

A

R

T

ALBUQUERQUE RAPID TRANSIT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FUNDING

How much will this project cost? Who is funding it?

The expected cost of the ART project is \$100 million with additional costs for wider sidewalks and landscaping throughout the corridor. ABQ RIDE submitted a Small Starts application for a capital grant from the Federal Transit Administration. Small Starts grants are provided for fixed guideway systems and bus corridor improvements for BRT systems that meet certain criteria and require a local contribution, which will come from varied City of Albuquerque funding sources like GRT bonds. Eighty (80%) percent of the project funding will come from federal sources.

Why not use that money to expand existing service/repair roads/add parking/routes to other areas?

Small Starts grant funds cannot be used for other types of infrastructure improvements or to offset operating expenses. The grant offers a unique opportunity for the City of Albuquerque to enhance and update the Central Avenue Corridor. ART will provide for first-class transit service, safety improvements, and ADA-compliant, vibrant pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods that support existing businesses, attract new investment, and follow Albuquerque's Complete Streets policy. The grant for this specific corridor is an opportunity for improvements that would not otherwise be available.

LOCATION

Why implement ART on Central Avenue, where there are three existing routes?

Central Avenue is the heart of the city. The corridor has the ridership, population density, land uses, and activity centers to support a successful BRT system. It would meet the demand for reliable transit service while benefiting the entire community.

- 5.3 million riders in 2014 — nearly 15,000 per day and 41% of the total number of ABQ RIDE passengers
- Connections with 32 of the 37 existing ABQ RIDE bus routes
- Research ruled out the Lomas Blvd corridor as an anchor for BRT

LEFT-HAND TURNS

How will changing left turn access increase safety?

All vehicular turns and crossings of Central Avenue will be at signalized intersections with signalized left turn/U-turns. These signals will be provided every ¼ mile, on average. These changes are estimated to cause drivers a 30-90 second delay in travel time to accomplish the safe U-turns.

According to studies conducted by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), protected signalized left turns/U-turns are safer for vehicles and pedestrians than uncontrolled left turns in and out of driveways and neighborhood streets. They improve visibility and reduce distractions to make travel safer for pedestrians and drivers.

Won't businesses be affected by reduced access?

FHWA found "the vast majority of businesses do as well or better after the access management project is completed." FHWA and other scholarly studies found that most drivers will use a signalized U-turn to get to their destination business.

TRAFFIC

If lanes are reduced, won't traffic congestion worsen?

A traffic impact analysis was performed as part of the environmental evaluation. All signalized intersections on Central Avenue between Unser Boulevard and Tramway Boulevard were assessed using morning and afternoon data. The results of the model found that only traffic at the intersection of Rio Grande Boulevard and Central Avenue may be impacted during the evening rush hour. The design team will continue to adjust the signal phasing at Rio Grande Boulevard to reduce negative impacts.

The Mid Region Council of Governments' regional transportation model shows that with the ART system, through traffic diverts to parallel routes, which have available capacity to handle the additional traffic. Studies have also found that focusing development in major transit corridors like Central Avenue makes a significant dent in future congestion because it enables more people to use transit.

BENEFITS

What benefits will ART bring?

More reliable transit service

- Seven minute frequency during rush hours
- Connects major activity centers within a ½ mile of the corridor
- 15% improvement in travel time
- 20-25% improved on-time performance

Enhanced quality of life

- Wider sidewalks for a safer, more pleasant pedestrian experience
- Trees and landscaping
- Frequent safe pedestrian crossings
- Slower traffic for increased safety and a Main Street atmosphere

Economic opportunities

- \$900 million in potential new development and 5,000 jobs according to a study by NAIOP
- Fort Collins MAX BRT project cost \$87M and the City of Fort Collins estimates its BRT has contributed \$150M in regional economic development to date
- Improved land value
- Increased Gross Receipts Tax revenue

