



Bruce Rizzieri, Director



Mayor Richard J. Berry

February 16, 2016

Anthony Anella, Concerned Citizens Group:

ABQ RIDE has received a copy of the Concerned Citizens' letter regarding concerns about the Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART) project and welcomes the continued input on the ART project. It is without question that both ABQ RIDE and the Concerned Citizens group want what is best for the city. Infrastructure project are always improved with a broad range of input and scrutiny and this project is no exception. Feedback on the design plans has helped shape the development of the plans significantly and the concerns raised by the Concerned Citizens group offer another opportunity to review specific aspects of the design and address where there may be need for clarification or revisions.

We have reviewed the concerns and recommendations presented by the Concerned Citizen's group. Because of the breadth of concerns covered in the letter, it is perhaps best to start with the planning context for the corridor.

- The ART project has a long background and is only one step in the maturation of transit services in Albuquerque.
  - o 1999 – The Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments and State DOT commission “Middle Rio Grande Connections”. The report, published in 2001, contains the first mention of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and clearly maps Central Avenue from Coors to Louisiana as a “Proposed High-Capacity Transit Corridor.”
  - o 2001 – The City Council adopts the “Centers and Corridors” element into the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan. The Centers and Corridors policy designates Central Avenue as a “Major Transit Corridor” with transit listed first in the hierarchy of modes.
  - o 2002 – The City Council adopts R-02-66 instructing the Transit Department to pursue New Starts funding for “the Central Avenue Corridor and a segment of Louisiana Boulevard from Central Avenue to Menaul Boulevard”.
  - o 2003 – The “Rapid Transit Project” examines options in the Central Corridor and states “both LRT [light rail transit] and BRT are recommended for further evaluation.”
  - o 2004 – The first Rapid Ride route – the 766 – initiates service. Ridership on Central doubles in ten years.

- 2011 – The City Administration commissions a feasibility study to determine if BRT can physically fit within Central Avenue. The report says the idea is “worthy of further study” and identifies potential funding sources, including the Federal Transit Administration’s Small Starts program.
- 2013 – After considerable planning effort and multiple public input meetings, ABQ RIDE makes an official “Request for Entry into Project Development” under the guidelines of Section 5309 Small Starts Capital Programming. The City Council amends the Centers and Corridors Plan to cover the full length of Central Avenue as a Major Transit Corridor.
- 2014 – “Entry into Project Development” is approved and further planning activities, including public meetings, commence.
- 2014 – The Metropolitan Transportation Board creates a specific line item in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for a BRT system in Central Avenue. The City Council begins the process to allocate funding to a BRT project on Central.
- 2015 – The City Council earmarks \$13,000,000 as local match for a BRT project on Central. Preliminary designs are developed and presented to the public in a series of open houses and presentations to neighborhood associations, merchant associations, and civic and non-governmental organizations.
- 2015 – ABQ RIDE submits an application to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for Small Starts funding for the ART project. Based on public input, continued study of the existing conditions of the corridor, data collected, and coordination with agencies and utilities, the project design development continues.
- The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan identifies Central Avenue as a “Major Transit Corridor,” which specifies the modal hierarchy as [1] Transit [2] Pedestrians [3] Autos and [4] Bikes. The planning framework for Central Avenue, as outlined in the 2001 Comprehensive Plan and the current Draft Comprehensive Plan Update, states that auto level of service is not the primary goal for Central Avenue but that transit and pedestrian levels of service are more important. Correspondingly, the purpose of the ART project is to improve transit service along Central Avenue and improve access to major activity and employment centers located within the project area.

With this planning framework, Central Avenue was evaluated for potential funding for improvements through the Small Starts program, which is for specific types of fixed guideway systems or corridor-based bus rapid transit. A number of transit improvements were reviewed over the years, and bus rapid transit emerged as the clear choice for high-quality corridor-wide improvements at an affordable cost, a fraction of that of light rail. Funding for the ART project presents an opportunity to capitalize on the strengths of Central Avenue while building for the future – from both transportation and economic development points of view.

The ART project is being designed to the bus rapid transit standards identified by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) and has followed the guidelines in the Transit Cooperative Research Program’s Bus Rapid Transit Practitioner’s Guide. In 2014 we had a Peer Review by engineers and planners who have worked on the development of BRT systems in Orlando FL, Eugene OR, Portland OR, and Salt Lake City UT among others (including a primary author of the American Public Transit Associations’ recommended practice for BRT), and in 2015 we conducted a project cost risk assessment with an expert who has done similar work for dozens of projects around the country. Jeff Speck, a nationally known expert on urban “walkability” and complete streets, provided input on the downtown and EDo portions of the plans and gave them positive reviews. Coordination with staff in other cities that have successfully implemented bus rapid transit projects has guided us on what has worked well and what could have been improved upon, and we have used that information in designing the ART within the context of the Central corridor. The detailed engineering plans for the project have been reviewed at appropriate points in the design process by the City’s Design Review Committee to ensure feasibility and compliance with City standards.



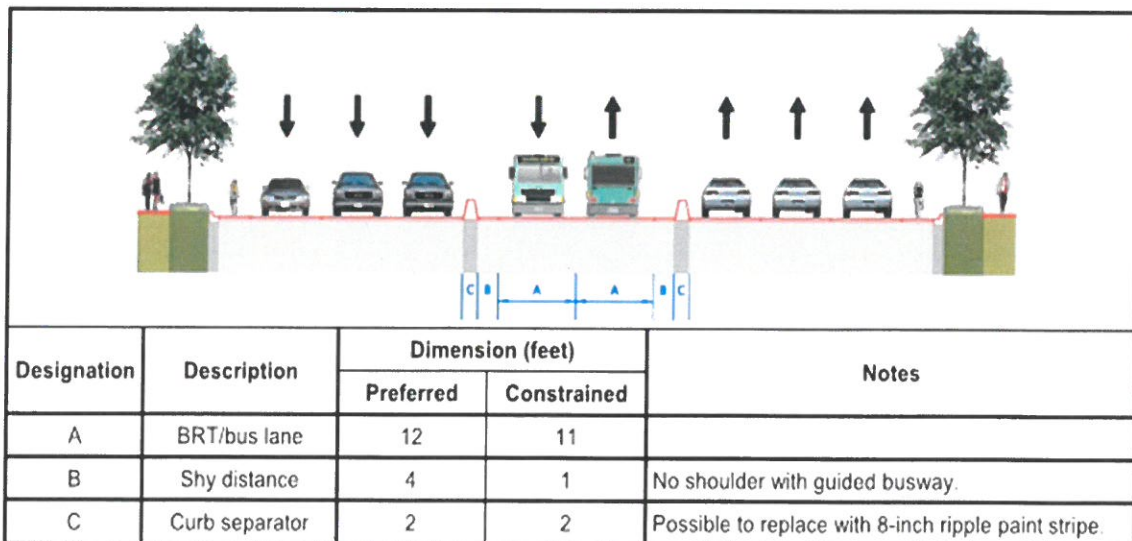
With that background of the planning context, outside expert design assistance, and internal City review, we would like to address some of the specific concerns presented by the Concerned Citizens group and attach detailed responses to the Analysis of ART by Paul Lusk.

**Traffic Congestion.** There are concerns about traffic congestion and levels of service based on an excerpt from the traffic analysis based on conceptual designs that were included with ABQ RIDE's application for federal funding for the ART. The excerpt notes that some intersections would have lower auto level of service than currently due to the reduction in general purpose lanes along the corridor. The traffic analysis also includes discussion on mitigation measures, such as signal timing, which is included in this project. With the mitigation measures, the traffic model and analysis concludes that level of service along Central Avenue would remain within acceptable standards. The traffic analysis has since been updated based on the latest design plans and continues to show that, with mitigation measures, all intersections will meet Albuquerque's standards for acceptable levels of service. The ART project's proposed changes to the number of lanes on Central were also included in the Mid-Region Council of Governments traffic modeling for the regional 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

**Compliance with the Complete Streets Ordinance.** The ART project meets the Complete Streets ordinance with minor exceptions that we believe are warranted and allowed by ordinance. As you noted, the Complete Streets Ordinance refers to the ITE's "Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach." The ART project complies with these recommendations as closely as possible as follows:

Lanes used by buses: This publication specifies that buses, "...can be 10.5 feet wide from mirror to mirror [true for ABQ RIDE buses] and require a minimum 11-foot-wide lane on roadways with 30 to 35 mph target speeds," (p. 137), exactly the speed of Central Avenue. The publication does not specify a maximum recommended lane width for dedicated bus lanes. ART lanes range from 11 to 13 feet, including an eight-inch rumble strip (essentially a buffer zone) to further delineate the ART lanes from general traffic lanes and discourage use of the lanes by cars. Below is guidance from the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) on BRT lane widths.

Two-Way Median Busway, Typical Cross-Section



General purpose lanes: The guide specifies that, "...on the lower-speed urban thoroughfares addressed in this report (target speeds of 35 mph or less), a range of lane widths from 10 to 12 feet on arterials... is appropriate" (p. 137). The guide directs users to, "...avoid combining minimum dimensions on adjacent elements to reduce street width where it could affect the safety of users." (p. 137). Planned general purpose lane widths for the ART project are generally 11 feet except in areas where high use and turn-over of on-street parking is expected (e.g. Nob Hill) where 13-foot lanes are used where right-of-way allows. Note that the local Route 66 buses, along with existing delivery trucks, will continue to operate in curbside general purpose lanes, and therefore those lanes need to safely accommodate those vehicles.

On-street parking: The guide states that, "the preferred width of a parallel on-street parking lane is 8 feet wide on commercial thoroughfares (all types). These dimensions are inclusive of the gutter pan and applicable to all context zones..." (p. 147). The ART project includes parking lanes that are generally 9.5 feet wide including the gutter.

The ART project traverses a very wide range of roadway and right-of-way conditions, so lane widths vary as necessary, but the above dimensions describe the general conditions.

**Right-of-Way.** The current designs are based on survey and identify where small amounts of right-of-way is needed to accommodate the design and functions of Central Avenue. The current designs fit within the public right-of-way with some exceptions that are being addressed. Based on the current design, the traffic analysis shows that traffic will continue to move at acceptable levels throughout the corridor.

It is worth noting that the EDo area was proposing reducing traffic lanes to one in each direction on Central as the ART project was evolving in 2013 and 2014. We have worked extensively with stakeholders in EDo to try to merge proposals, and that effort has resulted in some of the street elements that you criticize in your more detailed comments. Similarly, a national retail consultant, Robert Gibbs, reviewed Nob Hill's retail health and made multiple recommendations that will be accomplished by the ART project, including widening sidewalks, slowing traffic, improving landscaping, and relocating utility poles where the poles block sidewalks.

**Opportunity to Develop a Grid-Network.** As our riders know, we have a modified grid network. Central Avenue forms a major trunk line in this modified grid and ART routes will connect with 32 of ABQ RIDE's 37 other routes. We undertook a transformation in the 1990's to move to a grid network, somewhat similar to what Houston implemented last year. In the previous network, most North/South routes turned onto Central to go downtown rather than crossing Central to serve the rest of those respective corridors. Juan Tabo, Eubank, Wyoming, Louisiana, San Mateo, and Coors all have strict North/South routes connecting to EastWest routes. Carlisle, University, 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Atrisco, and 98<sup>th</sup> Street also have connecting routes although sometimes only on the North or South side of Central Avenue, and these connecting routes sometimes continue on to other areas to improve overall connectivity. As you can see from Houston's new network in their map here (<http://www.ridemetro.org/Pages/NBN-SystemMap.aspx>), their network is not a pure grid but still retains a high degree of radial service and many segments of streets where routes overlap. ABQ RIDE's network is very similar.

Improving service and reliability in this corridor will improve service and connections within the rest of the network. MRCOG recently released their evaluation of the effect ART would have on overall mobility for transit users and found that, between improved frequency, travel times, and reliability, the ART would have a very large positive impact. While we acknowledge that frequency on some routes is not as high as the public – or we – would like, we have been adding to and improving the service on this grid over the past 10 years and expect to continue that evolution in the future. The University Blvd. bus rapid transit is planned for project development phase in 2017 and other North/South corridors will be evaluated for



Rapid Ride-type service. Note that the capital funding that would be used for ART can not be used for operating costs and therefore the city is not diverting resources that otherwise could be used to operate improved service on other routes.

**Pedestrian street crossings and bus transfers.** The ART project would add more signalized crossings of Central Avenue and would widen sidewalks where possible, which improves pedestrian safety. The project implements key recommendations from the Road Safety Assessments of West Central (Coors to Atrisco) and the Central & San Mateo intersection, both prepared by the Federal Highway Administration in coordination with local agencies. In addition, ART includes mid-block crossings, in accordance with the Complete Streets ordinance.

In terms of the safety of median stations, using transit involves crossing streets. Currently, Rapid Ride users may not have to cross the street in one direction of their commute, but they have to cross the entire street when returning. With median stations, they'll have to cross half the street each time, dealing with only one direction of traffic and a shorter crossing distance at a time. Furthermore, median stations will be raised to about twice the height of a standard curb and will have ART lanes on either side of them, providing a buffer from general traffic, so the experience of waiting at an ART station will be much better than standing in a median or even at most current bus stops in the current street configuration.

**Left turn access.** As stated above, our traffic modeling shows that the street configuration will be able to accommodate traffic, including the proposed signalized U-turns and left-turns. Furthermore, your concern for safety (above) is contradicted by your desire to maintain un-signalized left-turn access. According to the Federal Highway Administration, the left turn into a driveway or side street is the most dangerous movement for cars accessing a business on a major street, followed by the left-turn out. Studies have shown that making a U-turn at a controlled location is significantly safer than making a left turn at a side street or driveway. Those turning movements also pose dangers for pedestrians where they have to cross driveways or side streets.

**Business access.** We certainly are going to support businesses along Central Avenue. After all, part of our goal with this project is economic development. Fortunately, concern about businesses' losing customers due to closing un-signalized left-turns is not supported by research. That research shows that the vast majority of businesses do just as well after left-turn restrictions are put in place and that customers are willing to use signalized U-turns or adjust their route to continue to patronize businesses. We have designed signal spacing along the ART corridor to provide left-turn and U-turn access at least every  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile, generally adding only 30 – 90 seconds of travel time for people going to businesses that are not right at the signalized intersections.

**Electric buses.** We agree that the use of battery-electric buses would be desirable on the ART if the technology can meet basic requirements familiar to anyone who drives a car. The vehicles need to pass the Federal Transit Administration Altoona testing requirements before the city can use federal funds to purchase these buses, and they need to be able to operate as far as required by the operations of the route. We recently tested electric buses on the D-Ride (downtown circulator) and on the Red Line Rapid Ride on Central Avenue to see how they performed in actual service. With charging facilities at endpoints of the ART, we believe electric buses are a possibility for the project. We have included an option for bidders to submit proposals for electric buses when we issued the request-for proposals (RFP) for purchasing vehicles for the ART. If the ART project were to proceed with non-electric buses, nothing would prevent replacing those buses at the end of their useful lives with electric buses.

**Utilities.** The water authority has chosen to use the ART project as a means to try to get support for replacing aging infrastructure. The actual cost for resolving specific conflict points (e.g. for foundations

for station canopies or signal mastarms) is about \$4 million, not accounting for the fact that some of that relocated infrastructure would need to be replaced due to its age anyway. Any type of roadway work that included sidewalk widening or reconstruction would encounter similar utility conflicts and thus has no guarantee of reducing utility relocation costs.

**Consideration of other designs for ART.** First, note that the ART project started out with a consideration of alternative designs, as presented at the public meetings earlier in the project. The current ART proposal is the result of several years of selecting and refining those alternatives.

The design alternative for ART suggested by the Concerned Citizens has a number of significant drawbacks and is not a substantial improvement over the current Rapid Ride. Its two main features differentiating it from current Rapid Ride service are that it would require the bus to pull out of traffic to stop, and it would create an area at each stop where people would pay to enter the station rather than when they board the vehicle. Those drawbacks are:

- Non-compliance with long-established Comprehensive Plan: The alternative design would have little (if any) benefit for transit operations while promoting faster traffic, in contradiction to the priorities set by the Comprehensive Plan.
- Substantial right-of-way impacts:
  - Outside of downtown, only a few current Rapid Ride stops on Central Avenue pull out of traffic, so most stops would require significant additional right-of-way for the suggested pull-out area.
  - In addition, pay-to-enter stations require substantial space themselves (more than shown on the suggested alternative, which would not meet ADA) to provide a comfortable waiting area, and that space cannot be shared with pedestrians on the sidewalk, since by definition the station area excludes those who haven't paid to enter. Therefore, right-of-way would be needed for the station itself in addition to any sidewalk improvements.
  - Since the design proposes curb-side stations, each station would serve only one direction of travel, so two stations would be required at all the locations where ART proposes one center platform. As a result, the suggested alternative would require significantly more right-of-way – having a much greater impact on neighboring businesses.
- No room for streetscape improvements: By concentrating on maintaining space for fast traffic flow, the alternative design also would not allow the streetscape improvements that ART provides, does not address the concerns of many people about pedestrian safety on Central, and does not take into account the demographic and walkable lifestyle preference changes taking place in Albuquerque and around the country.
- Loss of on-street parking: The alternative design would also require a loss of on-street parking in areas where the proposed ART design has avoided those impacts. Not only would the station area itself require space that otherwise could be on-street parking, but additional parking would be lost at the approach and departure sides of each station to provide room for the bus to maneuver in and out of the pull-out.
- No improved transit access to businesses: While stations on the sidewalk would increase accessibility to businesses on the same side of the street as the station, they would require pedestrians to walk farther to access businesses on the opposite side of the street, negating that advantage.
- No strategy for current and future congestion: Since the buses would not be in dedicated lanes, the proposed alternative would not improve reliability by avoiding traffic conflicts. Portions of the Central corridor experience traffic congestion already, and the Mid-Region Council of Government's extensive modeling of future conditions shows that the congestion, especially



around river-crossings, is likely to get much worse unless the region takes steps to promote alternative modes and encourage redevelopment along transit corridors like Central. In addition, even with advanced signaling, the buses would likely encounter significant delay in merging back into traffic.

- Doesn't meet national and international best practices: The ART project is an innovative project that uses new, proven techniques – beginning to be used in the U.S. but used extensively around the world – for significantly improving the functionality of transit at an affordable price. Other cities spend billions of dollars developing projects that do the same thing, with the only essential difference being the vehicle that provides the service. ART is designed to do everything that light rail does but at a fraction of the cost. Experts at the ITDP have studied transit systems around the country and the world and have developed a set of best practices (available on their website) based on what has worked well. The ART as currently designed has the potential to be the first Gold-rated system in the U.S. The proposed alternative would not meet even the ITDP's basic criteria.

**Construction impacts to businesses.** Any type of construction is going to be an inconvenience for businesses and people who travel a corridor. This is true for inevitable roadway reconstruction and resurfacing, updates to sidewalks, installation of landscaping, a sidewalk station, or a median station. The City is working to limit the amount of time construction activities are in front of any one business by working in small sections and providing as much information to businesses as possible as soon as it is available. The City will work with businesses to make sure that they (and their customers) know that access will be maintained and parking areas are clearly marked. One lane of traffic will always be available in each direction during business hours. The City will also host shopping events and incentives to encourage the community to support local businesses during construction.

In addition, the ART project has served as a catalyst for a coalition of small business assistance programs, independent of the City and the ART project, to come together to create a new Small Business Resource Collaborative. Serving as a unified resource during the construction of the ART, the SBRC will provide tailored technical help to interested, qualifying businesses on efforts that will help their individual situations, such as expanding their marketing, updating business plans, and accessing low-cost loans. This effort could bring benefits lasting long beyond the initial construction of the ART.

**Albuquerque's prospects for moving toward greater economic prosperity.** The convergence of the need for Albuquerque to address current and future transportation needs with the preferences of the current, large generation of young adults looking to establish themselves in careers and family life presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Albuquerque to make an investment in an entire corridor that will help both economic development and transportation needs. Two different organizations have looked at the development potential for the Central Corridor with ART – i.e. the potential for more people to live and work in this corridor, providing customers for existing businesses and vitality for current empty lots. The local chapter of the National Association of Office and Industrial Properties estimated that there was potential for almost \$1 billion in development between the Rio Grande and San Mateo Blvd. alone. The non-profit Center for Neighborhood Technologies estimated the potential for \$2 to \$3 billion in development and household travel expense savings over the next 10 years along the ART corridor.

Even if some do not believe those estimates are accurate, it is evident that people who study development trends believe that a lot more people will be interested in living and/or working in the Central corridor if we build ART. An alternative, of course, is to do nothing. Businesses that are struggling would continue to struggle. Public and private improvements along Central would continue to be slow, uncoordinated, and sporadic. We would not be helping current businesses and residents by continuing on our current path.

Projects like ART that were designed to current bus rapid transit standards have been successful in spurring development in other cities, making those corridors into destinations capitalizing on their unique character within their respective cities, and, conversely, we have not seen evidence where projects like ART have done the opposite.

**Transparency.** We have worked throughout the development of the ART project to inform the public about the project, from concept to its current status, and to solicit feedback through a variety of mechanisms, and that feedback has made a significant impact on the project design. A series of eighteen public meetings regarding ART were held in November 2012, May 2013, and October and November 2014. We have also had numerous meetings with neighborhood and merchant associations. In fact, since the project entered the FTA's project development process in 2014, we have had hundreds of meetings, personal visits, presentations, and elected official briefings to present the ART project and obtain feedback on proposed plans. In 2013, the ULI sponsored a series of workshops on transit-oriented development and how it could apply in Albuquerque with transit projects like ART. A series of visioning sessions was also held in August 2015 to discuss the project and placemaking around stations, with business and developer representatives from Cleveland and Phoenix providing information on how transit projects have affected corridors in their respective communities. We created a website with a commenting mechanism, by which many comments have been received and responded to. Project information was posted on the ABQ RIDE Facebook account, and a project-specific Facebook account has been created to continue sharing information pertinent to ART.

Public input from all these various sources has resulted in many changes to the plans and roadway configurations, and we continue to welcome input. That input has resulted in changing station locations, altering lane configurations to improve traffic flow or to address specific neighborhood concerns, adding traffic signals, maintaining on-street parking, improving pedestrian lighting, widening sidewalks, adding landscaping, and incorporating recommendations from the two Road Safety Assessments.

We cannot be timid about our approach to moving forward. Cities around us, who are attracting our talented youth, are not deterred by the growing pains of investing in their communities. Just like we pulled together funding and will to complete the recent I-25 & Paseo Del Norte interchange to build for the future, we need to invest in one of our original core corridors to improve our transportation system and foster new, private economic development. Fortunately, we have been successful in competing with other cities to obtain a likely funding source with the Federal Transit Administration that can help with that investment.

We appreciate your interest in helping to improve our community and your comments on this exciting project moving forward.

Sincerely,

Dayna G. Crawford  
Deputy Director /  
Albuquerque Rapid Transit Project Manager

c: Mayor Richard J. Berry  
Albuquerque City Council  
New Mexico Congressional Delegation  
Secretary Tom Church, NM Department of Transportation



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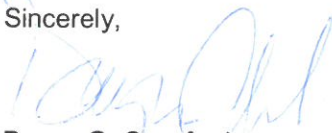
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Sincerely,



Dayna G. Crawford  
Deputy Director /  
Albuquerque Rapid Transit Project Manager

c: Michael J. Riordan, COO  
Secretary Tom Church, NM Department of Transportation

## **RESPONSE** - Analysis of A.R.T. PROJECT PLAN as REVISED 1/22/16

A number of site-specific comments and concerns were raised in the Concerned Citizens' Analysis of ART written by Paul Lusk. The plans presented online are an effort to show the public what the project is proposing with enough detail that the information is useful and reader-friendly. Therefore, the plans did not attempt to show the details like signal timing or bus operations, but we are happy to provide that information. We would like to take this opportunity to provide clarification and response to the site-specific comments, as prepared 1/24/16 by the Concerned Citizens' Analysis.

### **Example 1**

The short segment of single ART bus lane (about 200') just east of 1<sup>st</sup> Street will be used by westbound buses only. Eastbound buses will enter the ART lanes where the 2<sup>nd</sup> ART lane appears about 200' east of 1<sup>st</sup> Street. The Westbound buses at 1<sup>st</sup> Street will have a "queue jump" phase in the signal cycle to turn right while conflicting traffic is stopped.

The two bus lanes (one in each direction) merge into one bi-directional lane east of Broadway. Signaling will be used to prevent buses from meeting in the bi-directional segment. Buses going in opposite directions will be able to pass each other in three locations between the rail road tracks and I-25. Signals at those locations will keep a bus in one direction from entering the bi-direction section until a bus in that segment in the opposing direction has cleared the segment. This system is widely used in rail operations and has also been used in bus operations.

The bi-directional lane configuration in EDo, including sidewalk widening in some areas, additions of on-street parking in others, and addition of the eastbound bike lane from Broadway to I-25, is the result of extensive discussions with neighbors in that area. As the ART project was in its early phases, the EDo neighborhood began work with a consultant to design changes to Central Avenue in that area. That plan proposed reducing traffic lanes to one in each direction on Central as the ART project was evolving in 2013 and 2014. We worked extensively with stakeholders in EDo to merge our proposals, resulting in some of the street elements that are identified as concerns in the Concerned Citizens' Analysis.

### **Example 2**

In the segment east of I-25 in the vicinity of Presbyterian Hospital, the plans show that we intend to provide one ART lane in each direction and two general purpose traffic lanes in each direction between I-25 and Spruce Street. We have worked with Presbyterian Hospital and with Titan Development in that area to accommodate their future plans which include moving the hospital's main entrance from Cedar to Spruce and a development proposal for the property on the north side of the street. Some current street trees would be replaced. The "existing sidewalk" label on the north side of the street is, indeed, confusing since it would be relocated to the north to accommodate a wider roadway section; the "existing" label was intended to show that the sidewalk would not be widened at that location.

Cross-section B does contain an error. It should show the existing parking on the south side of the street. This section is mostly unchanged except that the left lanes would be dedicated to ART. ART bus lanes will have the same speed limits as the adjacent traffic lanes. With the ART lanes in the middle of the street away from the sidewalks, the sense of speed felt by pedestrians (more a result of the size of the buses than their speed) on the sidewalk will be reduced. Note that this section was, again, developed with input from neighbors who wanted to retain the current 1' vertical curb in the center of the street.

The plans at University Blvd. have been developed with input from UNM, the University Heights neighborhood association, and Rio Metro. The station planned at University is, in part, intended to connect with a future north/south ART proposed by Rio Metro. That line would connect the airport, stadium area, UNM south campus,



CNM Main Campus, UNMH, and the rest of UNM's north campus with the Central ART. As suggested, it is important for the Central ART to connect to north/south transit service.

The University area neighborhood was very concerned about the amount of traffic on Central by UNM, and after consideration of traffic volumes, we adjusted our plans to retain two lanes of traffic in each direction in this area. Hence, westbound traffic lanes at University are fed by two westbound lanes extending from Girard. Currently, some of that traffic turns north and south onto University, so the right and left turn lanes were preserved in addition to the through lane that continues west of the intersection. Given space constraints, and because only one eastbound lane is present west of the intersection, only one lane is provided east of the intersection, but that lane spreads into two eastbound lanes at Terrace. The property needed on the north side of Central at University is not substantial (about the width of the current sidewalk) and would not affect any of the iconic trees. As above, we have been coordinating closely with UNM and have received concurrence from New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office on this project.

### **Example 3**

The Cornell station was placed on the west side of the intersection since no east-to-north turn lane is needed at this pedestrian-only entrance to the UNM campus. Parking will be removed from the west side of the intersection but replaced on the east side where parking is currently not allowed at the current Rapid Ride stop. The additional space needed on the north side of the street is about the width of the current sidewalk. The "existing sidewalk" label is, indeed, confusing; the "existing" label was intended to show that the sidewalk would not be widened at that location.

### **Example 4**

Despite variations within the area, Section A is representative of much of the area from Bryn Mawr to Washington. Sidewalks are not widened in some areas where there are signalized intersections or proposed stations (although they are widened at the Solano station). Impacts on parking at the stations will be minimal with spaces replaced in the immediate vicinity.

In the Nob Hill area, based on feedback from the Nob Hill Neighborhood Association and Nob Hill MainStreet, the plans incorporate their desire for wider sidewalks rather than maintaining the current medians. The widened sidewalks will include street trees and permeable pavers.

Bus stop locations for the local routes are being evaluated and relocated where necessary to make sure that buses stopped to pick up passengers do not block the lane of traffic.

### **Example 5**

On-street parking is not currently allowed east of Jackson (two blocks west of San Mateo), so the stations at San Mateo and near Louisiana do not impact on-street parking. We are evaluating all landscaped areas to select plants likely to do well in our climate in the space available.

### **Summary**

The major themes in the examples above are that the plans shown online do not have any significant errors and that the City has worked diligently to consult stakeholders in the corridor and accommodate their concerns and requests wherever possible. We are happy to meet with you to review any other concerns or questions that you may have about the plans or exhibits posted on the website.