committing to improve these individuals’ lives. Relying exclusively on transit, they will be able to access most areas of the city in under one hour – this includes jobs, services, education, groceries, and other necessities.

Further, the current transit center is on a large and underutilized City-owned parcel near to one of the busiest areas of the city. The project seeks to find a more economically productive use of the

space, supporting the local economy, while removing vehicles from the road and encouraging more riders to take the bus, walk, or bike for more trips.

A way to do that is to construct a transit-oriented development project that also addresses a gaping housing shortage in Albuquerque. By offering energy-efficient, healthy, and affordable apartments combined with retail, people will come to the transit center because it is a desirable place to be, not merely because it is a place to catch the bus.

### **Project History**

Uptown Connect emerged out of an understanding of the strong need for a redesign of the UTC. The City’s Comprehensive Plan designates Uptown as an “Urban Center,” which is a land use designation that will help the city achieve its goal of “growing upward rather than outward.” The City’s vision for the Uptown Urban Center is to help the city accommodate future growth sustainably, discourage sprawl, and reduce water consumption. ABQ RIDE purchased land for and constructed the UTC with funds from a 1998 Federal grant. One of the requirements of that grant was that “the city will enter into an agreement with private sector developers concerning transit-oriented development that is compatible with alternative transportation uses and that also adds TOD [transit-oriented development] to the vitality of Uptown.” That requirement served to address air quality issues, which were pressing at the time, as well as to implement local land use development goals in the Comprehensive Plan.

The project team has met with many community and stakeholder groups over the past year to explain the project and gain buy-in. Initial renderings of the development, draft budgets and timelines, and agreements that form the Joint Development partnership have been completed.

### **Project Investment Context**

ABQ RIDE is the public Transit Department for Albuquerque, New Mexico, a city of 661,629. The demographics for Albuquerque are 60.2% minority, with 49.7% identifying as Hispanic/Latino, and 35.7% of residents are considered low-income (U.S. Census, 2020). A total of 35 Census Tracts within Albuquerque have been designated as Transportation Disadvantaged Census Tracts (Historically Disadvantaged Communities). A total of 53 Areas of Persistent Poverty (APP) are designated within the City. ABQ RIDE has a service area of 235 square miles and serves all of these areas. The project location is designated by Justice40 as a “Historically Disadvantaged Community;” investing in a housing and entertainment destination at this location here helps meet the goals of both federal and local governments to meet the Justice40 initiative by focusing public investment in areas of need.<sup>2</sup>

ABQ RIDE has been investing in transit service and capacity, most notably through ABQ RIDE Forward, a network redesign plan. This plan is considering different priorities for transit service, and both of the potential priorities include robust service to the Uptown Transit Center. Another recent project that will add great value to Uptown Connect is the Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART) project that debuted in 2019. This Transit Center is the northern terminus of the ART Route 766, which provides a one seat ride to many of the major job centers in the state, including

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<sup>2</sup> Albuquerque recently became the first city in the nation to formally utilize Justice40 to prioritize local investments in disadvantaged communities: <https://www.cabq.gov/mayor/news/albuquerque-becomes-first-city-in-nation-to-advance-justice40>.

Downtown, the University of New Mexico, two hospitals, and many other jobs and services along Central Avenue. ABQ RIDE is in the final stages of evaluating the feasibility of three new park-and-ride locations that will increase the utility of the transit system to more riders, including regional residents living in Rio Rancho, the Village of Tijeras, and communities in the east mountains (which are separated from Albuquerque by the Sandia and Manzano Mountains). The Department of Municipal Development is at the 60% design stage for roadway improvements to Indian School Road and Louisiana Boulevard to enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety and comfort. These Complete Streets designs will help transit riders and residents at Uptown Connect travel through the Uptown area more comfortably.

**Project Location**

Detailed Geographical Description: The project is located in northeast Albuquerque on America’s Parkway, between Uptown Boulevard NE and Indian School Road NE, just to the east of a collection of shopping malls, other retail, restaurants, and offices collectively referred to as “Uptown.” It is within Census Tract 2.07, in Bernalillo County, New Mexico and within the Census Designated Urbanized Area of Albuquerque. The site is located within a federally designated Historically Disadvantaged Community.

Supplemental Maps:

Below are maps and figures that help to put the project in context, including a diagram of the proposed project site, a map of the project area, and land uses in the Uptown region.

*Figure 1: Uptown Connect Cross-Section and Plan*

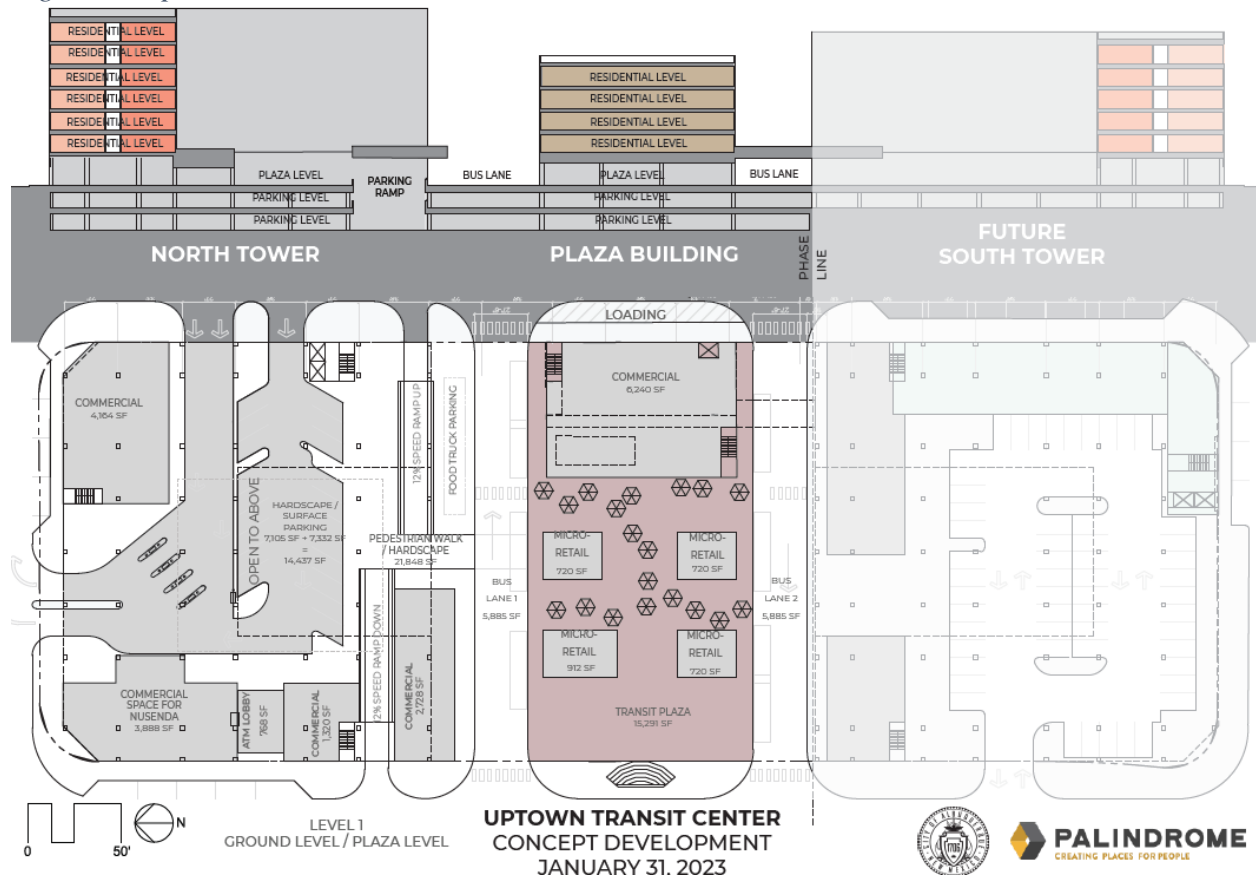


Figure 2: Land Uses in Uptown

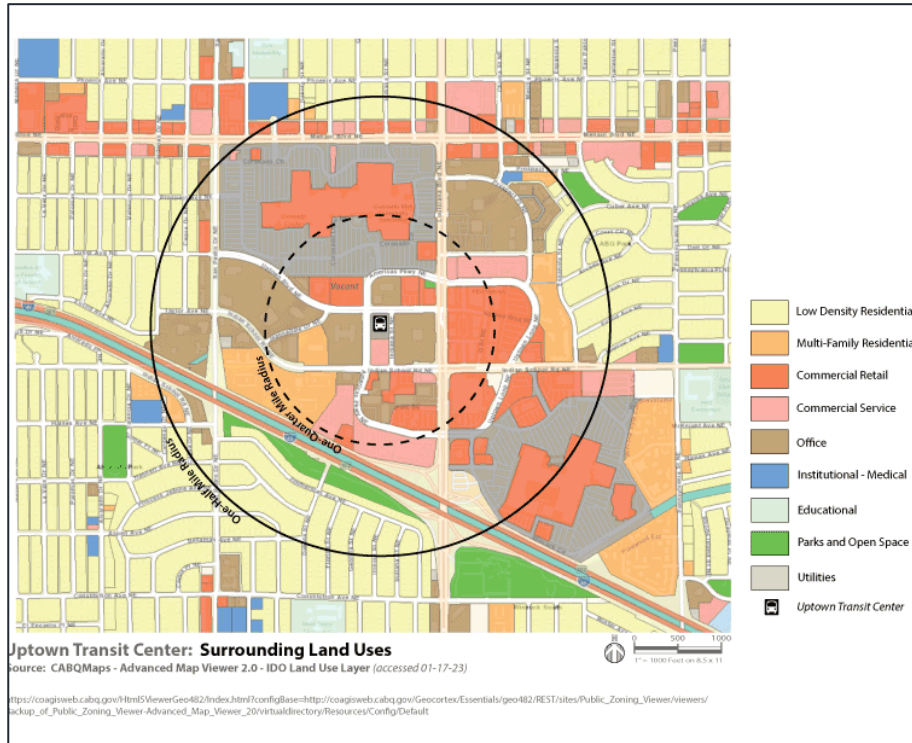


Figure 3: Uptown Connect Map



## Merit Criteria



Uptown Connect: The Uptown Transit Center Joint Development will rebuild an aging transit center – the Uptown Transit Center (UTC) – into a transit plaza as the centerpiece of a new mixed-use, joint development project that will also redevelop an adjoining lot. RAISE funds are requested for Phase I, which will revitalize an existing transit center to include six bus docks, protected passenger boarding, better lighting, underground parking, and safety officer facilities. Phase I also includes design, utilities, infrastructure, footings, and commercial structures that support developing a destination-worthy transit plaza. The residential portion of the project (Phase II) includes 215 affordable housing units and 19 units of market-rate or short-term rental units on the adjacent lot or above the transit plaza. The project is part of a phased effort to increase transit safety and accessibility by activating the transit space through retail and housing. Uptown Connect simultaneously advances many of the City’s goals including access, mobility, affordability, quality-of-life, economic development, sustainability, safety, equity, partnering with private entities to advance public goals, and smart city technology. In alignment with the White House’s Justice40 Initiative and local policy, this project will invest in an Historically Disadvantaged Community. A privately-financed Phase III will bring the total number of dwelling units to 409, and will also feature additional commercial space. The requested RAISE grant will provide funding for all Phase I improvements, including the transit plaza and site infrastructure improvements supporting transit use that are co-located with the mixed-use portion of the project.<sup>1</sup> Phase II and III will be built using private investments and other financing mechanisms. Phase I includes the following:

- 6 bus docks with sheltered waiting areas
- 23,200 sq. ft. transit plaza with the following transit amenities: Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs), wayfinding, street furniture, security cameras and call boxes, pedestrian walkways, benches, signage, lighting, landscaping, etc.
- Security/Maintenance room (monitoring/debriefing spaces, communications/maintenance equipment)
- 22,000 sq. ft. of commercial space
- 48 spaces of underground parking available for commercial uses (402 total off-street parking)

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<sup>1</sup> “Uptown Connect Concept Development Drawings,” posted at <https://www.cabq.gov/transit/our-department/transit-grants>. Phase I & II are the Joint Development project and are contractually related.

The project sponsor, ABQ RIDE, is Albuquerque’s primary operator of fixed route bus service and paratransit service. ABQ RIDE’s service area is 235 square miles, with a population of 680,507 people (U.S. Census, 2020). With a fleet of 162 buses, the department operates 38 motor-bus fixed routes, including 21 “local” routes with all-day service, and 16 “commuter” routes. In late 2019, ABQ RIDE began service on two bus rapid transit routes (called Albuquerque Rapid Transit, or ART) as a “fixed guideway” system with median stations, frequent service, limited stops, off-board fare payment, and distinctive vehicles.<sup>2</sup> One of the ART routes terminates at Uptown Connect. Total ridership on all fixed routes was 9.2 million trips in FY2019. Ridership was greatly reduced during COVID-19 so in FY2021 the system had only 4.1 million passenger trips. However, ridership continues to slowly rebound, particularly along the ART lines.<sup>3</sup>

To redesign and develop Uptown Connect, the City held a competitive process to select a Joint Development Partnership team (referred to as the Project Development Team), to plan, design, construct, and maintain the project site. In 2019, our City Council selected a team of two general contractors (PacifiCap and Jaynes Corp.); commercial and residential developers (Palindrome Communities and Family Housing Development Corp.); an A&E firm (Dekker/Perich/Sabatini); a property management company (PMI); legal counsel (Stoel Rives, LLP); and an accounting firm (Novogradac & Company, LLP). ABQ RIDE is partner on all project development activities and is seeking RAISE grant funding for the transit plaza and FTA Joint Development Eligible portion of the project.

#### **(a) Safety**

Albuquerque was designated a Focus City by the Federal Highway Administration because of the high number of pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and fatalities. The Albuquerque Area High Fatal and Injury Network (HFIN) map highlights the most dangerous corridors and intersections in Albuquerque. The City uses the HFIN to identify areas to prioritize for transportation improvements and other interventions as part of its Vision Zero initiative. Current data for the project area (Figure 1) shows “Above Mean to 1.5 Times Above Mean” fatal and injury crashes on two of the roads abutting the project site – both Uptown Boulevard and Indian School Road. Another major road, Louisiana Boulevard, has two times the city’s mean crashes. Transit investments, along with other ongoing bicycle and pedestrian interventions, will help implement Complete Streets and safety priorities.

An analysis of transit users indicates who the expected users and residents are likely to be. A third of users are under 30 years old, and another third makes under \$35,000 per year. Within the service area, 68% of the population are minorities. The largest sector for employment is retail trade, followed by food services—both are “shift” jobs, meaning that commutes do not fall within the typical 8am-5pm time period. The Uptown area offers thousands of such service jobs. Transit service must be frequent throughout the day to serve workers who also live at Uptown Connect. An additional set of users will be people who go to Uptown to shop and dine.

The City of Albuquerque is in alignment with the National Roadway Safety Strategy and has adopted a Vision Zero strategy and program to commit to zero roadway fatalities. This project helps implement the Safer Roads strategy by reducing safety risks borne by the traveling public. Uptown Connect will include several Proven Safety Countermeasures e.g., the project will

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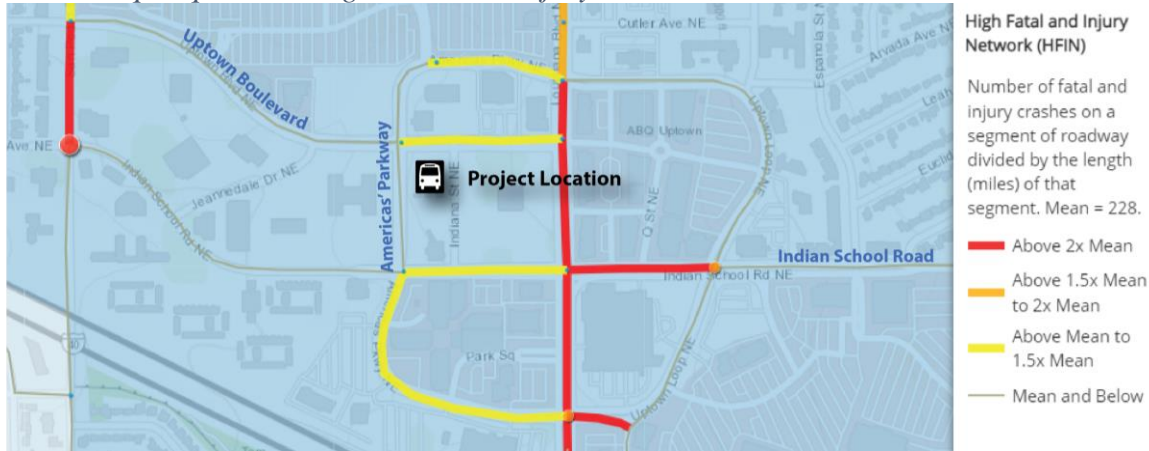
<sup>2</sup> The City of Albuquerque is currently piloting a free fares program, which means that all transit service is free to all users. Prior to this, the cost was \$1 per ride.

<sup>3</sup> “FTA 2021 Data for Transit Agency Profile,” USDOT, 2021, [60019.pdf](https://www.cabq.gov/transit/our-department/transit-grants), also posted at: <https://www.cabq.gov/transit/our-department/transit-grants>



implement Crosswalk Visibility Enhancements such as lighting, pavement markings, and high-visibility crosswalks. The Uptown Connect project design will maintain the bicycle lane on Indian School Road and add on-street parking around the project site to buffer pedestrians from vehicular traffic. Pedestrian walkways around the development and within the transit plaza will be widened and enhanced with shade, benches, lighting, and other amenities. These design features align with prior studies of the Uptown area that have recommended these improvements.<sup>4</sup>

Figure 1: Albuquerque Area High Fatal and Injury Network, 2023<sup>5</sup>



Beyond pedestrian and rider safety, Uptown Connect will also offer notable security and interpersonal safety upgrades. The existing UTC is at the end of its useful life with no active security systems currently in place. The site is divorced from surrounding land uses. Security is especially an issue at night when the transit center is empty, as it tends to attract vagrancy and crime. The Uptown Connect project will provide direct “eyes-on-the-street” by populating a large housing development on the site along with other retail and entertainment uses that will operate through the day and evening. The design will also include *Crime Prevention through Environmental Design* (CPTED) principles, including thoughtful landscaping design consisting primarily of trees and active uses with windows facing the common areas.<sup>6</sup>

As part of the project’s Joint Development Agreement, the development and management team will provide on-site security services that can respond more quickly and effectively than other available options. An active transit location with on-site security presence is likely to increase the number of women and elderly transit users who otherwise avoid the location for fear of harassment or fear for their personal safety.

Uptown is Albuquerque’s second most active “urban center”. Three malls and multiple large office complexes draw many visitors every day. Its location at a freeway exit on I-40 means the vast majority of people who come to Uptown arrive by automobile. Louisiana Boulevard’s eight travel lanes and dual turn lanes create a long and harrowing crossing experience for pedestrians and cyclists. Several intersections have no bicycle lanes but do have wide, sweeping right turn lanes that expedite vehicular travel and make non-motorized crossing even more challenging.

<sup>4</sup> “Uptown Pedestrian Study,” Mid-Region Council of Governments, 2014 and “Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan and Wayfinding Program,” City of Albuquerque, 2008, <https://www.cabq.gov/transit/our-department/transit-grants>.

<sup>5</sup> “Albuquerque Area High Fatal and Injury Network Map,” <https://arcg.is/aS1Pz0>. Accessed on January 31, 2023.

<sup>6</sup> “International CPTED Association Website,” <https://www.cpted.net/>.

This project’s contribution to reducing traffic fatalities and injuries is centered on the mode shift benefits that accrue through improving the jobs and housing mix in Uptown, which will reduce the number of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) overall by an estimated 955,188 per year in relation to what a similar development in a location with less frequent transit service would have generated. Creating a new travel destination at Uptown Connect aims to shift the automobile-dominant environment in Uptown to one more supportive of transit and non-motorized transportation. Consistent with the National Roadway Safety Strategy, this project will include several Roadway Countermeasures and Behavioral Interventions to improve transportation safety. Uptown Connect will protect non-motorized or motorized traveling communities from safety risks through project design features like tightening the curb radii, shortening pedestrian crossing distances, adding on-street parking, and improving the streetscape and pedestrian environment.

Through this same mode shift the number of fatalities and serious injuries in the area is also likely to decrease by around 10% due to fewer individuals driving and lower overall VMTs for personal vehicles.<sup>7</sup> Because the 215 dwelling units require residents to be 60% below Area Median Income (\$56,366 median family income in 2021), the residents will fall within the Title VI protected class.<sup>8</sup> People living in poverty experience roadway violence at higher rates than people with higher incomes. Providing convenient on-site access to the transit plaza makes it more likely residents will choose transit. Uptown Connect is unique in that it is being built to attract low-income residents who need or choose to rely on transit due to the immediate proximity of residences and transit service.

Uptown Connect aligns with other safety improvements in the area. Albuquerque is in the design phase of a pedestrian safety project to improve nearby Indian School Road, as shown in Figure 1 above. This project is in the TIP under the title “Uptown Intersection Improvements”.<sup>9</sup> These design improvements will support the first and last mile connections for ABQ RIDE passengers coming through the UTC and residents at Uptown Connect.

### **(b) Environmental Sustainability**

Climate Change and Environmental Justice Considerations: This census tract where the project is located is designated as Historically Disadvantaged, in part due to air quality issues. The Uptown Urban Center has been a focus area for air quality strategies and was previously a target area for Air Quality Non-Attainment efforts.<sup>10</sup> The area also struggles with a housing shortage. Uptown Connect will provide low-income housing, which when combined with high-frequency transit service, will allow residents to reduce their combined housing and transportation costs. Residents will have access to many jobs and services without needing a vehicle. Entry into the NEPA process will require strong engagement with the neighborhood, potential residents, and ridership in the project design. See the Safety section, above, for a transit rider demographic profile.

Transportation is the second-largest contributor to Albuquerque’s greenhouse gas

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<sup>7</sup> “Transit Ridership & VMT Estimation Methodology,” ABQ RIDE, 2023, <https://www.cabq.gov/transit/our-department/transit-grants>.

<sup>8</sup> “US Census Quick Facts 2021,” , <https://www.cabq.gov/transit/our-department/transit-grants>, also posted at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/albuquerquecitynewmexico/INC110221>.

<sup>9</sup> TIP funds are programmed in 2023 and construction is anticipated in early 2025. This project includes installation of HAWK signals on Indian School Rd., ADA sidewalk and curb ramp improvements, and lane width changes. “Uptown Intersection Improvements,” City of Albuquerque, 2022, <https://www.cabq.gov/transit/our-department/transit-grants>.

<sup>10</sup> “Maintenance Plan for Carbon Monoxide-Albuquerque/Bernalillo County, NM,” Air Quality Control Board, 1998, <https://www.cabq.gov/transit/our-department/transit-grants>.

emissions, and as such is one of the six strategies in Albuquerque’s Climate Action Plan Implementation Report (2021).<sup>11</sup> Clean transportation is not only about reducing emissions, but also making Albuquerque an accessible city for all. To encourage people to drive less and reduce transportation cost burdens, it is important to improve all modes of transportation – especially by encouraging walking, biking, and transit. Albuquerque can further reduce emissions and traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries by adopting Complete Street projects, and improving public transportation.

Environmental Sustainability Benefits: Uptown Connect features several sustainability elements and furthers several of the goals in the Climate Action Plan (City Resolution R-19-187),<sup>11</sup> including the Sustainable Buildings, Renewable Energy, and Clean Transportation sections. Reducing the number and length of automobile trips is the most sustainable way to reduce adverse environmental impacts caused by transportation. Housing, employment, and transit in close proximity has the best chance of reducing the overall number of single occupancy vehicle trips. This is why FTA supports Joint Development as an activity eligible for federal funding and grants. Joint Development is a tool that is designed to implement location-efficient land use and design by bringing more residents to a location served by high-frequency transit and by developing a complementary mix of supportive land uses. With a density of 108 dwelling units per acre in Phase II (2 acres) and 141 dwelling units per acre after the Phase III private development (409 units on 2.9 total acres) Uptown Connect will be some of the densest residential land in the city (which averages only 1.76 households per gross acre city-wide).<sup>12</sup> This compact and walkable development will make it easy to use transit, walk, and bike to reach many daily needs.

Uptown Connect will result in an estimated 17.5% fewer vehicles owned by residents of Uptown Connect, due to its location-efficient design.<sup>13</sup> As a result of the reduced number of vehicles that are owned per household, the project will result in a reduction of 955,188 Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMTs) per year, in relation to what a similar development with less frequent transit service would have generated.<sup>13</sup> This works out to a collective savings of \$547,128 per year in auto ownership costs for the residents, and 382 metric tons of CO<sup>2</sup> gas reduced per year. These estimates are intentionally conservative and it is likely that the true impact of this project will be even greater in terms of actual reduction in transportation costs and environmental benefits due to people choosing active transportation options for some of their trips, even if they own a vehicle. (See the Mobility and Community Connectivity section for more information about the likely increase in transit ridership and active transportation.) Because the project will serve a Historically Disadvantaged area that has struggled with both poor air quality and low-incomes, these cost and greenhouse gas reductions are even more meaningful.

By encouraging density, Uptown Connect is estimated to save ABQ RIDE significant funds over the long-term, compared to extending service to a comparable population in a number of less-dense housing units built in more remote locations. It aligns with the City’s “Centers & Corridors” land development vision: to grow in a denser and location efficient manner, rather than

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<sup>11</sup> “Greenhouse Gas Inventory,” City of Albuquerque, 2020, <https://www.cabq.gov/sustainability/documents/city-of-albuquerque-ghg-inventory-3.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> According to the Center for Neighborhood Technology, Albuquerque as a whole has 4.24 Households per residential acre, as calculated with 2010 US Census Data. The city has 1.76 HH/Acre for gross household density.

<sup>13</sup> Based on car ownership rates for the Central Avenue ART Corridor as compared to the rest of the city, this project will result in 56 fewer cars owned by residents of Uptown Connect. The estimates provided are conservative with true impacts expected to be larger. Source: *Transit Ridership & VMT Estimation Methodology*, ABQ RIDE, 2023, <https://www.cabq.gov/transit/our-department/transit-grants>.

accommodating low-density growth at the fringes of the city.<sup>14</sup> Further, the location will create a neighborhood community where none currently exists. The mixed-use, high-density concept will activate and celebrate public transit, while creating a catalyst for live-work-play development in a context that reduces overall emissions and makes it easy for residents and users to live a lower-carbon output lifestyle.

Energy Efficient Investments: Uptown Connect will be designed to industry recognized and valued criteria, including LEED BD+C and LEED for Homes certification, the WELL Building Standard, the Sustainable SITES Initiative, and the Center for Active Design Guidelines. The project intends to weave combined best practice credits from across these programs into a unique, project-specific set of sustainability goals that highlight placemaking, energy efficiency and water conservation, walkability, and celebration of public transit in a car-dominated community.

Energy efficiency measures will be included in all building elements utilizing industry tested checklists like Energy Star for New Homes and the Home Energy Rating System Index; the design will strive to meet a high level of energy efficiency to achieve a HERS index of 55 or better. Higher energy efficiency reduces emissions and protects the environment, but also will allow all tenants to benefit from a lower monthly utility bill.

In addition to energy conservation, water conservation is central to this project and its location in the high desert of New Mexico. The project will utilize water catchment and re-use systems and low-flow plumbing fixtures. The residential building will be designed with capabilities for future connection to a photovoltaic energy source.

Material choice and material usage for construction is a large component of reducing the environmental impact of buildings. With emphasis on durability and waste management, the project will be designed with durable, easily cleaned and disinfected interior finishes throughout, with priority on materials with renewable or recycled content. During construction, careful attention to recycling unused materials will be driven by the contractors.

Additionally, the transit plaza will include two en-route chargers at the transit plaza to support ABQ RIDE's move towards a Zero Emission Bus fleet. The project will also include 12 public chargers for personal vehicles, or 3% of the total parking provided.

### **(c) Quality of Life**

Reducing Vehicle Dependence: All RAISE funds will be spent within a Transportation Disadvantaged Census Tract (Historically Disadvantaged Community), as defined by the US DOT grant project mapping tool. This tract has health, economy, equity, and environmental disadvantages. This mixed-use project will help improve some of these disadvantages for residents of Uptown Connect by attracting individuals who do not have a car for economic reasons or choose not to have one for environmental ones, affording them a high quality of life and high degree of city-wide accessibility without having to get into a personal vehicle.

The City's 2001 Comprehensive Plan identified Uptown as an ideal location for dense, mixed-use infill development, but over the last twenty years this type of development has failed to occur in the private market, which is part of a citywide under-investment in housing in the past two decades. In fact, there is a notable absence of housing across the area, which means it cannot function as a truly urban center even though Uptown has many of the components of one. Right now, the Uptown area is an employment and service destination with a multitude of offices, shops,

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<sup>14</sup> Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 3 - Vision. Accessed at: <https://www.cabq.gov/planning/plans-publications/abc-comprehensive-plan>

and restaurants. However, to be a truly urban environment, it also needs to have a wide variety of places for people to live. Uptown Connect would accomplish just that – adding over 215 new dwelling units and multiple new retail and entertainment uses on the transit plaza. Enhancing the transit plaza will make the UTC more attractive option for many commuters, and may result in higher use by the 18,000 employees who work in Uptown, and more specifically the 13,000 employees within a half-mile radius of the transit center.<sup>15</sup>

As demonstrated in the project’s “Transit Ridership & VMT Estimation Methodology,” Uptown Connect is expected to reduce private automobile dependence. We already know that transit can make a difference on people’s vehicle usage. Areas of Albuquerque served by the ART routes have much higher rates of people commuting by transit, walking, and biking and a lower rate of automobile ownership compared to the rest of the city. The interface between the new residents, transit center, abutting bicycle lane, and nearby trails can help increase affordable transportation choices by making it easier to choose an active transportation mode. Overall, this will reduce transportation and housing cost burdens by integrating mixed-use development, affordable housing, and multimodal transportation infrastructure.

Based on a Transit-Oriented Development commute rate of 7.2% (based on data published in the Public Policy Institute of California’s “Making the Most of Transit”), and the projected 241 workers who will now reside at Uptown Connect, we anticipate creating 17 new transit commuters. The US DOT’s Bureau of Transportation Statistics’ Travel Survey notes that only 15% of daily trips are taken for commuting, so this project will likely generate 227 new daily transit trips.<sup>16</sup> This would be a 42.3% increase in Uptown boardings from the average of 537 weekday boardings at the UTC in spring 2022.<sup>17</sup> We also estimate fewer vehicles per household, with 56 fewer cars owned by residents than they would have if they lived in a different part of town.<sup>17</sup>

Over the course of the two project phases, Uptown Connect proposes to build 402 underground parking spaces. The parking will support the 409 dwelling units, 22,000 sq. ft. of commercial space, and park-and-ride passengers. With 48 parking spaces required for the commercial development, the residential units are less than one parking space per dwelling unit. RAISE funds will be used for the commercial parking spaces.

**Mixed Use Development:** The project, through its innovative co-location of housing and transit, will reduce transportation and housing cost burdens for residents while creating a welcoming space for people to live, work, and play. According to the Center for Neighborhood Technology, the average Albuquerque resident spends about 49% of income on housing and transportation costs, or an average of \$26,495 per year.<sup>18</sup> By offering affordable housing options while giving people a viable option to reduce their transportation costs to near zero (presuming the City’s Zero Fares program continues), Uptown Connect promises to increase the quality of life and disposable income for residents.

Due to the location efficient-design, residents and transit users will have convenient access to daily destinations like jobs, health care, grocery stores, worship, and retail destinations. Public health might be improved by developing new pedestrian infrastructure that will simultaneously promote walking and transit use. The close proximity to a bicycle lane on Indian School Road and

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<sup>15</sup> “On the Map, 2019 Analysis,” and “On the Map” calculation for ½ mile buffer from the UTC.

<sup>16</sup>  $34 \text{ Daily Commuting Trips} / \text{Total Daily Trips} (15\%) = 227 \text{ Transit Trips}$

<sup>17</sup> “Transit Ridership & VMT Estimation Methodology,” ABQ RIDE, 2023, <https://www.cabq.gov/transit/our-department/transit-grants>.

<sup>18</sup> Housing estimated at 26% and transportation at 23%, with the cost based on a regional typical household income of \$54,072. “Housing + Transportation Index,” Center for Neighborhood Technology, <https://htaindex.cnt.org/map/>

nearby multi-use trails makes it a convenient location to access by bicycles and other mobility devices. Even more recreation opportunities, parks, open space, hospitals, university campuses, etc. are accessible by a 30-minute transit ride.

Without any supporting land uses, the current UTC merely serves as a transfer point between routes. With Uptown Connect, that core function will be maintained but be complemented by a range of other uses that will activate the place. It also will provide amenities and services that are currently lacking at the transit center, including food service, restrooms, and protection from the weather.

When completed, these projects will offer 409 new housing units. At an average household size of 1.6 people, the projects will connect an estimated 344 residents in the Joint Development (Phase I and II) and 310 additional residents in the private development (Phase III) to high-frequency ART service and citywide local bus service. These residents will have access to 136,200 jobs and 162,500 residences within 45-minutes of walking and transit travel time (See the following section for additional information on mobility and community connectivity).

#### **(d) Improves Mobility and Community Connectivity**

Uptown Connect will increase mobility and connectivity for development residents, relative to what their access would be in other parts of the city. As an affordable housing development aligning with a transit system that is currently free to riders, it will increase affordable transportation choices for underserved, overburdened, or disadvantaged individuals. The transit center will connect transit users to jobs and services both nearby and far away. Mobility will be improved for walkers, bikers, and transit users.

Access by Walking & Biking: The Mid-Region Council of Government's Transportation Accessibility Model (TRAM) was used to find the areas accessible by walking from the UTC, as depicted in Figure 2 below. Within a 10-minute walk, residents or transit plaza users could walk to three separate malls, at least two banks, many health care providers, dozens of restaurants, and two grocery stores. These amenities represent thousands of jobs, as well as the goods and services that people need to maintain a high quality of life. Extending the walking range slightly, there are an estimated 20,200 jobs within a 30-minute walk of Uptown Connect, as depicted in Figure 3 below. Uptown Connect has abutting access to a bicycle lane, which in turn connects to over 500 miles of dedicated bicycle infrastructure across Albuquerque.

The project will implement Complete Streets design principles to encourage reductions in car dependence while fostering safety through improving the pedestrian environment with landscaping and pedestrian walkways, rebuild intersections and the street edge with on-street parking and bulb-outs that will shorten crossing distances, and improve pedestrian within the site and to nearby bicycle and pedestrian facilities to access other destinations.

Access by Transit: When taking transit from the Uptown Connect transit plaza, users can reach nearly anywhere in the city in an hour or less. They can travel to the Sandia Mountains to the east, past the Rio Grande River to the west (an automobile bottleneck), to Kirtland Air Force Base in the south, and nearly to Sandia Pueblo in the north. The City's major education and job centers are located within a 20- to 45-minute transit travel time, including Downtown, University of New Mexico, and two major hospitals. In about 18 minutes of bus travel time, without needing to transfer, users can reach the Downtown Transportation Center, which is the City's main multi-modal transfer center and includes access to the Rail Runner (commuter rail that goes to Santa Fe), Amtrak, Greyhound, and regional Rio Metro buses.

Figure 2: Walking Accessibility from Uptown Connect Project (MRCOG Analysis, 2023)

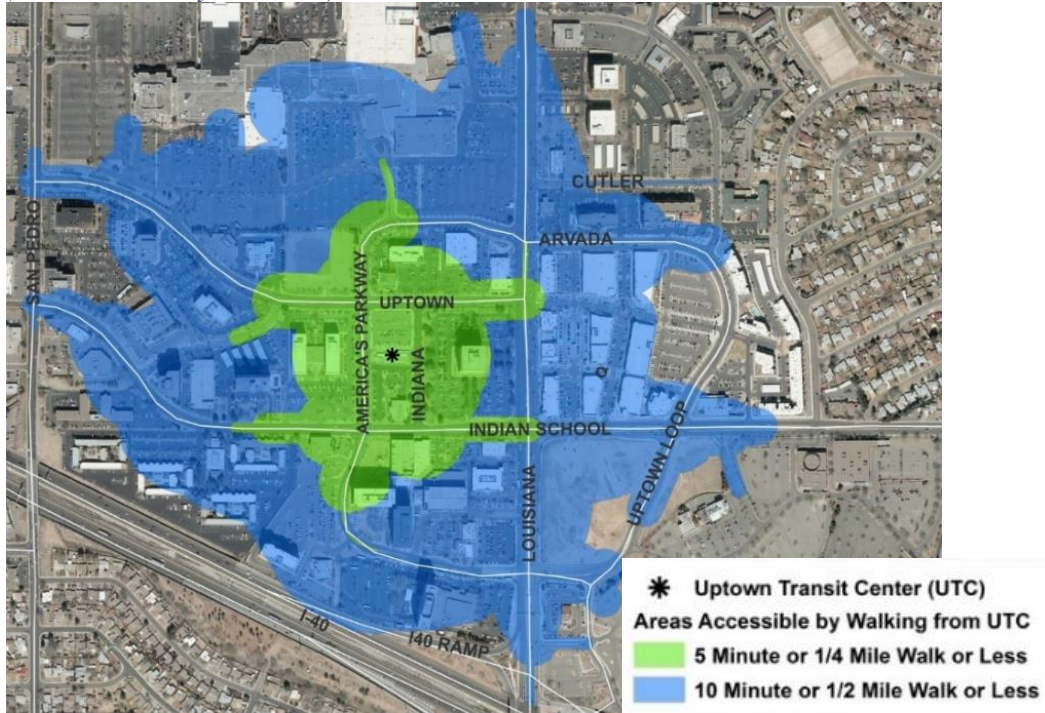
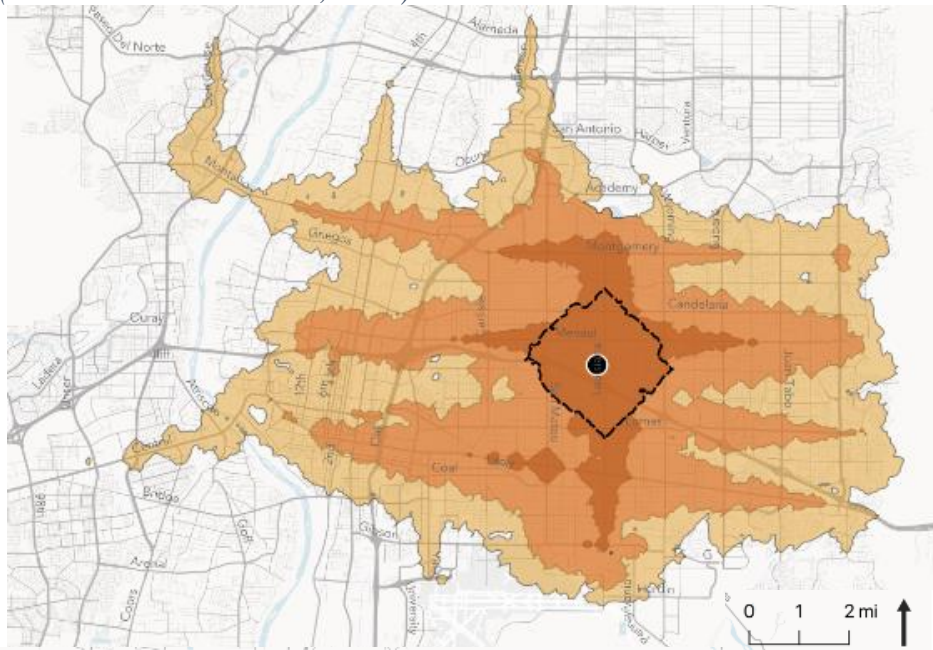


Figure 3: Transit Accessibility from Uptown Connect Project (Jarrett Walker & Assoc., 2022)



- 1.5 miles walk
- 30 minutes of travel
- 45 minutes of travel
- 60 minutes of travel

Residents and Jobs reachable by					
	Walk		Transit		
	30 min	45 min	30 min	45 min	60 min
Residents	14,700	35,600	162,500	284,000	
Jobs	20,200	33,500	136,200	221,000	

Conversely, approximately 284,000 residents from around the city can access Uptown Connect within 60 minutes of transit travel time. This project will add a unique destination at the heart of the Uptown Urban Center that is more likely to draw visitors via transit than the current UTC.

By combining an improved transit plaza with housing and retail, Uptown Connect will build a community and knit together an area that has long been neglected, in spite of its close proximity to goods and services. Current safety concerns (especially for more vulnerable riders like women and the elderly) might deter users, while an amenity rich, 24-hour mixed-use transit plaza would create feelings of safety and encourage transit use.

ADA Accessibility: The construction of the transit plaza will offer accessibility to users with physical disabilities or mobility issues. Currently, the UTC is not entirely ADA accessible. The cross-slope of the platform was built in excess of current ADA tolerances. This makes it a challenging stop for mobility-limited travelers. The reconstructed transit plaza will provide an opportunity to correct this error and it will meet or exceed ADA minimum standards for sidewalk width, cross slope, and accessible route design. The entire site, including residential and commercial spaces, will be designed to meet or exceed ADA design thresholds to allow safe and comfortable movement across the entire project site.

#### **(e) Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity**

Inclusive Development: During the construction phase of the project, the Project Development Team will reach out to minority-owned businesses to use as subcontractors during construction. The Project Development Team has committed to meeting the 4.5% Disadvantaged Business Enterprise goal the City has set for projects utilizing federal spending.

The project will also increase equitable opportunities for businesses. It includes several micro-retail commercial spaces, which will enable small and local businesses locate in the development more easily than if there were only larger tenant spaces. New Mexico small business owners have a fairly high minority concentration. Further, Palindrome and the Project Development Team has a strong history of developing projects in Albuquerque that prioritize local, minority, and woman-owned businesses in their micro-retail spaces. The project combines affordable and market-rate housing to provide options for people with a range of income levels to live at the site, as well as 19 additional units that may be used for market rate furnished rentals to appeal to visitors to Albuquerque who are either tourists or staying for a period of months for work.



Long-Term Growth and Job Creation: Uptown Connect will improve the productivity of the land, and it will improve economic strength and opportunity in Albuquerque as a whole. This 2.9-acre parcel currently has the lowest number of jobs and activity in the Uptown Urban Center of all occupied lots. This exceptionally low-density development is located in the geographic center of the City's second-most-active employment and activity center. The proposed Joint Development – Uptown Connect – will transform this lot into economically productive land. This partnership will leverage private investments, in conjunction with this federal RAISE grant, to improve land-use productivity in a location with a high land value but a low-level of development.

The project promises both to connect people with jobs and to create new ones. The National



Association of Home Builders has an Economic Impact Assessment Form that estimates the economic impact of new multifamily construction. The multi-family portion of this project will generate 344 jobs during the construction period. This is an undercount of construction period jobs because the model does not account for the amount of commercial space construction.

The Commercial Real Estate Development Association's Economic Impacts of Commercial Real Estate Report indicates that for every 475 square feet of retail or entertainment space developed, there is approximately one job generated, with an average earning of \$37,969 per job for retail positions. This project will add approximately 22,000 square feet of retail/entertainment/banking uses, and the retail portion of the project will generate an estimated 46 new permanent jobs.

Increased Investments: Over the full course of the project, it is estimated that the development will spur more than \$122 million in additional investments to complete the project. Additionally, between the residential and commercial portions of the development, there will be at least an \$2,469,136 ongoing annual economic benefit from this project, based on pre-2022-inflation economic values for revenues plus taxes.<sup>19</sup> Creating a more productive mix of land uses at the UTC will promote long-term economic growth, including broad economic and fiscal benefits.

#### **(f) State of Good Repair**

Uptown Connect will increase safety, mitigate system vulnerabilities, and develop new infrastructure that will modernize an important node in the transit system while also building new housing and commercial outlets.

Mitigate Vulnerabilities: The project will seek to mitigate ridership vulnerabilities in our transit system. The main vulnerability to the transit system that the existing transit center poses is its reputation as an uncomfortable or unsafe transfer location. The number of 311 calls for service indicate some people feel uncomfortable there. Adding more uses, destinations, and people can help mitigate the character and poor reputation of the UTC. Rebuilding it as a transit plaza with complementary uses also serves to reduce another vulnerability: the likelihood of vandalism and crime.

Today, the transit center has a relatively low number of boardings and alightings and a low use of the park-and-ride lot. Adding around 344 new residents to the site through the affordable housing project (which will develop concurrently with the transit plaza) will build in a new source of ridership and demand for transit service. The new commercial and services will also attract citywide residents to this location. Bringing riders to transit builds in demand for our transit system and makes our service more productive.

The secondary vulnerability the existing UTC poses is related to ADA standards and comfort of traversing the site. An accessibility suit could be brought against the City; this transit center reconstruction project is the appropriate remedy to address the ADA deficiency.



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<sup>19</sup> This figure excludes 19 dwelling units on the transit plaza, which may be used for market-rate rentals, short-term rentals, or furnished mid-term rentals. Because the final use has not been determined, their revenue has been excluded.

Restore and Modernize: This project will restore and modernize a transit center at the end of its useful life. Originally opened in 2004, its design does not take full advantage of a pair of large parcels. Further, the existing platform is not ADA compliant, a serious issue that must be rectified through reconstruction.

Reduce Construction and Maintenance Burdens: Uptown Connect will utilize existing partners with a strong track record of similar successful projects to ensure that the project is on-time and on-budget. A design-build approach will reduce construction costs. Further, the project team anticipates that the planned design will reduce maintenance costs in the long-run by decreasing opportunities for vandalism. By adding hundreds of tenants who will live on-site and provide passive oversight, as well as commercial property that will operate longer hours than the UTC currently does, there will be much more activity that reduces the opportunities for loitering and vandalism. Finally, the project will reduce maintenance burdens through efficient land use and well-integrated design of urban amenities in conjunction with the new transit plaza.

The project proposes an innovative maintenance agreement with the development partner for all new infrastructure. The project capitalizes on the new mixed-use, multi-story development which itself will require security and maintenance to provide security and maintenance for the transit asset. The new transit plaza and related pedestrian amenities will be maintained in a state of good repair for the life of the project. The private property developer has committed to hiring private security and maintenance personnel to serve the transit plaza as part of the Fair Return on public investment in this project, which agreement will be formalized in the Joint Use Development Agreement.

Improve Safety Conditions: The UTC, as redesigned and rebuilt through Uptown Connect, will be safer and more accessible for a wide range of transit users. It will be wheelchair accessible, with a wide platform where users can wait well-back from the edge of the platform. The design is intended to invite people to linger, purchase a coffee or a snack, and enjoy the experience of waiting for the bus. Additionally, the design will deter crimes. The UTC as it currently operates has been plagued by vandalism because of limited ability to maintain around-the-clock oversight. A reimagined transit plaza will increase traffic to the area and build interest and activity into a part of town that is currently underutilized in spite of its central location.

New Infrastructure: Uptown Connect is conceived as an ambitious, multi-phased, development that will be all new infrastructure. Critically, the project includes housing, something that is in short supply in the Uptown area, in spite of the proximity to goods, services, and thousands of jobs. This new development will draw hundreds of people to the Uptown Connect area each day, radically changing the nature and culture of the UTC into the front door for Albuquerque's Bus Rapid Transit system, as well as for many businesses and residences.

### **(g) Partnership and Collaboration**

Community Engagement: Uptown Connect will support and engage diverse people and communities and has been in planning for years. Since 2022, Project Team members have presented the project and solicited feedback from a range of stakeholder groups including Albuquerque Public Schools, the Greater Albuquerque Active Transportation Committee, the Greater Albuquerque Recreational Trails Committee, the Climate Action Plan Stakeholder Committee, and the City of Albuquerque Transit Advisory Board. The team has also engaged several professional organizations including the Uptown Progress Team, the Albuquerque Apartment Association, and the local chapters of the Commercial Real Estate Development

Association and Urban Land Institute. Each of these groups expressed excitement and support of the project (See the attached Letters of Support). In these discussions, the only critical feedback was provided by BikeABQ, which requested bike racks and improved circulation and access for cyclists at the project site. This input will be incorporated as a multi-modal feature.

As the project moves forward in the design stage, ABQ RIDE will engage members of the community and stakeholder groups using methods identified in the US DOT’s “Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making Guide.”<sup>20</sup> For instance, we will use Virtual Public Involvement (VPI) techniques to inform design elements and project priorities. We will present the project in a visual and interactive format to make participation more transparent, engaging, and convenient for members of the public. ABQ RIDE will use many of the techniques for meaningful involvement such as allowing sufficient time and budget for outreach, targeting the relevant audience of transit riders, providing language and ADA accommodations, and offering engagement opportunities at the Uptown transit center, where many potential stakeholders pass through daily. The purpose of the next round of engagement will focus on vetting the project design and identifying community needs the new transit plaza can meet. These meetings will take place in May-June 2023. ABQ RIDE will be responsible for documenting all comments received and the project responses. All efforts will be made to reflect public input into the final design, as budget and space allows; where it is not feasible ABQ RIDE will explain and document the reason.

Partner Coordination: Uptown Connect will be a phased project guided by a Joint Development, based on a reconstructed transit plaza, commercial space and a local credit union, which in its second phase will include an income-restricted affordable housing complex. In Phase III, the Project Development Team will initiate a separate private development with another 194 market-rate apartments and additional commercial space. This ambitious project has drawn on a number of partners across the metro area, as follows:

<b>Partner Type</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Economic Development	City of Albuquerque Economic Development Department, Uptown Progress Team (association of local businesses), Chamber of Commerce, Hispano Chamber, Urban Land Institute. Will support planning, community outreach, and educating local businesses and neighborhoods on the scope and impact of the project.
Commercial/ Residential Development	PacifiCap Construction, Jaynes Corporation, Palindrome Communities, and Family Housing Development Corp. This team has a successful track record in Albuquerque and Portland, Oregon. Since inception, Palindrome has developed over \$1 billion in real estate and 19 affordable housing projects in Albuquerque. If funded for a RAISE award, the partnership will spur an additional \$122 million in private equity and debt. The project aligns with Albuquerque Housing Forward, a city goal to create 5,000 new dwelling units in the next three years; Uptown Connect will help the City achieve 8% of the goal. <sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> “Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making Guide,” USDOT, 2022, <https://www.transportation.gov/priorities/equity/promising-practices-meaningful-public-involvement-transportation-decision-making>

<sup>21</sup> Albuquerque Housing Forward is an ambitious plan to close the housing gap and contribute to making housing affordable for all income levels. The City’s funding priorities are focused on conversions of existing hotels and

Electric/ Broadband Deployment / Water Utilities	Electrical: Public Service Company of New Mexico service expansion; Fiber-Optics: Relocation and modernization of a fiber node on the site; Water: Reconstruction of 1,500 feet of fire line loop to meet flow requirements.
Minority Business/ Disadvantaged Business Enterprises; Minority- / Woman- / Veteran-Owned Businesses	New Mexico Minority Business Development Center, offers resources to minority-owned businesses that include capacity building, increasing access to contracts, and other training. ABQ RIDE will rely on the City’s Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program contacts at all stages in the development.

Workforce Development: This project will be developed through a formal development agreement to rebuild and modernize the existing UTC with added economic development gains through the mixed-use development on the same site. A Design-Finance-Build-Maintain (DFBM) model is anticipated. ABQ RIDE and the Development Team have begun negotiations on the Joint Development Agreement and anticipate completing that task by July 2023.

The Project Development Team has committed to hiring Disadvantaged Business Enterprises for the project to contribute to ABQ RIDE’s goal of 4.5% of federal contracts going to minority-, women- and veteran-owned businesses. Additionally, the City of Albuquerque has a local-hire preference for all of its contracts. To help these businesses develop the well-trained workforce needed to compete for contracts, ABQ RIDE will refer partners to the City’s Job Training Albuquerque program. Job Training Albuquerque is a partnership between the City and Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) to create a workforce development program that provides opportunities for the local workforce to gain necessary skills in order to fill gaps and meet the workforce needs of existing and potential employers. It can provide job training resources and funding for free to eligible local employers.

Beyond Job Training Albuquerque, the City of Albuquerque is close partners with CNM on many workforce development efforts. CNM is the state’s largest community college and has multiple campuses around the Albuquerque metro



area, including a large workforce training facility. It has hundreds of strong employer and industry partners and a long history of being able to quickly design and implement customized training programs as needed to ensure a safe, adequately trained workforce. CNM also utilizes a wrap-around supports model, CNM Connect, which has been nationally recognized. Based on the Center for Working Families model, CNM Connect bundles three core service elements: 1) employment and career advancement; 2) income and work supports; and 3) financial services and asset-building supports to help low-income students excel in school and careers. As needed, Uptown Connect contractors will be able to draw on CNM resources to train workers. ABQ RIDE also partners with the New Mexico Minority Business Development Agency for workforce connections and contracting through our Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program.

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offices to dwellings in order to have a quick impact and create spaces for our homeless reduction program attendees to “graduate” out of emergency shelters into permanent housing. Our estimates include both this projects’ 215 affordable housing units and the induced investment in creating 194 more dwellings in the developer’s second project on the same block, which is not included in the Joint Development or grant application.

## **(h) Innovation**

Uptown Connect is aligned with all three innovation strategies identified in the RAISE grant, as illustrated below.

1. Innovative Technologies: The UTC currently has limited technologies to increase system efficiency and reduce emissions. Uptown Connect will include two bus electric enroute charging stations and 3% of the parking spaces provided for passenger vehicles will have electric charging stations. ABQ RIDE does not yet have any enroute charging stations. This infrastructure will support the City's commitment to transition to a Zero Emissions Fleet.

2. Innovative Project Delivery: At its heart, Uptown Connect functions similarly to a public-private partnership. It is a Joint Development project that started with public land and community goals for improving the use of the land for transportation purposes. For Uptown Connect, the community has identified that the transit center requires upgrades for efficiency and accessibility. However, another strong need in the Uptown area is more housing - particularly affordable housing. Uptown Connect is innovative in its ability to address multiple issues simultaneously. In January 2021, ABQ RIDE signed a partnership agreement with the Development Team of developers, designers, and contractors to design, build, and operate a Joint Development.<sup>22</sup> The Joint Development Agreement will detail the private investments, the public investments, the public benefits to be gained through the project, and roles and responsibilities of each party. This agreement will be drafted to ensure efficient use of financial resources and time. The construction stage of the project will be carried out using a design-build arrangement. This will also help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the development process.

Concurrently with drafting the Development Agreement, ABQ RIDE will initiate the environmental permitting and review process, which will accelerate project delivery and allow the construction phase to begin shortly after a RAISE Notice of Award. ABQ RIDE is coordinating with local reviewers, utility service providers, and permitting agencies to ensure the project is on track to begin construction at the earliest possible date.

3. Innovative Financing: The financing structure for Uptown Connect utilizes all assets at ABQ RIDE's disposal, given State of New Mexico limitations on how public entities can finance projects. The private partners in the Development Team are what allow for a level of financing innovation. Private financing and equity constitute an estimated 78% of the total project cost for Phases I, II, and III. The Development Team will finance residential, commercial, and retail portion of Phases I and II with Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Equity, private debt, and owner equity. If selected for this RAISE grant, the project is expected to immediately spur a private investment of \$65.3 million in the Joint Development project in Phases I and II and another \$57.1 million in private funding for Phase III, which is a second, market-rate, housing tower. (See the Project Budget document for more detailed information.)

## **Conclusion**

ABQ RIDE is proud to submit our Uptown Connect project for RAISE grant consideration. It will do much to heal the separation between transit and ridership that exists in Uptown today.

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<sup>22</sup> In 2023, ABQ RIDE and the Development Team will submit the Joint Development Agreement to the FTA for review and approval. See the Commercial/Residential Development Partners in the table above.

## Project Readiness

### (a) Environmental Risk

i. **Detailed Project Schedule:** The project will be completed in phases to ensure continuing transit operations throughout construction. The pre-award activities include ABQ RIDE developing a Joint Development Agreement with the project developer to complete design, construction, and ongoing maintenance and security plans for the project. ABQ RIDE will formally submit this Joint Development Agreement to the FTA for approval. The project will also obtain State and Federal permitting approvals, including programming on the Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MRMPO) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and NEPA review/anticipated FONSI approval.

After notice of grant award, ABQ RIDE and the Project Development Team will complete full design documents, and obtain local approval of plans and permitting, specifications, and estimates. The selected development team is also the general contractor responsible for construction, so there will be no secondary proposal and procurement stage. Construction of improvements in the public right-of-way will be completed early, to allow for interim transit operations, including bus shelters, bus layover spaces, and a new driveway for the credit union along Indiana Street, to the east of the parcel.

This project is estimated to take approximately 4 years to complete. The project schedule builds in a 6-month buffer to account for uncertainties in global procurement and supply chain delays; the project may wrap sooner than scheduled if no supply chain issues are encountered.

*Table 1: Project Schedule*

Period	Activity	Description	Entity <sup>1</sup>
'23 Q2	Planning	Phase 1 & NEPA (EA Level of Effort)	ABQ RIDE
'23 Q2	Planning	Baseline Conditions Analysis & Market Study	ABQ RIDE
'23 Q3	Planning	Environmental Assessment Public Input Period*	ABQ RIDE
'23 Q3	Planning	MRCOG/MRMPO TIP Programming	ABQ RIDE / MRCOG
'23 Q2	Partnership	Draft Joint Development Agreement	ABQ RIDE/Developer
'23 Q2	Partnership	Public Input*	ABQ RIDE
'23 Q3	Partnership	Complete Joint Development Application (JDA)	ABQ RIDE/Developer
'23 Q3	Partnership	Utility Availability Statement – Gas/Water/Power	ABQ RIDE
'23 Q3	Partnership	Buffering Agreement / Century Link (Telecom)	Century Link/DMD
'23 Q4	Acquisition	ROW Appraisal, Survey & Right of Entry	Real Property/Owner
'24 Q1	Acquisition	Property Acquisition Offer & Negotiations	Real Property/Owner
'24 Q2	Acquisition	Closing with Property Owner	Real Property/Owner
'23 Q4	Design	Utility Design - Fire Loop/Fiber Vault/Bus Docks	ABQ RIDE/DMD
'23 Q4	Design	Initiate Design Development and Construction Document Production	ABQ RIDE/Developer
'24 Q1	Financing	Submit: LIHTC Application	Developer
'24 Q1	Financing	Submit: Tax-Exempt Bond Application	Developer

<sup>1</sup> Acronyms are as follows: **ABCWUA**: Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority; **DMD**: Department of Municipal Development; **LIHTC**: Low-Income Housing Tax Credit; **MRCOG**: Mid-Region Council of Governments

'24 Q3	Financing	Construction & Permanent Loan Commitment	Developer
'24 Q4	Financing	Grant Funds Obligated and Approved by Council	ABQ RIDE
'23 Q3	Reviews	Submit: Environmental Assessment to FTA	ABQ RIDE
'23 Q3	Reviews	Submit: Joint Development Agreement to FTA	ABQ RIDE
'23 Q3	Reviews	Submit: EA for FONSI Determination	ABQ RIDE
'23 Q3	Reviews	FTA - Joint Development Agreement Review	FTA
'23 Q3	Reviews	Award Recommendation	USDOT
'23 Q4	Reviews	Submit: Archaeology/Drainage Plan	ABQ RIDE/Planning
'23 Q4	Reviews	JDA Approval / FONSI Issued	FTA
'23 Q4	Reviews	Notice of Grant Award	USDOT
'24 Q1	Reviews	Submit: 30% Design Review - DRC	ABQ RIDE/Developer
'24 Q1	Reviews	Planning Application Public Notice & Meetings*	ABQ RIDE/Planning
'24 Q1	Reviews	Submit: Subdivision, Conditional Use, Site Plan	ABQ RIDE/Planning
'24 Q2	Reviews	Submit: 60% Design Review	Century Link/DMD
'24 Q3	Reviews	Submit: 90% Design Review & Infrastructure List	ABQ RIDE/ Planning/DMD
'24 Q3	Reviews	RAISE Grant Obligation	USDOT
'24 Q3	Reviews	Construction Doc Approval	ABQ RIDE/Planning
'24 Q3	Reviews	Plans, Specs & Estimates / Building Permit	ABQ RIDE/Planning
'24 Q1	Construction	Utility Construction	ABCWUA/DMD
'24 Q2	Construction	Public Notice of Street Construction*	ABQ RIDE/Planning
'24 Q2	Construction	Construct Sidewalk, Shelters & Bank Driveways	DMD
'24 Q3	Construction	Finish Pre-Development Construction	ABQ RIDE/DMD
'24 Q3	Construction	Site Clearing & Turn Over Site to Developer	ABQ RIDE/DMD
'24 Q3	Construction	Construction Commences August 2024	Developer/DMD
'27 Q1	Construction	Construction Concludes February 2027	Developer/DMD
* Public Engagement Periods/Opportunity			

ABQ RIDE confirms that all necessary activities will be complete to allow RAISE grant funds to be obligated sufficiently in advance of the administrative deadline (September 30, 2027). Any unexpected delays will not put the funds at risk of expiring before they are obligated.

All real property and right-of-way acquisition will be completed in a timely manner in accordance with 49 CFR part 24, 23 CFR part 710, and other applicable legal requirements. The project can begin project design and construction upon obligation of grant funds. Grant funds will be spent expeditiously, with all funds expended by September 30, 2032 in a manner in accordance with 49 CFR part 24, 23 CFR part 710, and other applicable legal requirements.

## ii. Required Approvals

### 1. Environmental Permits and Reviews:

A. **NEPA Status:** ABQ RIDE anticipates an Environmental Assessment level of review and a likely Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), based on site investigation work performed for the original land purchase and construction of the Uptown Transit Center platform in

2013-2014. To allow for expansion of the transit platforms into a transit plaza, there will be an additional ½ acre of land purchased from Nusenda Credit Union (which owns the adjoining parcel, to be converted to market rate housing in Phase III—outside the scope of this request). ABQ RIDE has contracted with a consultant and they have initiated the work to meet a June 2023 public involvement process and July 2023 submittal date for FTA review. ABQ RIDE anticipates a three-month FTA review period and will work with DOT Region 6 to an on-time approval. ABQ RIDE will follow NEPA guidelines as directed by the FTA.

- B. **Reviews, Approvals, and Permits:** No additional environmental approvals are anticipated.
- C. **Environmental Studies:** There are no known environmental considerations that would impact or delay this project. As mentioned above, ABQ RIDE is aware of the need for an environmental-assessment-level environmental review and has initiated that process.
- D. **DOT Discussions:** ABQ RIDE has discussed this project on multiple occasions with various FTA Regional and Technical staff over the past two years. The feedback has been positive and encouraging. ABQ RIDE has also contracted with a consultant to shape the Joint Development Agreement and negotiate for a fair market value return on the project.
- E. **ROW Schedule and Compensation Plan:** ABQ RIDE needs to acquire the additional land from the abutting property to ensure space for the expanded transit plaza. The developer has negotiated a Letter of Intent with the owner, who is also a project partner to the extent that they will be a tenant in the Joint Development project. ABQ RIDE has initiated an appraisal and review appraisal for the property, consistent with FTA practices. ABQ RIDE's intent is to purchase the property once the fair market value has been determined.

The same Letter of Intent allows the developer to ultimately acquire the remainder of the property south of the transit plaza. The ½ acre acquisition will occur in Phase I and the remaining one acre will be acquired to develop Phase III. This is a known expense that is incorporated into the overall project budget. ABQ RIDE has ordered an appraisal for the ½-acre portion, which will determine the cost for the portion needed for the Joint Development.

- F. **Public Engagement:** ABQ RIDE has performed preliminary outreach and engagement of relevant stakeholders. As a Joint Development project, on a site that is an existing Transit Center, the proposed project poses fewer impacts than most typical transportation projects. This project will have limited impacts to the surrounding community after acquisition of the right-of-way and re-platting of an existing city block.

Prior to reconstruction of utilities and relocation of the transit center functions to Indiana St. during the construction period, there will be notification of all property owners within 100 feet and all neighborhood associations within one mile. The same notice and involvement will occur during the Subdivision, Conditional Use request, and Site Plan applications.

During the project development process, ABQ RIDE has identified and will continue to engage several stakeholder groups: 1) Transit Riders, via discussion at the City of Albuquerque's Transit Advisory Board; 2) Nearby property owners and tenants, via discussion with the Uptown Progress Team, office of the City Councilor, and the Office of Neighborhood Coordination; 3) Active transportation stakeholders, via discussion at the Greater Albuquerque Active Transportation Committee and the Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MRMPO) Active Transportation Committee; and 4) Climate Action stakeholders via discussion at the Climate Action Plan committee. We will also attempt to engage employees at surrounding commercial and office properties.

Generally, feedback for the project has been supportive and community members and area businesses believe the project will improve conditions for disadvantaged communities,



current transit users, and other businesses and institutions in the Uptown area. Some of the input already gathered on the project is that the Uptown Transit Center is perceived to be a nuisance that generates vandalism and indecent behavior due to limited security, especially overnight. Stakeholders have generally welcomed the prospect of a mixed-use development that adds multi-family residences and retail because of the prospect of increased activity, security, and “eyes on the street.” There is also support for the affordable housing project component—something that is needed in the area— with no concerns raised so far.

Another round of public involvement will begin prior to the permitting process, after notice of award. A public meeting will be scheduled, with all surrounding neighborhood associations, transit users and advocates, and other impacted communities to be invited. This outreach will be sure to identify and engage disadvantaged and environmental justice communities to identify impacts and benefits of the project during construction and after.

2. State and Local Approvals: No state permits are required for this project. ABQ RIDE will need to pull local permits for construction. Construction permits for the project will be submitted through the City of Albuquerque’s typical construction permitting process, which includes public notice and engagement. Permits will be acquired concurrently once design is complete, and will include: 1) Land use entitlements (Subdivision – DRB; Conditional Use Approval – ZHE, City of Albuquerque); 2) General building permit (Site Plan – Administrative, City of Albuquerque); 3) Water Utility Authority tap permits (ABCWUA); 4) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit; and 5) Electricity hookup permit (PNM).

3. Federal Transportation Requirements Affecting State and Local Planning: ABQ RIDE submitted this project for the FFY 2024-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development process on December 31st, 2022. TIP proposals will be evaluated and scored in April 2023. The MRMPO will review final scores and project ranks in July 2023. Preliminary discussions with MRMPO have indicated this project is likely to rank high and it has provided a letter of support for the project.

ABQ RIDE intends to use federal formula funds that are drawn from rehabilitation and maintenance of existing facilities to continue preliminary design and permitting for the project.

This project is not required to be included in State, metropolitan, or local planning documents. However, it is consistent with and implements many adopted goals and policies, and will further the regional vision for safe streets, strong transit, and increased housing.

iii. Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies: There are few anticipated concerns around the construction. The project construction area is flat and in a developed urban center. There are no designated State and National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, or National Game Preserves located on or in the vicinity of the project site. There are no Wilderness Areas or wild or scenic rivers located on or in the vicinity of the project site. The site is not in a floodplain. There are no historic buildings or infrastructure on or in the vicinity of the site. The site had previously been archeologically cleared; there is no history of adverse land use or underground tanks. The soil is amenable to construction; multi-story office buildings surround the site.

The site will go through a Phase 1 environmental assessment prior to purchase of the property. No adverse environmental circumstances are expected to arise in the area. We do know that significant expansion will have to occur in water service. There may also have to be expansion of electrical services. Any issues or mitigation identified in the review process will be

addressed prior to full project design.

Due to recent global procurement and supply chain delays, project delay is a real and significant risk. To address this concern, the project schedule has built in an additional 6 months of free-floating time during the construction period.

**(b) Technical Capacity**

Experience Working with Federal Agencies: As the transit operator for the City of Albuquerque, ABQ RIDE has extensive experience working with Federal Agencies. ABQ RIDE receives annual formula funds and regularly complies with all requirements. ABQ Ride has been a recipient of FTA funding since at least 1975 and is able to implement FTA-funded projects in accordance with the grant application. ABQ Ride is eligible and authorized under state and local law to request, receive, and dispense FTA funds to execute and administer FTA funded projects. The staff, from the Grant Manager to the Director, has been working with FTA for many years and has a solid understanding of project management, fund management, grant reporting, and FTA compliance. In addition to the knowledgeable staff of ABQ RIDE, the City of Albuquerque has several departments such as Department of Municipal Development, Legal Department, and the Department of Finance, which provide support and expertise in various areas. ABQ RIDE will work closely with staff from these departments to manage this project according to the FTA guidelines and within the regulations of the City of Albuquerque.

Civil Rights Compliance: ABQ RIDE is current and in compliance with the Civil Rights Programs, including Title VI reviews of service changes, the Disadvantaged Business Enterprises Program, and all applicable reporting requirements.

Experience with DOT Discretionary Grant Awards: ABQ RIDE has experience receiving and managing dozens of DOT grants, including discretionary and formula funds. For instance, Albuquerque Rapid Transit was supported by a Small Starts Grant (\$75,000,000 in 2018). This project was completed on time and within the budget. ABQ RIDE obtained a Low-No Emission Grants for \$2,786,875 in 2019 to purchase five (5) electric buses; this project has been completed. ABQ RIDE also obtained a Buses and Bus Facilities Grant of \$1,161,100 in 2021, which is underway currently and anticipated to be completed later this year.

Technical Resources/Experience Dedicated to the Project: ABQ RIDE, as the City of Albuquerque's Transit Department, has extensive experience managing ambitious transit projects, including the development and implementation of the bus rapid transit line. Annually, ABQ RIDE manages an average of \$52 million in DOT formula funds. The private development team selected for the project has completed 20 residential developments in Albuquerque in the past 20 years totaling \$212 million; of these 15 are for affordable housing and eight are mixed-use. This successful history demonstrates the developer's capacity and technical competence in the field. The developer has demonstrated available resources and commitment to the project, including in-house design and construction capacity, and have strong relationships with other firms in the area. Inspections, assessments, acquisitions, and right-of-way processes have already begun, with progress continuing prior to Notice of Award. ABQ RIDE will ensure that the project will comply with all applicable federal requirements including but not limited to Buy America provisions, ADA regulations, Civil Rights requirements, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS), and/or the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR).

# UPTOWN CONNECT: THE UPTOWN TRANSIT CENTER JOINT DEVELOPMENT

## BENEFIT-COST ANALYSIS SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTATION



### *FY2023 RAISE DISCRETIONARY GRANT PROGRAM*

PREPARED FOR: CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE TRANSIT DEPARTMENT (ABQ RIDE)  
FEBRUARY 2023

# Executive Summary

A benefit-cost analysis (BCA) was conducted for Uptown Connect: the Uptown Transit Center Joint Development for submission to the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) as a requirement of a discretionary grant application for the 2023 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program. The analysis was conducted in accordance with the benefit-cost methodology as outlined by U.S. DOT in the Benefit-Cost Analysis Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs, released in January 2023. The period of analysis corresponds to 33 years and includes 3 years of construction and 30 years of benefits after completion of construction in 2026.

ABQ RIDE is partnering with a private development team to deliver Uptown Connect, which will rebuild an aging transit center as the centerpiece of a new mixed-use joint development project that will also activate increased development potential on an adjoining lot. The new transit center (Phase I) will include six bus bays, protected passenger boarding, better lighting, and safety officer facilities. Phase I also includes other Joint Development Eligible Activities<sup>1</sup> including design, utilities, infrastructure, footings, and commercial structures. The mixed-use portion of the project (Phase II) includes 215 affordable housing units and 19 units of market-rate or short-term rental units. The project is part of a phased effort to increase transit safety and accessibility by activating the transit space by adding retail and addressing local need for more affordable housing.

Uptown Connect simultaneously advances many of the City of Albuquerque’s goals including access, mobility, affordability, quality-of-life, economic development, sustainability, safety, equity, functions similarly to a public-private partnership, and smart city technology. In alignment with the White House’s Justice40 Initiative and local policy, this project will invest in an Historically Disadvantaged Community.

## COSTS

The capital cost for this Project is expected to be \$22.3 million in undiscounted 2021 dollars through 2026.<sup>2</sup> At a seven percent real discount rate, these costs are \$16.6 million. Table ES-1 shows how these costs are allocated across time.

**Table ES-1: Project Costs by Category and Year, in Undiscounted Millions of 2021 Dollars**

	2024	2025	2026	Total
<b>Total</b>	3.9	6.3	12.2	22.3
<b>Total, Discounted 7%</b>	3.2	4.8	8.7	16.6

Source: ABQ RIDE

In addition to the upfront capital cost, ABQ RIDE’s operations and maintenance (O&M) costs are projected to average \$9,500 per year in the long term versus a current average of \$162,000. This reduction would result partly from improved safety and reduced vandalism issues at the current site. Over the entire 30-year analysis period these cost savings accumulate to \$4.6 million in undiscounted 2021 dollars, or \$1.4 million when discounted at seven percent. Note that these O&M cost savings are included as the numerator of the benefit-cost ratio calculation.

<sup>1</sup> As defined by the Federal Transit Administration

<sup>2</sup> Note that these costs differ from those reported in the Project Narrative due to the use of 2021 dollars rather than year-of-expenditure dollars.

## BENEFITS

In 2021 dollars, the Project is expected to generate \$20.3 million in discounted benefits using a seven percent discount rate. The Project creates these benefits by providing direct access to transit from onsite residents and workers, resulting in lower auto dependency and increased transit ridership. The associated VMT reduction results in reduced accidents, vehicle O&M costs, congestion, emissions, pavement damage, and noise. It also creates benefits from improved transit amenities and increased value of repurposed right of way (ROW). This leads to an overall project Net Present Value of \$3.7 million and a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 1.2<sup>3</sup>. The overall project benefit matrix can be seen in Table ES-2.

**Table ES-2: Project Impacts and Benefits Summary, Monetary Values in Millions of 2021 Dollars**

Current Status/Baseline & Problem to be Addressed	Change to Baseline/ Alternatives	Type of Impact	Summary of Results (at 7% discount rate)
Need for replacement of transit center at end of useful life; Need for less auto-dependent, Mixed-Use TOD format	Reduced VMT	Increased Safety	5.1
		Reduced Emissions	0.3
		Reduced Vehicle O&M Costs	4.2
		Reduced Congestion, Noise, and Pavement Damage	1.2
	Ridership	Increased Transit Amenities	4.5
	Station Replacement	Decreased Station O&M	1.4
		Increased ROW Value	2.0
		Residual Value	1.6

The overall Project impacts can be seen in Table ES-3, which shows the magnitude of change and direction of the various impact categories.

**Table ES-3: Quantified Project Impacts for Uptown Connect, Cumulative 2026-2055**

Category	Unit	Quantity	Change
Vehicle-Miles Traveled	VMT	28.7M	▼
Fatalities	#	1	▼
Injury Accidents	#	25	▼
Property Damage Only (PDO)	#	55	▼
CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions	tons	7,400	▼
NO <sub>x</sub> Emissions	tons	0.9	▼
PM <sup>2.5</sup>	tons	0.02	▼
SO <sub>x</sub>	tons	0.08	▼

In addition to the monetized benefits presented in Table ES-2, the Project will create several additional benefits that were not quantified or monetized in this analysis. The Project will contribute to increased on-

<sup>3</sup> Per USDOT guidance, operations and maintenance costs are included in the numerator along with other project benefits when calculating the benefit-cost ratio.

site safety conditions, deliver pedestrian improvements, result in higher levels of active transportation trips via walking and biking and increase the supply of affordable housing in the area.

While these benefits are not easily quantifiable, they do provide real advantages and improvements that will be experienced by individuals and businesses in the region.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

A benefit-cost analysis (BCA) was conducted for the Uptown Transit Center Joint Development (“Uptown Connect” or “the Project”) for submission to the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) as a requirement of a discretionary grant application for the RAISE 2023 program. The following section describes the BCA framework, evaluation metrics, and report contents.

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## 1.1 BCA FRAMEWORK

A BCA is an evaluation framework to assess the economic advantages (benefits) and disadvantages (costs) of an investment alternative. Benefits and costs are broadly defined and are quantified in monetary terms to the extent possible. The overall goal of a BCA is to assess whether the expected benefits of a project justify the costs from a national perspective. A BCA framework attempts to capture the net welfare change created by a project, including cost savings and increases in welfare (benefits), as well as disbenefits where costs can be identified (e.g., project capital costs), and welfare reductions where some groups are expected to be made worse off as a result of the proposed project.

The BCA framework involves defining a Base Case or “No Build” Case, which is compared to the “Build” Case, where the grant request is awarded, and the project is built as proposed. The BCA assesses the incremental difference between the Base Case and the Build Case, which represents the net change in welfare. BCAs are forward-looking exercises which seek to assess the incremental change in welfare over a project lifecycle. The importance of future welfare changes is determined through discounting, which is meant to reflect both the opportunity cost of capital as well as the societal preference for the present.

The analysis was conducted in accordance with the benefit-cost methodology as recommended by the U.S. DOT in the 2023 Benefit-Cost Analysis Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs.<sup>4</sup> This methodology includes the following analytical assumptions:

- Defining existing and future conditions under a No Build base case as well as under the Build Case;
  - Estimating benefits and costs during project construction and operation, including 30 years of operations beyond the Project completion when benefits accrue;
  - Using U.S. DOT recommended monetized values for reduced fatalities, injuries, property damage, travel time savings, and emissions, while relying on best practices for monetization of other benefits;
  - Presenting dollar values in real 2021 dollars. In instances where cost estimates and benefits valuations are expressed in historical or future dollar years, using an appropriate inflation factor to adjust the values;
  - Discounting future benefits and costs with a real discount rate of seven percent consistent with U.S. DOT guidance.
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## 1.2 REPORT CONTENTS

Section 2 of this report contains a description of the Project, information on the general assumptions made in the analysis, and a description of the base case compared to the build case. Section 3 provides a

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation, Benefit-Cost Analysis Guidance for Discretionary Grant Applications, January 2023. <https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2023-01/Benefit%20Cost%20Analysis%20Guidance%202023%20Update.pdf> Accessed February 25, 2023.

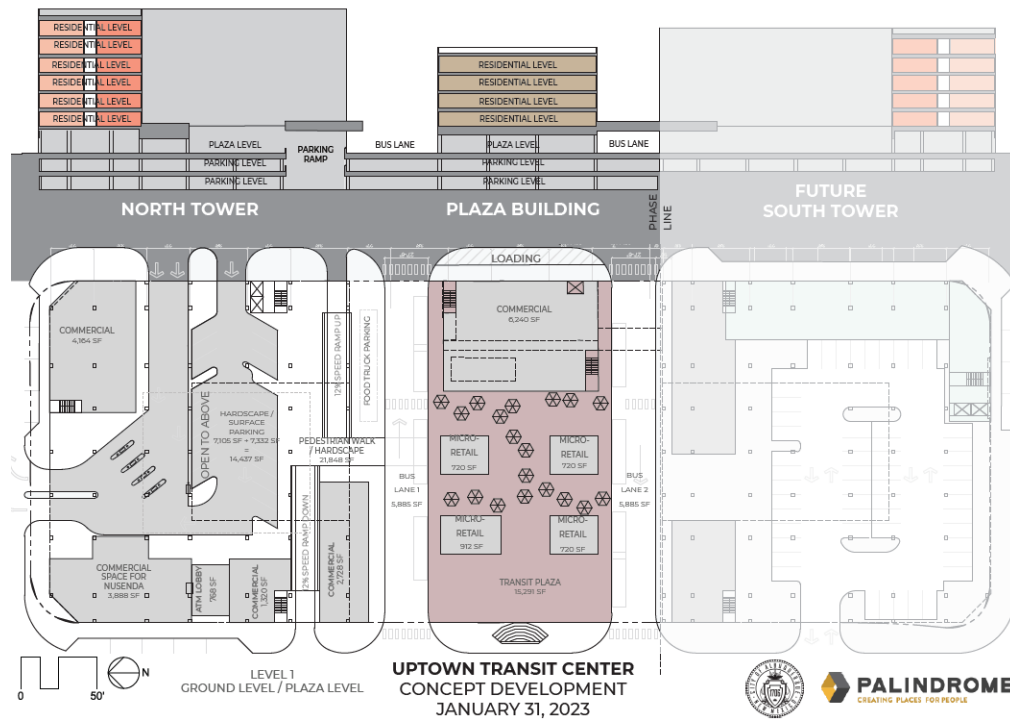
summary of the anticipated project costs. Section 4 reviews the expected economic benefits the Project would generate, including a review of the assumptions and methodology used to calculate the benefits. Finally, Section 5 reports the high-level results of the benefit-cost analysis.

# 2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

## 2.1 DESCRIPTION

The Uptown Connect project will rebuild an aging transit center as the centerpiece of a new mixed-use joint development project that will also activate increased development potential on an adjoining lot. The new transit center (Phase I) will include six bus bays, protected passenger boarding, better lighting, and safety officer facilities. Phase I also includes other Joint Development Eligible Activities including design, utilities, infrastructure, footings, and commercial structures. The mixed-use portion of the project (Phase II) includes 215 affordable housing units and 19 units of market-rate or short-term rental units on the adjacent lot or using air rights above the Transit Plaza. The project is part of a phased effort to increase transit safety and accessibility by activating the transit space by adding retail and addressing local need for more affordable and market-rate housing. Figure 1 details the plans for the transit center and the private vertical development that delivery of the new transit center will catalyze.

**Figure 1: Uptown Connect Conceptual Plan**



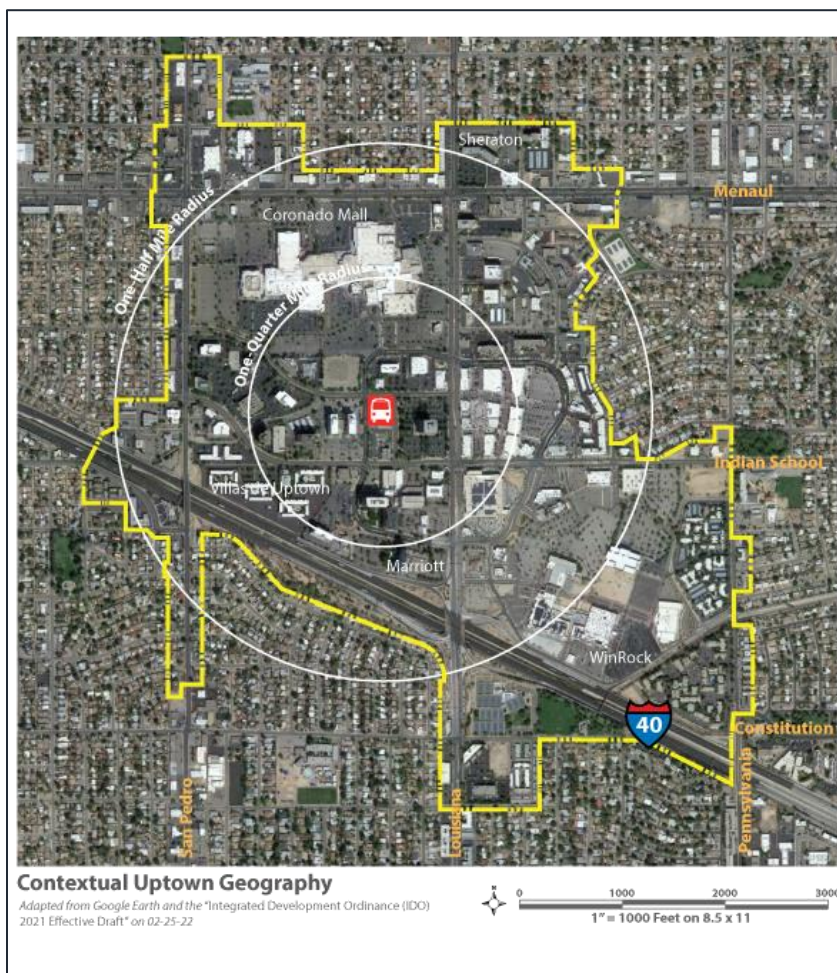
Uptown Connect simultaneously advances many of the City of Albuquerque’s goals including access, mobility, affordability, quality-of-life, economic development, sustainability, safety, equity, functions similarly to a public-private partnership, and smart city technology. In alignment with the White House’s Justice40 Initiative and local policy, this project will invest in an Historically Disadvantaged Community. The full development plan will be delivered in phases, with a total of 409 dwelling units and additional commercial spaces ultimately planned for the site. The proposed RAISE project grant would provide funding for all Phase I improvements including the transit plaza and certain site infrastructure, improvements supporting transit use that will be co-located with the mixed-use portion of the project.

The project sponsor for Phase I is ABQ RIDE, the Albuquerque metropolitan area's primary operator of fixed route bus service and complementary paratransit service. The City of Albuquerque went through a competitive process to select a Joint Development Partner team, referred to as the Project Development Team, to develop, design, construct, and maintain the project site. In 2019, City Council selected a team led by two general contractors (PacifiCap and Jaynes Corp.), along with the development and housing members (Palindrome Communities and Family Housing Development Corp.), architect and designers (Dekker/Perich/Sabatini), property management (PMI), legal counsel (Stoel Rives LLP), and accounting (Novogradac & Company LLP). Since then, ABQ RIDE has been partnering on the project development activities and is currently seeking funding for the transit center.

The project is located in northeast Albuquerque on America's Parkway, between Uptown Boulevard NE and Indian School Road NE, just to the east of a collection of shopping malls, other retail, restaurants, and offices collectively referred to as "Uptown." It is within Census Tract 2.07, in Bernalillo County, New Mexico and within the Census Designated Urbanized Area of Albuquerque. The site is located within a federally designated Historically Disadvantaged Community.

The current transit center is on a large and underutilized City-owned parcel near one of the busiest areas of the city, as shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Uptown Connect Area Map**



The project seeks to find a more economically productive use of the space, supporting the local economy, while removing vehicles from the road and encouraging more riders to take the bus, walk, or bike for more trips. A way to do that is to construct a transit-oriented development project that also addresses a gaping housing shortage in Albuquerque.

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## 2.2 GENERAL ASSUMPTIONS

The evaluation period for this project includes a 3-year design and construction period from 2023 to 2026, during which capital expenditures are undertaken. Estimated project benefits are calculated using a 30-year period of operations, assumed to begin in 2026 and end in 2055.

Dollar figures in this analysis are expressed in constant 2021 dollars (2021\$) The latest estimated project costs were converted to 2021 dollars using a 3.5 percent inflation factor. The real discount rate used for this analysis was 7.0 percent, consistent with USDOT guidance for 2022 RAISE grants and OMB Circular A-94.<sup>5</sup>

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## 2.3 BASE CASE AND BUILD CASE

The Base Case or “Do Nothing” Case assumes continued operation of the existing Uptown Transit Center and continued underutilization of the land surrounding the bus station, consisting of surface parking and low-density commercial development on the adjoining property.

The “Build” Case includes delivery of Phase I of the joint development plan for the site, which includes the costs associated with replacement of the transit center and additional costs to facilitate additional vertical development on the site. Replacement of the transit center is a key component of the overall joint development. As such, it is the key catalyst that unlocks the planned vertical commercial and residential transit-oriented development (TOD) at the site. For the purposes of this analysis, benefits from investing in the new transit station include those stemming from the Phase II TOD that it facilitates, including reduced VMT from less auto-dependent residents and increased transit ridership.

Under the standard BCA framework used to evaluate conventional transportation infrastructure investments, it could be argued that the full costs of the Phase II development should be included in the analysis in order to count the benefits that accrue from the resulting on-site residents and workers taking transit instead of driving. However, replacement of the transit center is not a conventional transportation infrastructure improvement; rather it has the appearance of a public-private partnership. Details will be worked out in the Development Agreement to be attached to the formal Joint Development application when it is submitted in early summer. Rather, replacement of the transit center is the key component of a joint development that will unlock the delivery of mixed-use, affordable TOD that would otherwise not occur.

While it is true that under the Base Case, an equivalent amount of real estate development would take place elsewhere in the region to meet demand, there are no other development opportunities in the region that will have the direct, onsite transit access that this project will create. Any alternative development will be in a conventional auto-dependent format. As such, the cost to replace the transit component reflects the investment necessary to make TOD happen at the site. Based on this logic, the Build Case captures the

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<sup>5</sup> White House Office of Management and Budget, Circular A-94, Guidelines and Discount Rates for Benefit-Cost Analysis of Federal Programs. October 29, 1992.

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/a94/a094.pdf>. Accessed March 18, 2022.

benefits from replacing the station that will accrue to occupants of the Phase II private development, such as reduced VMT and increased ridership, that are well documented benefits of the mixed-use TOD concept.

# 3 PROJECT COSTS

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## 3.1 CAPITAL COSTS

The capital costs for the Project are estimated to total \$33.2 million in year-of-expenditure (YOE) dollars for construction. These costs include the seismic retrofits to the building, pedestrian and bicyclist access and sidewalk improvements, installation of electric vehicle charging stations and landscaping improvements. The YOE total equates to \$28.3 million in undiscounted 2021 dollars, which includes \$6.2 million in contingency. At a 7 percent real discount rate, these costs are \$21.0 million. Table 1 shows these costs broken down by year of expenditure.

**Table 1: Project Costs by Category and Year, in Undiscounted Millions of 2021 Dollars**

	2024	2025	2026	Total
<b>Total</b>	3.9	6.3	12.2	22.3
<b>Total, Discounted 7%</b>	3.2	4.8	8.7	16.6

Source: ABQ RIDE

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## 3.2 OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE COSTS

In addition to the upfront capital cost, ABQ RIDE’s operations and maintenance (O&M) costs are projected to average \$9,500 per year in the long term versus a current average of \$162,000. This reduction would result partly from improved safety and reduced vandalism issues at the current site. Over the entire 30-year analysis period these cost savings accumulate to \$4.6 million in undiscounted 2021 dollars, or \$1.4 million when discounted at seven percent. Note that these O&M cost savings are included as the numerator of the benefit-cost ratio calculation.



## 4 PROJECT BENEFITS

As discussed in the Build Case description in Section 2.3, investment in replacing the station creates the opportunity to develop mixed-use TOD at the site, and the reduced auto dependency and active transportation opportunities that TOD formats create. As a result of the direct access to transit that this project creates, the majority of benefits are accrued due to fewer auto trips and the resulting reduction in VMT. The associated VMT reduction results in reduced accidents, vehicle O&M costs, congestion, emissions, pavement damage, and noise. It also creates benefits from improved transit amenities and increased value of repurposed ROW. In accordance with U.S. DOT BCA guidance, these benefits are accrued over a 30-year analysis period, with the exception of the increased value of the repurposed ROW, which is a one-time benefit, and the residual value of the station remaining, which is included in the final year of analysis.

In 2021 dollars, the Project is expected to generate \$20.3 million in discounted benefits using a seven percent discount rate. The overall project benefit matrix can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2: Project Benefits**

Benefit Category	Description	Monetized	Quantified	Qualitative
<b>Increased Safety</b>	Reduced accidents	√		
<b>Reduced Emissions</b>	Reduced emissions	√		
<b>Reduced Vehicle O&amp;M</b>	Reduced vehicle O&M			
<b>Reduced Road Damage</b>	Reduced pavement damage	√		
<b>Reduced Congestion</b>	Reduced congestion	√		
<b>Reduced Noise</b>	Reduced noise			
<b>Commuter Mobility Benefits</b>	New station amenities	√		
<b>Repurposed ROW</b>	TOD development potential unlocked from station replacement	√		
<b>Reduced transit O&amp;M</b>	Reduced station O&M from increased safety and joint development structure	√		
<b>Health Benefits</b>	Increased active transportation from mixed-use TOD format			√
<b>Increased Equity</b>	Delivery of affordable housing units			√
<b>Residual Value</b>	Replacement of station at end of useful life	√		

The details of each benefit calculation and the underlying assumptions and inputs are described in further detail in the following sections.

## 4.1 DEMAND PROJECTIONS

### 4.1.1 REDUCED VMT FROM TRANSIT ACCESS ONSITE

The estimates of reduced VMT and increased ridership were conducted by ABQ RIDE and validated by WSP, using data from several sources, including the U.S. Census American Community Survey (Census ACS), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS). The Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MRCOG) provided data to conduct a GIS analysis of renter households along the existing Central Avenue Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART) corridor. This data was used to develop an estimate of vehicle ownership for those households with access to transit versus the broader citywide average, to determine the TOD impacts of the project on VMT. Table 3 shows the breakdown of vehicle ownership by renter households with access to transit in the Central Avenue ART Corridor versus the remainder of Albuquerque households.

**Table 3: Share of Households by Vehicle Ownership**

Variable: 2020 Renter Households	Central Ave. ART Corridor		Remainder of Albuquerque	
	#	%	#	%
Renter Households with No Vehicles	5,345	24.1%	8,222	11.9%
Renter Households with 1 Vehicle	10,519	47.5%	34,462	50.0%
Renter Households with 2 Vehicles	4,934	22.3%	21,049	30.5%
Renter Households with 3 Vehicles	1,017	4.6%	4,004	5.8%
Renter Households with 4 Vehicles	318	1.4%	968	1.4%
Renter Households with 5+ Vehicles	32	0.1%	263	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,165</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>68,968</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Census ACS 2016-2020 5-Year Survey, MRCOG, ABQ RIDE

Applying these vehicle ownership rates to the 215 new households in the Phase II affordable housing units at the site, this results in 51 fewer cars owned, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Onsite Car Ownership – Units at Uptown Connect vs. City Average<sup>6</sup>**

Variable: Total VMT	Central Ave. ART Corridor		Remainder of Albuquerque		TOD Impact
	#	Cars	#	Cars	+/- Cars
Renter Households with No Vehicles	52	-	26	-	-
Renter Households with 1 Vehicle	102	102	107	107	(5)
Renter Households with 2 Vehicles	48	96	66	131	(36)
Renter Households with 3 Vehicles	10	30	12	37	(8)
Renter Households with 4 Vehicles	3	12	3	12	0
Renter Households with 5+ Vehicles	0	2	1	4	(3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>(51)</b>

Source: Census ACS 2016-2020 5-Year Survey, MRCOG, ABQ RIDE

<sup>6</sup> Note: totals may not match due to rounding

According to data from the BTS, licensed New Mexico drivers drove an average of 18,369 miles per year. Assuming each vehicle in a given household is driven this amount in a year, this results in a reduction in VMT of 955,188 annually for households in in the Project versus the broader citywide average, as shown in table Table 5.

**Table 5: Estimated VMT from Households Onsite and Equivalent Households not in TOD Environment**

Variable: Total VMT	Central Ave. ART Corridor		Remainder of Albuquerque		TOD Impact
	#	VMT	#	VMT	+/- VMT
Renter Households with No Vehicles	52	-	26	-	-
Renter Households with 1 Vehicle	102	1,873,638	107	1,965,483	(91,845)
Renter Households with 2 Vehicles	48	1,763,424	66	2,424,708	(661,284)
Renter Households with 3 Vehicles	10	551,070	12	661,284	(110,214)
Renter Households with 4 Vehicles	3	220,428	3	220,428	-
Renter Households with 5+ Vehicles	0	-	1	91,845	(91,845)
<b>Total</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>4,408,560</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>5,363,748</b>	<b>(955,188)</b>

Source: Census ACS 2016-2020 5-Year Survey, MRCOG, ABQ RIDE, BTS

#### 4.1.2 INCREASED RIDERSHIP FROM TRANSIT ACCESS ONSITE

Assumptions and sources used to estimate the Base Case and Build Case ridership demand are shown below in Table 6.

**Table 6: Uptown Transit Center Bus Ridership Demand Projection Assumptions and Sources**

Variable	Unit	Value	Source
<b>Base Case Ridership</b>			
Total Daily Weekday Trips	Trips	1,074	ABQ RIDE
Annualization Factor	Factor	260	WSP
<b>Annual Ridership</b>	<b>Trips</b>	<b>279,240</b>	<b>Calculation</b>
<b>Build Case Ridership</b>			
Residential Units	Units	215	ABQ RIDE
Avg. Workers / Household	Workers/HH	1.12	Census ACS, MRCOG
New Workers Living Onsite	Workers	241	Calculation
% of HHs Commute via Public Transit	%	4.1%	Census ACS, MRCOG
New Transit Riders Onsite	Riders	10	Calculation
Total Daily Commute Roundtrips	Trips	20	Calculation
Commute Trips % of Total Trips	%	15%	NHTS
Total New Transit Trips	Trips	133	Calculation
Total Daily Weekday Trips – Base Case + Build Case	Trips	1,207	Calculation
Annualization Factor	Factor	260	WSP
<b>Annual Ridership – Build Case</b>	<b>Trips</b>	<b>313,907</b>	<b>Calculation</b>

The Build Case annual ridership forecast assumes no annual growth, and is used primarily to calculate the benefits from the new transit station amenities delivered from the project, which are calculated on a per-trip basis, as described in later sections.

## 4.2 SAFETY

The safety benefits assessed in this analysis include a reduction in fatalities and injuries, as well as a reduction in other property damage crash costs resulting directly from the Project’s reduced VMT. Data from New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) on crash rates in Bernalillo County were combined with USDOT recommended values per crash type and the Project’s reduction in VMT to estimate the annual amount of crash reductions and monetary value resulting from the Project.

The assumptions used in the estimation of safety benefits are summarized in Table 7.

**Table 7: Safety Benefits Assumptions and Sources**

Variable	Unit	Value	Source
Bernalillo Co. Fatal Crashes 2020	Crashes	104	<a href="#">NMDOT Traffic Safety Division</a>
Bernalillo Co. Injury Crashes 2020	Crashes	4,394	<a href="#">NMDOT Traffic Safety Division</a>
Bernalillo Co. Property Damage Only (PDO) Crashes 2020	Crashes	9,540	<a href="#">NMDOT Traffic Safety Division</a>
Bernalillo Co. VMT 2020	100M VMT	49.8	<a href="#">NMDOT Traffic Safety Division</a>
Fatal Crash Monetized Value	2021\$ / crash	13,046,800	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023
Injury Crash Monetized Value	2021\$ / crash	307,800	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023
PDO Crash Monetized Value	2021\$ / vehicle	4,800	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023
Auto Average External Safety Cost	2021\$ / VMT	0.015	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023

These assumptions and inputs applied to the annual reduction in VMT yields a discounted safety benefit of \$15.8 million (undiscounted) and \$5 million (discounted at 7 percent) over the 30-year period of analysis, including a reduction of 0.6 fatal crashes, 25 injury crashes, and 55 property-damage-only crashes.

**Table 8: Safety Benefits, Thousands of 2021 Dollars**

Benefit	Project Opening Year		Project Lifecycle	
	Undiscounted	Discounted (7%)	Undiscounted	Discounted (7%)
<b>Crash Reduction</b>	528.1	0.4	15,842.9	5.0
<b>Safety (External Highway Use)</b>	14.3	10.2	429.8	135.6

Additional external safety benefits are calculated using an average value per VMT of \$0.015 based on USDOT guidance. These results do not account for the many other safety benefits that the Project will deliver, including activating the site with mixed uses and from various pedestrian upgrades.

## 4.3 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

As a result of the reduced VMT, four forms of reduced emissions were identified, measured and monetized, including: nitrous oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>), particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). The assumptions used in the estimation of emissions reduction benefits are summarized in Table 9.

**Table 9: Emissions Assumptions and Sources**

Variable	Unit	Value	Source
<b>Grams of CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Per Gallon of Gasoline</b>	Factor	8,887	EPA, Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator
<b>CO<sub>2</sub> 2021 Value</b>	2021\$ / metric ton	56	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023
<b>NO<sub>x</sub> 2021 Value</b>	2021\$ / metric ton	16,600	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023
<b>PM<sup>2.5</sup> 2021 Value</b>	2021\$ / metric ton	796,700	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023
<b>SO<sub>x</sub> 2021 Value</b>	2021\$ / metric ton	44,300	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023

Based on these assumptions and values, reduced emissions amount to \$600 thousand (undiscounted) and \$334 thousand (discounted at 7 percent) in accrued benefits from the Project's reduced VMT. Per U.S. DOT guidance, the value of monetized benefits of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are discounted at a rate of 3 percent.

**Table 10: Climate Change and Environmental Justice Benefits, Thousands of 2021 Dollars**

Benefit	Project Opening Year		Project Lifecycle	
	Undiscounted	Discounted (7%)	Undiscounted	Discounted (7%)
<b>Emissions Reduction</b>	18.3	15.5	599.3	333.5

## 4.4 QUALITY OF LIFE

As part of the Project, several new transit station amenities will be added relative to the existing transit center. The Build Case ridership estimate was used to quantify and monetize benefits to passengers based on the latest values-per-trip guidance from USDOT. In addition to station amenities, the reduced VMT resulting from the Project will also result in benefits from reduced congestion and noise.

**Table 11: Transit Station Amenity Assumptions and Sources**

Variable	Unit	Value	Source
Clocks	2021\$ / trip	0.03	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023
Electronic Real-Time Information Displays	2021\$ / trip	0.31	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023
Information/Emergency Button	2021\$ / trip	0.24	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023
PA System	2021\$ / trip	0.31	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023
Retail/Food Outlet Availability	2021\$ / trip	0.11	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023
Surveillance Cameras	2021\$ / trip	0.31	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023

Variable	Unit	Value	Source
Bike Facilities	2021\$ / trip	0.48	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023
Elevator	2021\$ / trip	0.07	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023
Taxi Pickup/Dropoff	2021\$ / trip	0.05	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023
Congestion – Light-Duty Vehicles – Urban	2021\$ / trip	0.13	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023
Noise - Light-Duty Vehicles – Urban	2021\$ / trip	0.0018	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023

Transit amenities amount to total increased value of \$1.53 per trip. Applied to the increased annual ridership amount of 314,000, the resulting monetized benefit \$14.4 million undiscounted 2021 dollars and \$4.5 million discounted at 7 percent. Congestion and noise benefits amount to \$3.8 million undiscounted and \$1.2 million in benefits discounted at 7 percent.

**Table 12: Quality of Life Benefits, Thousands of 2021 Dollars**

Benefit	Project Opening Year		Project Lifecycle	
	Undiscounted	Discounted (7%)	Undiscounted	Discounted (7%)
<b>Transit Station Amenities</b>	480.2	342.4	14,408.3	4,536.7
<b>Congestion</b>	124.2	88.5	3,725.2	1,175.5
<b>Noise</b>	1.7	1.2	51.6	16.3

## 4.5 MOBILITY AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

The project would increase mobility and expand connectivity for all users, particularly non-motorized travelers (those walking, cycling, and using transit). Although the Project includes several pedestrian upgrades and there are demonstrated increase in walkability from mixed-use TOD formats, sufficient data was not available to fully quantify and monetize these benefits in the BCA.

## 4.6 ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS AND OPPORTUNITY

This project would contribute to increasing economic opportunity by reducing vehicle operating costs. Vehicle operating cost savings includes the cost of fuel, as well as maintenance and repair, replacement of tires, and the depreciation of the vehicle over time. Consumption rates per vehicle mile travelled (VMT) are used to calculate the vehicle operating cost savings. Estimates of VMT and unit costs for each component of vehicle operating cost are applied to the consumption rates to calculate the total vehicle operating cost. The assumptions used in the estimation of vehicle operating costs are presented in Table 13.

**Table 13: Vehicle Operating Cost Savings Assumptions and Sources**

Variable	Unit	Value	Source
Vehicle Operating Costs - Light Duty Vehicles	2021\$/ VMT	0.46	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023

Applying this rate to the reduced annual VMT of 955 thousand results in \$13.2 million in undiscounted benefits and \$4.2 million in benefits discounted at 7 percent over the 30-year period of analysis.

**Table 14: Vehicle Operating Cost Savings, Thousands of 2021 Dollars**

Benefit	Project Opening Year		Project Lifecycle	
	Undiscounted	Discounted (7%)	Undiscounted	Discounted (7%)
<b>Vehicle O&amp;M (including fuel)</b>	439.4	313.3	13,181.6	4,159.6

In addition to vehicle operating costs, the project will also free up ROW for new development. Based on information provided by ABQ RIDE and the Bernalillo County Assessor's Office, redevelopment of the station and the adjacent area will increase property value by approximately \$2.4 million.

**Table 15: Repurposed ROW Assumptions and Sources**

Variable	Unit	Value	Source
ABQ RIDE Property Area	Acres	1.4507	Bernalillo County Assessor's Office
ABQ RIDE Property Current Assessed Value	2022\$	515,600	Bernalillo County Assessor's Office
Adjacent Developable Property (Phase III)	Acres	1.4802	Bernalillo County Assessor's Office
Adjacent Developable Property (Phase III)	2022\$	521,800	Bernalillo County Assessor's Office
Land Value – No Build	2022\$	1,037,400	Bernalillo County Assessor's Office
Land Value / SF – Build	2022\$/SF	27.00	ABQ RIDE
SF / Acre	Factor	43,650	Conversion Factor
Land Value – Build	2022\$	3,447,090	Calculation
<b>ROW Value Uplift</b>	<b>2022\$</b>	<b>2,409,690</b>	<b>Calculation</b>

Based on the assumptions described above, redevelopment of the station area results in a one-time ROW property value uplift of \$2.4 million.

Based on the station

## 4.7 STATE OF GOOD REPAIR

The state of good repair condition benefits assessed in this analysis include reduced VMT which leads to less road damage, O&M savings, and long-term remaining residual value of the station replacement. The residual capital value (RCV) is calculated by determining the percentage of useful life remaining beyond the analysis period and multiplying that percentage by the construction cost for that component.

The assumptions used in the estimation of state of good repair benefits are presented in the following table.

**Table 16: State of Good Repair Benefits Assumptions and Sources**

Variable	Unit	Value	Source
Value of Reduced Pavement Damage	2021\$/VMT	0.002	USDOT BCA Guidance January 2023
Build Case Annual O&M Cost	2021\$	9,480	ABQ RIDE
Base Case Annual O&M Cost	2021\$	162,080	ABQ RIDE

Variable	Unit	Value	Source
Build Case O&M Savings	2021\$	152,600	Calculation
Estimated Useful Life	Year	99	ABQ RIDE
Station Capital Cost	2021\$	22,336,798	ABQ RIDE
Remaining Residual Value – 2055	2021\$	1,560,222	Calculation

These inputs and assumptions result in the following quantified and monetized benefits from delivering the Project.

**Table 17: State of Good Repair Benefits, Thousands of 2021 Dollars**

Benefit	Project Opening Year		Project Lifecycle	
	Undiscounted	Discounted (7%)	Undiscounted	Discounted (7%)
Pavement Damage	1.5	1.0	43.7	13.8
O&M Savings	152.6	108.8	4,578.0	1,444.7
Residual Value	0.0	0.0	15,568.1	1,560.2



# 5 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

## 5.1 EVALUATION MEASURES

The benefit-cost analysis converts potential gains (benefits) and losses (costs) from the Project into monetary units and compares them. The following common benefit-cost evaluation measures are included in this BCA:

- Net Present Value (NPV): NPV compares the net benefits (benefits minus costs) after being discounted to present values using the real discount rate assumption. The NPV provides a perspective on the overall dollar magnitude of cash flows over time in today’s dollar terms.
- Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR): The evaluation also estimates the benefit-cost ratio; the present value of incremental benefits is divided by the present value of incremental costs to yield the benefit-cost ratio. The BCR expresses the relation of discounted benefits to discounted costs as a measure of the extent to which a project’s benefits either exceed or fall short of the costs.
- Internal Rate of Return (IRR): The IRR is the discount rate which makes the NPV from the Project equal to zero. In other words, it is the discount rate at which the Project breaks even. Generally, the greater the IRR, the more desirable the Project.
- Payback Period: The payback period refers to the period of time required to recover the funds expended on a Project. When calculating the payback period, the time value of money (discounting) is not taken into account.

## 5.2 BCA RESULTS

The table below presents the evaluation results for the project. Results are presented undiscounted and discounted at seven percent as prescribed by USDOT. All benefits and costs were estimated in constant 2021 dollars over an evaluation period extending 30 years beyond project completion in 2026.

The total value of the benefits generated by the project improvements within the analysis period are calculated to be \$20.4 million in discounted 2021 dollars. The total capital costs are calculated to be \$16.6 million in discounted 2021 dollars. The difference in the discounted benefits and costs equals a net present value of \$3.7 million in discounted 2021 dollars, resulting in a benefit-cost ratio (BCR) of 1.2.

Although there are 11 total benefit categories quantified and monetized, three categories make up approximately two thirds of the total: safety (25%), facility amenities (22%), and vehicle O&M savings (20%). The next four largest categories make up another 30% of the total, including the land value of repurposed ROW (10%), the remaining residual value of the station (8%), O&M cost savings (7%), and congestion reduction benefits (6%).

Based on this analysis, the benefits of the Uptown Connect transit center investment exceed the costs, making this a worthwhile investment.

**Table 18: Benefit Cost Analysis Results, Millions of 2021 Dollars**

BCA Metric	Undiscounted	Discounted (7%)
<b>Total Benefits</b>	<b>70.84</b>	<b>20.35</b>
Emissions	0.60	0.33
Safety	15.84	5.00
Vehicle O&M (includes fuel)	13.18	4.16

<b>BCA Metric</b>	<b>Undiscounted</b>	<b>Discounted (7%)</b>
Pavement Damage	0.04	0.01
Congestion	3.73	1.18
Noise	0.05	0.02
Safety (External Highway Use Cost)	0.43	0.14
Facility Amenities	14.41	4.55
Value of Repurposed Right-of-Way	2.41	1.97
Residual Value	15.57	1.56
Change in O&M / R&R Costs	4.58	1.44
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>22.34</b>	<b>16.64</b>
<b>Net Present Value (NPV)</b>	<b>48.50</b>	<b>3.71</b>
<b>Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR)</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>
<b>Internal Rate of Return (IRR)</b>	2.1%	
<b>Payback Period (Years)</b>	23	