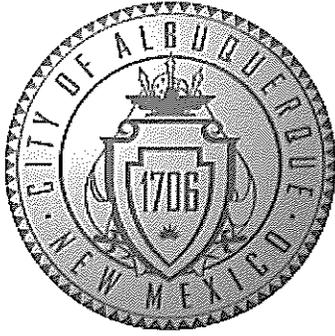


EC-26-59

# CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Office of the Mayor



Mayor Timothy M. Keller

## INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

2/17/26

**TO:** Klarissa J. Peña, President, City Council

**FROM:** Timothy M. Keller, Mayor

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'TK', is written over the name 'Timothy M. Keller' in the 'FROM' field.

**SUBJECT:** Metropolitan Redevelopment's State of New Mexico Trails+ grant request for West Old Town Rail Trail

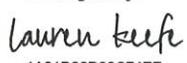
The Department of Municipal Development and Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency submitted a grant request of \$1,000,000 to the State Outdoor Recreation Division's Trails+ grant competition. If awarded, this grant will help to fund the planning and construction of a West Old Town Rail Trail segment, creating a new bicycle and pedestrian connection between the Bosque Trail, Botanic Garden, and Old Town. A \$1,000,000 match is required. Award notifications are expected later this year.

TITLE/SUBJECT OF LEGISLATION\*\*\* *Same as subject line on last page)*

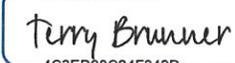
Approved:

Approved as to Legal Form:

  
Samantha Sengel, EdD Date  
Chief Administrative Officer

DocuSigned by:  
 2/23/2026 | 2:02 PM MST  
1A21D96D32C74EE...  
Date  
City Attorney

Recommended:

DocuSigned by:  
 2/23/2026 | 12:06 PM MST  
4C3ED98E24F342B...  
Date  
Director

## **Cover Analysis**

### **1. What is it?**

An application for a grant to the state of New Mexico's Outdoor Recreation Division's Trails+ grant program, which will help to fund planning and construction of the West Old Town segment of the Rail Trail.

### **2. What will this piece of legislation do?**

This is an EC. If awarded, the MRA will follow up with a piece of legislation.

### **3. Why is this project needed?**

If awarded, the grant will help to fund the West Central portion of the Rail Trail, which will help to connect the Rail Trail to the Bosque Trail, the Botanic Garden, and Old Town.

### **4. How much will it cost and what is the funding source?**

The grant request is for \$1,000,000 and there is a required \$1,00,000 match, which would be covered by funds reserved for this project between the Departments of Municipal Development, Parks and Recreation, Arts and Culture, and the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency.

### **5. Is there a revenue source associated with this contract? If so, what level of income is projected?**

No

### **6. What will happen if the project is not approved?**

The City will continue to seek out alternative funding sources for this project.

### **7. Is this service already provided by another entity?**

No

## 2026 Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant

Ends on Sat., Jan. 31 6:00 PM

<https://nmoutside.submittable.com/submit/340665/fy26-outdoor-recreation-trails-grant-closes-jan-31-2026>

*Access to the outdoors should be low-cost and ubiquitous for all New Mexicans. That's why lawmakers created the Outdoor Recreation Trails+. This grant program supports projects that enhance communities' outdoor recreation opportunities. Trails, river parks, wildlife viewing areas, and more contribute to economic development, prosperity, and wellness. This grant funds ready to implement projects that directly add to that access.*

*Review the 2025-2026 Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant Program Guide for details about the grant, including eligible applicants, award amounts, and deadlines. <https://nmoutside.com/grants/trails-plus/>*

Applying on behalf of:

ALBUQUERQUE, CITY OF

UEI: HUJ1SKKR5C18

Address: PO Box 17, ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87103, USA

### ORGANIZATIONAL DETAILS

#### 1. Organization name(required)

Limit: 300 characters

City of Albuquerque, Department of Municipal Development

#### 2. Entity type(required)

- Tribe, Pueblo, or Nation
- County or municipality
- Acequia association
- Land grant association
- Public school/district or college/university
- Soil and water conservation district
- Non-profit

#### 3. Organization website.

<https://www.cabq.gov/dmd>

#### 4. Organization social media(required)

Limit: 250 words @34 words

*Please include the platform names and associated handles or put "none" if applicable.*

DMD Instagram: CABQDMD

DMD X: ABQdmd

DMD Facebook: CABQ DMD

MRA Instagram (MRA): @cabqmetroredev

MRA LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/cabqmetroredev

MRA Facebook: CABQ Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency

Rail Trail Instagram (ABQ Rail Trail): @abqrailtrail

Rail Trail website: <https://abqrailtrail.org/>

**5. Organization address(required)**

Country(required) USA  
Address(required) PO Box 1293  
Address Line 2 (optional) One Civic Plaza, Room 7057  
City(required) Albuquerque  
State, Province, or Region(required) NM  
Zip or Postal Code(required) 87102

**6. Primary contact information(required)**

First Name(required) Jennifer  
Last Name(required) Turner

*This is the contact for all updates and questions about the grant. This contact will also receive all notices for required reporting. This contact should be available throughout the duration of the grant period AND should be the person / email address / account that submits the application. If the contact changes, it is your responsibility to update this through your Submittable account.*

Primary contact email address(required) [jenniferturner@cabq.gov](mailto:jenniferturner@cabq.gov)

Primary contact phone number(required) 505.768.3722

**6a. Secondary contact information(required)**

First Name(required) Jennifer  
Last Name(required) Jackson  
Secondary contact email address(required) [jjackson@cabq.gov](mailto:jjackson@cabq.gov)  
Secondary contact phone number(required) ) 505-263-5376

**7. Do you have a fiscal sponsor? (required)**

- Yes
- No

*If the grant funds will go directly to the organization listed above select "no". If the grant funds will go to a different organization, other than the one listed above, select "yes".*

**9. Attach the W-9 for your organization or fiscal sponsor. (required)**

*PLEASE NOTE: If your application is selected for an award, the state will use this document to begin the grant agreement process. If you are using a fiscal sponsor, please attach their completed W-9. If you are not using a fiscal sponsor, please attach a completed W-9 for the applying organization. Additionally, the signature on the attached W-9 should be from within the 6 month and it must NOT be an electronic signature. Submitting a W-9 without a correct signature or date will delay the funding process. Find a blank State of New Mexico W9 form: <https://www.nmdfa.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/NM-SUBSTITUTE-W9.pdf>. Federal forms are also acceptable.*

**10. Attach the logo for your organization. (required)**

*Select up to 2 files to attach. This will be used in official promotion of the award should your application be selected.*



municipal  
development

**11. How did you first hear about the Trails+ Grant? (required)**

- Social media
- Newspaper advertisement
- Radio advertisement
- ORD website
- An ORD OEF or Trails+ grantee
- ORD newsletter
- Partner or collaborator
- News article
- Other

**11a. If you selected other, how did you first hear about the Trails+ Grant? (50 characters)**

**12. Has your organization applied for Trails+ Grant funding previously? (required)**

- Yes
- No

**12a. Was your organization awarded Trails+ outdoor infrastructure funding?**

- Yes
- No

**12b. When was your organization awarded Trails+ funding?**

- 2020 special projects award
- 2021 Trails+ award
- 2022 Trails+ award
- 2023-24 Trails+ award
- 2024-25 Trails+ award

**12c. Are you on schedule with the project and up-to-date on reporting requirements?**

- Yes
- No
- Almost

**13. Please provide a brief organization overview. (required)**

Limit: 500 words @401 words

*This may include your mission statement, the history of your organization, your current programs and activities, and/or a few top accomplishments within the last few years.*

The Department of Municipal Development (DMD) oversees the major capital construction projects for the City of Albuquerque. This includes not only buildings, but roads, trails, lighting, and a wide range of other construction projects. DMD assures capital projects will be completed efficiently and in a timely manner with high quality standards. DMD provides the operation and maintenance of city streets, storm drains, and traffic signals, as well as the development and design of capital infrastructure for streets and storm drainage. DMD's divisions include the Capital Implementation Program, Engineering, Real Property, Storm Water Management, Street and Storm Maintenance, Traffic Engineering, Neighborhood Traffic Calming, and Construction. At any given time, DMD has hundreds of projects actively underway.

The Rail Trail project is a current priority. One of the most ambitious public infrastructure projects in the city in many decades, when completed the Rail Trail will be a seven-mile linear park that connects some of Albuquerque's most historic downtown neighborhoods to the existing Bosque Trail. Similar trails in other cities have helped to make neighborhoods safer and more accessible, stimulated massive economic growth, and fostered a stronger sense of community. One segment is complete, in the Sawmill neighborhood, and has proven to be a highly popular amenity. This segment, along with a new roundabout on Mountain Road, is a major accomplishment and was completed ahead of schedule. A wide, accessible trail, the Sawmill Rail Trail segment connects Old Town and Sawmill together and offers an inviting and well-lit recreational amenity.

A trail project of the magnitude of The Rail Trail cannot be carried out alone. From the beginning, DMD has worked closely with the city's Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA), which oversees redevelopment projects that foster economic development in the city's urban core. A current Trails+ grantee for the Central Crossing bridge project downtown, MRA's mission is to initiate collaborative public-private partnerships that lead to thoughtful and catalytic revitalization by investing in community for sustainable and equitable growth.

DMD has also planned this trail in close consultation with the state's Department of Transportation, BNSF Railroad (along segments with active rail lines nearby), the County, the Mid Region Council of Governments, Downtown Albuquerque MainStreet, businesses, and residents. Moving the Rail Trail forward is a core goal of Mayor Tim Keller in his third term. This goal was made more urgent by the federal administration cutting \$11.4M in competitive grant funding for the downtown Rail Trail segment.

## **PROJECT DETAILS**

### **14. Project abstract(required)**

Limit: 500 characters [@471 characters](#)

*Please describe the project you are applying for in 2-3 sentences. This will become the long-term public description of the work, including press releases.*

The West Old Town segment of the Rail Trail, running from the Bosque Trail at the Botanic Garden to Rio Grande near the Old Town Plaza, will be a critical Rail Trail segment, allowing walkers and bikers to connect from the existing Bosque Trail to some of Albuquerque's popular destinations—the BioPark, Old Town, and Sawmill—without requiring a vehicle. This segment will carry the vision of the Rail Trail forward and strategically grow the bike network in Albuquerque.

**15. Please provide a full overview and description of your project. What are the primary goals of the project? (required)**

Limit: 500 words @500 words

With State support, DMD proposes to construct the West Old Town phase of the Rail Trail. This segment will connect the Bosque Trail to some of Albuquerque's most visited attractions, creating an amenity with regional draw by allowing more people to access amenities by foot or bicycle in a highly congested part of the city. Because this segment connects to the Bosque Trail, users will be able to reach a wide range of other attractions beyond the Old Town area, including the National Hispanic Cultural Center, Zoo, and other popular retail/commercial destinations like El Vado and Bike in Coffee at Old Town Farm.

The West Old Town Rail Trail segment will widen the sidewalk and enhance bike/ped safety in front of the Botanic Garden and create a connection through the historic West Old town neighborhood along Montoya Street and Panmunjon Road, crossing Rio Grande Boulevard using a HAWK signal to be installed at Hollywood Avenue.

The trail in front of the Botanic Garden is 90% designed. Concurrently, traffic calming and pedestrian safety measures are being studied and a pedestrian trail north of Hollywood Avenue is in design. Dubbed "the Hollywood Alley," the city acquired a wide strip of land (about 44 feet wide and 1,731 feet long, or 1.75 acres in area), that runs between Hollywood Avenue and Edna Avenue. This parcel, which is completely removed from vehicles, is being designed to be a linear park, with sculptures and other amenities—to benefit neighborhood residents and attract visitors to Old Town. The plan for the Hollywood Alley will be complete by the spring, with the Botanic Garden stretch ready to break ground upon securing funding.

The goals of the West Old Town Rail Trail Segment are to:

- Create a new, safe, non-vehicular connection to some of Albuquerque's most popular attractions;
- Reduce traffic congestion in one of the city's more dangerous areas for crashes and pedestrian injuries/fatalities;
- Build a new recreational attraction in what is already a major destination;
- Enhance public spaces, add landscaping, and shade;
- Improve the City's transportation and recreation network; and
- Foster job and economic growth.

The completed seven-mile Rail Trail will connect historic lower-income residential neighborhoods (Barelas, Downtown, Wells Park, Sawmill, and Old Town) to jobs, key institutions, and mass transportation options while expanding opportunities for local businesses and the development of vacant lots and buildings that emerged after a decline of dominant industries in the area.

The Trail will also reduce crashes and pedestrian and bicycle fatalities through a design that is largely separated from vehicular traffic. Increased pedestrian traffic from the project will increase the customer base for local businesses and enterprises, creating an investment opportunity that will enhance the quality of life in neighborhoods that have been disconnected from surrounding areas by roads and the railroad. These elements are an opportunity to link different neighborhoods while creating healthy and safe recreation that will drive economic development and create a more vibrant community that equitably serves the needs of residents.

**16. Please select the primary type of project. (required)**

- Planning and design
- Surveying and engineering
- Construction
- Campground and/or picnic site
- Signage (trailhead, wayfinding, interpretive, etc.)
- Outdoor classroom
- River boat ramp or other water access
- River surf wave
- Post fire or other disaster mitigation
- Trail amenities (benches, bike maintenance stations, and/or trail improvements)
- Trail Maintenance
- Park improvement
- Group shelter
- Other

*Select all that apply.*

**17. Check all types of outdoor recreation activities this project will improve access to. (required)**

- Archery
- Backpacking
- Bicycling (road, mountain, and gravel)
- Birdwatching
- Boating
- Camping
- Climbing
- Conservation / Restoration / Trail Work
- Fishing
- Flora and Fauna Identification
- Gardening
- Hang-gliding
- Hiking
- Horseback Riding
- Hot-air Ballooning
- Hunting
- Jet skiing
- Mushrooming
- Nature Study
- Off-Highway Vehicles (motorcycles, ATV's, trials riding, side-by-sides, overlanding...)
- Skateboarding
- Orienteering
- Paddling (rafting, kayaking, canoeing, paddle boarding, etc.)
- Running (road or trail)
- Skiing
- Sledding
- Snowboarding

- Snowshoeing

Please check all applicable types of outdoor recreation activities this project will support.

**18. Is this project primarily for motorized, non-motorized, or mixed use? (required)**

- Motorized
- Non-motorized
- Mixed use

**19. Please select the primary county this project will benefit. (required)**

Bernalillo

**20. Attach a location map of the proposed project. (required) In hand**

Select up to 5 files to attach. Please attach a map(s) to show the location of the project within your community or region. The map should identify the main roads that provide access to the project and other infrastructure surrounding the project. For trail projects, the map should show how the project links to other recreational amenities, businesses, and/or other trails.

**21. What entity or individual owns the land where the project will occur? (required)**

Limit: 250 characters @243 characters

The City owns the land and right-of-way where this segment of the trail is planned. Unlike other segments of the Rail Trail, there are no rail lines along the West Old Town Trail and therefore no NMDOT reviews or permissions will be required.

**22. What is the strategy for ongoing stewardship of the project? (required)**

Limit: 250 words @103 words

Please explain how the project will be maintained, i.e. will you coordinate volunteers, and if so, how will they be recruited, trained and mobilized? Will you contract for maintenance, if so, what is your budget and source of ongoing funding? If maintenance will be provided in-house, which department and what are their resources?

As with other open spaces and trails under City of Albuquerque stewardship, the City commits to cleaning and securing the West Old Town Rail Trail segment. Similar to other parks and trails, this will be a joint effort between departments, including Solid Waste, Parks, Arts and Culture, Municipal Development, Albuquerque Police, and Albuquerque Fire as appropriate. Over the longer term, a group of dedicated Rail Trail supporters are forming a nonprofit Friends group. This group, as it grows in capacity, may also provide support for cleaning, maintaining, and programming the Trail. The City is supporting the initial board with their nonprofit paperwork currently.

**23. Has permission been granted to access the land to complete this project? (required)**

- Yes
- No

**23a. Please upload documentation confirming the project being proposed is supported by the land management agency or land owner. In hand**

Please note you must document permission to access the land in order to be eligible for grant funding. If you answer no to this question your application will be deemed ineligible and denied for funding.

*Private property: If your project enters private property, please attach a copy of a Memorandum of Understanding, the Grant of Easement, a copy of a lease, or other relevant documentation from the landowner. For ORD to invest in a project on private property, the project must be open to the public.*  
*Public property: If your project takes place on public land, provide a letter of support from the Foresty Supervisor or senior line staff of the land management agency. Projects on Forest Service land must have Forest Supervisor approval. Additionally, we highly recommend that if a project is on public land, the local land management agency is one of the project partners, and an agreement is in place that identifies their role and commitment to the success of the project, and this aligns with the program of work.*

**24. Please select the most appropriate type of community this project will support. (required)**

- Tribal
- Rural
- Urban
- Land Grant

*NOTE: "Rural" defined as any part of the state other than: Los Alamos County; Albuquerque; Rio Rancho; Farmington; Las Cruces; Roswell; Santa Fe; and a 10-mile radius around those cities.*

**GRANT PROJECT TIMELINE**

**25. Is the project shovel-ready? Shovel-ready is defined as being able to start the project within three months of being awarded the grant. (required)**

- Yes
- No

**26. Grantees are allowed up to 24 months from contract signing to complete the project. Please use the spaces below to provide a grant timeline for your project. Provide detailed explanations on how the project will be constructed, what work will be done in each stage, and who will lead the work.**

**Months 1-6(required)**

Limit: 150 words

Design, engineering documents, and landscaping are already underway for portions of the proposed West Old Town segment, with the BioPark segment at 90% design. After notification of award, the following activities will begin immediately:

Hollywood Alley and Panmujon:

\*Preliminary designs and budget, Q1 2026

\*Public meetings on proposed neighborhood trail alignment and Hollywood Alley design, Q1 and Q2 2026

\*Traffic studies, Q1-2 2026

Design on Biopark segment finalized in Q1, 2026 (at 90% currently)

Construction on Biopark segment begins, Q2 2026 (12-month duration)

**Months 7-12(required)**

Limit: 150 words

FINAL DESIGNS for West Old Town segment:

\*Hollywood Alley budget and design finalized, Q2 2026

\*Intersection studies completed, Q2 2026

\*Construction documents completed, Q4 2026

**CONSTRUCTION**

\*Construction on Hollywood and BioPark intersections starts and concludes, Q3-Q4 2026

\*A separately planned and funded HAWK signal installed at Rio Grande and Hollywood, Q4 2026

**Months 13-18(required)**

Limit: 150 words

Construction on BioPark segment concludes, Q1, 2027

**CLOSEOUT:**

\*Trail operational, punch-list, substantial project completion, Q2 2027

**Months 19-24(required)**

Limit: 150 words

N/A

**BUDGET INFORMATION****27. Organization's total operating budget(required)**

\$869,593,000

*List the total annual operating budget for the applying organization.*

**28. Total project cost(required)**

\$4,355,155

*Provide the total anticipated cost of the specific project you are applying for. This is not the same as the Trails+ grant request amount.*

**29. What category of Trails+ grant are you applying for? (required)**

- Tier 1 Local (Between \$25,000 - \$99,999)
- Tier 2 Regional (Between \$100,000 - \$500,000)
- Tier 3 Regional (between \$500,000 to \$1,000,000)

*Trails+ grants will be distributed in three tiers: Tier 1 Local of up to \$99,999; Tier 2 Regional of up to \$500,000; Tier 3 up to \$1 million. Note that Tier 2 and Tier 3 Regional applicants will be expected to make an oral presentation to the review committee should their project be chosen as a finalist. These should be landscape-scale projects that bring together multiple community partners.*

**29b. Tier 2 regional project funding request.**

\$1,000,000

**29d. Please attach MOUs or MOAs to document collaborator roles and responsibilities. (required) In hand**

**29e. Please upload a copy of any and all subcontractor quotes to total \$20,000 or more here. In hand**

**30. Match amount (required)**

\$1,000,000

*Please provide the amount secured for the 1:1 match requirement. For rural and tribal applicants (see definition above), the match is 2:1. (i.e. if you apply for \$50,000 in grant funding you need at least a \$25,000 match). The match can be in the form of in-kind donations, cash, other grants or funding associated with the project, volunteer time, etc. If you are unclear about the match requirement or what counts towards the match please reach out to ORD for clarification.*

**Budget Attachment(required)**

*Please ensure your grant and match totals equal match amount and grant request amount listed in questions 29 and 30.*

Please use this format for your budget submission. Complete grant request and match documentation on one spreadsheet. Contact ORD if you have any questions.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>Category</b>	<b>Item/Description/Source</b>	<b>Trails+ Grant</b>	<b>Match (cash and in-kind)</b>
<b>Total</b>			

*\*Please complete all columns and note the total for Trails+ Grant column should equal the grant request amount included in your application, and the same for the match column.*

**RECREATIONAL VALUE**

**32. Briefly describe how this project will improve equitable outdoor recreation access needs in your community. Who will be the primary users or beneficiaries of this project? Will youth in particular benefit? (required)**

Limit: 250 words @ **238 words**

While the Bosque Trail is located near some of Albuquerque’s most popular destinations, access for residents of historic neighborhoods is limited, unpleasant and often dangerous. The area has significant traffic congestion and dangerous intersections. Central Avenue and Rio Grande Blvd. in the project area are noted as dangerous on the High Injury Fatal Road network, with 26 injuries and one death between 2019 and 2023.

The primary beneficiaries of the West Old Town Rail Trail will be city residents, including those who currently have limited non-vehicular options. The Trail will provide a pleasant and safe means of getting into and out of the area, and to access the Bosque Trail. This segment of the Rail Trail will bolster the greater downtown recreation network and provide nonmotorized access to housing, services, and amenities—while connecting residents and visitors, including youth, to the larger public transportation network. Additionally, the Trail is expected to reduce Albuquerque’s housing gap and create new jobs. Similar trails elsewhere have spurred dense new housing and high levels of investment.

Economic and housing growth is needed across greater downtown, where close to 40% of residents are at or below the poverty line; and more than half are people of color. Over 81% of downtown residents are renters, and almost half of them do not own a car, meaning that a strong transportation network is critical to ensuring access to recreation, as well as jobs and services.

**33. How does your project enhance the region's recreation landscape? For example, will it connect to any other trail systems? Will it contribute to a regional outdoor brand? (required)**

Limit: 250 words @238 words

New Mexico is well-known for its recreational amenities. However, Albuquerque’s downtown area is not on many people’s must-visit list. The West Old Town Trail will improve the situation by connecting the well-loved Bosque Trail to some of Albuquerque’s most popular amenities with tourists and residents alike. By linking to the Bosque Trail, users will be able to access nearly 20 miles of safe, separated, multiuse trail—while also connecting to cultural and historic amenities, shopping, and restaurants, not to mention schools and jobs. Because the Bosque Trail is the primary spine for the planned Rio Grande Trail, the West Old Town segment of the Rail Trail will one day connect people to a massive network of multi-state bike and pedestrian trails.

The Rail Trail will be one of the most ambitious outdoor recreation projects in the state in recent decades, and we anticipate that it will have regional and national appeal, attracting new visitors to the state. With its celebration of New Mexico history and culture and strong focus on recreation and getting outdoors, will align with the New Mexico True brand. It features in Visit Albuquerque’s 10-year master plan, where downtown development, enhancing outdoor recreation, celebrating Route 66, arts and culture heritage attractions, and building transportation connectivity are all key strategies to foster more and better experiences for visitors to Albuquerque. The Rail Trail is also a key strategy and development opportunity in MRA’s recently-passed Downtown 2050 Plan.

**34. Will this project connect to or enhance the Rio Grande Trail's designated or preferred alignment? (required)**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**35. Is this project part of a county, city, or other master plan for the area? (required)**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**35a. Please list which county, city, or other master plan this project is part of. (required)**

Limit: 50 characters @42 characters

**35b. Please describe the level of community engagement in the development of planning document being referenced. (required)**

Limit: 500 words @323 words

City staff was in regular contact with Visit Albuquerque staff during the writing of their 10-year plan to ensure up-to-date information about Rail Trail planning and development. City staff continue to meet regularly with Visit Albuquerque to ensure a coordinated and aligned vision for Albuquerque development and tourism.

The Rail Trail is part of a larger vision to revitalize the greater downtown area, turning it into a destination to live, work, and explore. It features in other local and regional planning documents as well, including the MRA Downtown 2050 Plan and the Central Albuquerque Community Planning Area Assessment. In the development of these plans, the City held a series of public and stakeholder meetings over the past few years, which have engaged dozens of business leaders, industry groups, and government officials, as well as hundreds of residents and property owners. The MRA also mailed a survey (in English and Spanish) to over 4,000 residents in and around the downtown area to gather input on the project.

Other pieces of this Rail Trail vision have already been constructed or are underway, each of which underwent their own community engagement processes. The Sawmill Rail Trail segment had its grand opening in late 2025 and has already been the focal point of community events such as a Dia de los Muertos-themed pet parade. Central Crossing is under construction downtown and will create a more welcoming entry-point into downtown for walkers and bikers, with an at-grade rail crossing and 2+-story monumental sculpture at the top (the “tumbleweed” is currently on display at the Rail Yards, with a grand unveiling scheduled for Valentine’s Day). Central Crossing will complement other projects that have enhanced downtown safety and appeal, including new bike lanes installed downtown along Central Avenue, which will connect seamlessly to the Rail Trail.

Consultants working on the design of the West Old Town segment anticipate at least three community meetings with neighborhoods to assist with their planning.

**35c. Please note here where your project is referred in the planning document attached below. (required)**

Limit: 100 words @42 words

In Visit Albuquerque’s 10-Year Destination Master Plan, the Rail Trail is listed as a priority in the Situational Analysis, page 60; as a key strategy under the Recommendations section, page 62; and as a partner to support Bike Sharing, on page 71.

**35d. Please attach planning document. (required) In hand**

**36. Estimate the physical size of the project (i.e. miles, acres, or square footage). Make sure to list the unit of measurement. (required)**

Limit: 100 characters @100 characters

The West Old Town trail is 0.75 miles. Trail width will be 12-24 ft along the length of the segment.

**37. What barriers or challenges might impede this project? (required)**

Limit: 250 words @248 words

*Examples: Supply chain issues, land access issues, weather, lack of volunteers, etc.*

Budget shortfalls in this era of project cost escalations and labor shortages have been the ongoing primary concern. As is likely known by the State already, the federal government retracted more than \$11.4M from the Downtown segment of the Rail Trail. Knowing that there will be little to no federal financial support for trails projects for the foreseeable future, the City has pivoted to focusing on more modest trail segments – like West Old Town—which can be built using a phased approach and are achievable with lower budgets. The City has also requested funding in the state capital outlay process to try and close some of the more significant funding gaps on other trail segments. Focusing on the segments of trail that are not near active rail lines also helps with the speed of decision-making and flexibility in design. Another factor is neighborhood concerns, which are always a risk to the design and approval process. To alleviate these concerns and to help build understanding, public meetings will be scheduled in the spring, as design work for the neighborhood portions of the West Old Town Rail Trail becomes ready to share.

However, once constructed, the City is confident that this segment will be successful. Helping to increase access and connection to some of Albuquerque’s most popular recreational assets is expected to be highly popular. It has been the goal of multiple past administrations to build an urban trail, and that longstanding vision is becoming a reality, bit by bit.

#### **EQUITY AND ACCESS**

38. Will you charge a fee to access this area? (required)

- Yes
- No

**39. How will this project connect members of your community to recreational opportunities, particularly community members who historically may not have had the same access? (required)**

Limit: 500 words @296 words

Currently, the only pedestrian and bicycle access point from Sawmill and Old Town is along Mountain Road, which is a narrow road with no shoulder that leads to a busy intersection at Mountain and Rio Grande. There is no safe and dedicated bike access to the Botanic Garden from Old Town, in spite of being directly adjacent to the Bosque Trail. The West Old Town neighborhood has no good bike access either. The proposed West Old Town Trail will build a dedicated bike and pedestrian trail, which will connect to the larger recreational trail network, allowing people to get into town safely and easily. It will also help West Old Town residents and visitors better access the network of acequias that are already used as an informal trail network, further expanding the network of recreational trails in the area.

The West Old Town Trail is an investment in local residents, as well as a future attraction for tourists. For residents, it will represent a means of getting around without having to rely on a car or getting stuck in traffic. Beyond mere recreation, for the nearly half of downtown renters who do not have regular access to a vehicle, this trail could be a critical means of access to the City’s larger transportation network, including bike and bus infrastructure.

Finally, once the vision for the Rio Grande Trail is realized, the Rail Trail may be able to connect many thousands of Albuquerque residents and visitors alike to one of the nation’s premier multi-state bike trails. It will, in turn, connect Rio Grande Trail users to amenities in Albuquerque’s downtown. Finally,

working toward better and safer access to the Alvarado Transit Center can connect people by bus or train to recreation as far away as Santa Fe.

**40. Describe what considerations for accessibility have been made in your project and why these considerations will or will not be implemented. (required)**

Limit: 500 words @91 words

*Making small changes to infrastructure, such as widening trails, can open up their use for people of all abilities. Please keep this in mind when planning your project so you can find opportunities to meet as many community members' needs with outdoor recreation infrastructure, no matter what the recreation type may be. This will be prioritized in scoring of applications.*

The entirety of the Albuquerque Rail Trail is being designed with ADA accessibility in mind, with wide trail widths and gentle slopes, with appropriate handrails installed where needed. The Trail, wherever possible, will be wide enough not just for bicycles and pedestrians, but to accommodate pedestrians walking side-by-side with a wheelchair and still leave room for bicyclists. Most of the Rail Trail will be constructed from smooth concrete or similar material to ensure there are no tripping hazards and to provide enough texture to keep the path from being slippery when wet.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL IMPACT**

**41. How will this project restore, enhance, or conserve the natural lands and/or waters in the region? (required)**

Limit: 500 words @234 words

The Rail Trail is part of a larger vision to bring more native landscaping, shade, rest areas, and water to the greater downtown area in order to enhance comfort and increase climate resiliency. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, as the greater downtown area grew, very little thought was put into retaining or creating green spaces, ensuring pedestrian accessibility and comfort, conserving the natural environment, or creating shade to improve the environment for residents and visitors. As temperatures increase and weather grows more extreme, the current design of many public spaces is not a recipe for recreational comfort and safety. The Rail Trail will introduce greenery and shade to areas that are currently barren and exposed. The plan is to use native plants, including flowering and edible plants, to create a greenbelt, attract pollinators, and to create habitat for local fauna. In West Old Town this is particularly important, restoring green spaces and habitats that connect to the Bosque Trail. Part of the West Old Town plan involves transforming a currently vacant and barren alley into an inviting public space that brings people together and adds shade and greenery. Users will also have the opportunity to connect to the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District ditch network, which winds through the West Old Town neighborhood. In total, this project will increase floodwater management, provide habitat for native pollinators and insects, and reintroduce native species across greater downtown.

**42. Does the project improve the region's resilience or adaptation to climate change? (required)**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**42a. Please explain how the project will improve the region's resilience and/or will addresses climate change.**

Limit: 500 words @216 words

Resilient infrastructure that is designed to better manage temperature extremes and periods of drought and flood will be critical to ensuring that Albuquerque remains a healthy and desirable place to live and work. The Rail Trail is part of a larger vision to make the area more resilient to the extremes of climate change by building infrastructure that reduces the risk of flooding, creates shade, and increases native plant life. Part of the proposed route will run along or near Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District ditches, and the City is committed to working with MRGCD on improving flood control through the design of the Trail.

This project is yet another piece, along with Central Crossing downtown and the Sawmill segment of the Rail Trail, in an ambitious reimagining of greater downtown through the construction of the Rail Trail. This project will introduce more green spaces, shade, rest areas, and water fountains and will build an amenity with broad appeal that attracts users from across the city, state, and elsewhere. This infrastructure will support making all of downtown a more comfortable place to live, work, and be active. The introduction of native plants into the landscaping along the Rail Trail will not only create shade and cooler pavement but will also offer habitat for native species of insects and animals.

**43. Will this project help restore, enhance, or protect a watershed? (required)**

- Yes
- No

**44. Is all necessary environmental compliance and/or other permitting work completed? (required)**

- Yes
- No

**44b. Please explain what compliance work has been completed. (required)**

Limit: 250 words @160 words

No environmental compliance is required for the West Old Town Rail Trail. The entire project will be on existing sidewalks, roads, and an alley. The project will have no effect on cultural resources or traditional cultural properties. It is not expected to have an impact on threatened or endangered animals and the area to-be-disturbed currently has few to no plants or wildlife habitats. The area is not near a Wild and Scenic River. Portions have irrigation ditches/acequias in the vicinity, but the City will maintain close communication with MRGCD over any plans that involve trail infrastructure near the acequias. The current plan is to utilize existing roadways over acequias for the trail. There are no wetlands in or near the area. The project will only run on areas that are already paved or are disturbed land. It is not eligible for erosion or sediment control. The project is not eligible for fugitive dust control and no noise analysis is required.

**45. Please attach any environmental compliance or other permitting documentation here (if applicable). N/A**

**46. Is this project located in or near sensitive natural or cultural resource areas? (required)**

- Yes
- No

ECONOMIC IMPACT

**47. How will this project support and engage the local business community? List specific economic impacts the project will have. (required)**

Limit: 500 words @500 words

*Cite any partnerships with local EDOs or local economic development entities.*

The Rail Trail is part of a larger vision to revitalize downtown and turn it into a destination to live and work. In cities such as Atlanta and Indianapolis, urban trails have attracted billions of dollars each in new investment dollars and brought in thousands of new jobs. Albuquerque expects to see similar levels of investment here once more segments of the Rail Trail have been completed. The Rail Trail is expected to catalyze and improve the greater downtown business climate, attracting new businesses and helping existing businesses to thrive.

The MRA recently updated its downtown redevelopment plan (Downtown 2050: <https://www.cabq.gov/mra/documents/downtown-2050-final-email.pdf>), which points to the Rail Trail as a key development, and is undergoing the first downtown parking study in nine years. City Council also declared Tax Increment Financing District in the Downtown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area, which will eventually allow the City to support both public infrastructure and incentivize private investment with growth on property tax and gross receipts tax collections. An Action Plan is required prior to expending TIF Funds, which will point to the Rail Trail as a critical piece of infrastructure to support economic growth in the greater downtown area. These plans will all help the City to make more informed and strategic decisions on amenities and supports required to help support a more vibrant greater city.

Additionally, MRA is working with other area organizations and City departments to determine the appropriate set of business and residential supports in and around downtown. Outputs of this work include a Rail Trail Inclusive Growth Report and an Anti-Displacement Toolkit (led by the Planning Department). MRA has strong relationships with the City's Economic Development Department (EDD), which houses small business navigation supports, and both EDD and MRA refer businesses to one another. MRA has also been coordinating with the Planning Department to help improve businesses' and developers' experience of working through the permitting and development process.

The City has held a series of public and stakeholder meetings over the past four years, which have engaged dozens of businesses and hundreds of residents and property owners. The MRA also mailed a survey (in English and Spanish) to over 4,000 residents and businesses in and around the downtown area in 2024 to gather input on the project. The city has strong partnerships with Visit Albuquerque, the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, and the Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance, which will support efforts to connect the business community to development and growth opportunities in and around downtown. The City is also working with a group of dedicated stakeholders on standing up a Friends of the Rail Trail nonprofit and an in-progress downtown Albuquerque Business Improvement District, as well as various neighborhood groups, and Downtown Albuquerque and Barelas MainStreets. Additional meetings with the public and businesses are planned throughout 2026 to ensure a high level of ongoing engagement. Both the West Old Town Neighborhood Association and the Historic Old Town Association have been in frequent contact with the MRA throughout the Rail Trail planning process.

**48. How many full, part-time, and/or seasonal jobs will this project create? (required)**

*Include all job(s) (full-time, part-time, seasonal, etc.).*

60

**48a. Provide a breakdown of the number listed above for number of jobs created. (required)**

Limit: 250 words @187 words

*Please break down number of full-time, part-time and seasonal jobs that the number stated in question 48 includes. Describe if that number describes additional job opportunities created in ancillary industries due to the attraction of the project.*

Based on construction projects of similar size, we expect that the West Old Town Rail Trail segment will create 55-60 full-time construction jobs during the 12-18-month construction period, followed by 2-4 permanent part-time jobs to oversee and maintain the trail. In addition, the City will dedicate its own maintenance staff to the project. As the trail grows in size and scope, the City anticipates requesting additional support staff from City Council to ensure that the entirety of the Rail Trail remains in excellent condition—clean, free of trash, and with beautiful landscaping. The Friends of the Rail Trail nonprofit group, if it grows in ways comparable to other cities, will hire its own staff or contractors to support maintenance and programming along the Trail—estimated at 1-3 positions within 3-5 years.

The Trail, by attracting additional visitors to the area, is also expected to create hundreds of ancillary jobs by creating a new attraction between the Botanic Garden and Old Town, which is likely to spur investments due to more connected and more accessible destinations. However, these indirect jobs cannot be calculated at this early stage of the project.

**49. How many temporary positions will be created through the development of this project? (required)**

*Include all job(s) (full-time, part-time, seasonal, etc.).*

55

**49a. Provide a breakdown of the number listed above for number of jobs created. (required)**

Limit: 250 words @28 words

*Please break down number of full-time, part-time and seasonal jobs that are created by completing the project stated in question 49 (e.g. hiring construction crews).*

Based on construction projects of similar size, we expect that the West Old Town Rail Trail segment will create 55-60 full-time construction jobs during the 12-18-month construction period

**50. How will this project increase visitation to the area? (required)**

Limit: 250 words @242 words

*Describe whether this is a project that you anticipate increasing visitors to the region. Cite any partnerships with destination management organizations or local tourism departments.*

Investments in Albuquerque should not only seek to attract out-of-state visitors, but New Mexico residents. Many people who live in Albuquerque never come to the greater downtown area due to a perception that it is unsafe or there is nothing to do. A major investment in recreational amenities that helps connect attractions in Sawmill, Old Town, and the Botanic Garden to the well-known Bosque Trail sends an important signal to all potential visitors that the area is worth visiting. In its 10-year strategic plan, Visit Albuquerque highlights the potential of the Rail Trail to attract visitors to the City and make the tourism industry overall more viable. The Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce and Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance both also support this development and its potential for revitalization.

Based on experiences in other cities that have built similar trails, when completed the Rail Trail is likely to attract many millions in investment and create hundreds of jobs. By constructing a world-class destination recreational infrastructure, Albuquerque expects to attract tourists and local visitors, as well as new investments in new housing, hotels, and services. We already have evidence to support this theory in the existing Sawmill Rail Trail segment. Even though it is less than one-quarter mile long and opened in late 2025, the Trail has hosted a number of events and has made Old Town and Sawmill both more accessible on foot or on bike, even as an isolated segment of trail.

**51. Have you applied to or do you intend to apply to the Land and Water Conservation Fund in 2024 or 2025? (required)**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**52. Have you applied or do you intend to apply for a New Mexico Youth Conservation Corps grant in 2025? (required)**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS**

**53. Please attach any relevant documents, images, maps, etc. that help describe or showcase the proposed project. In hand**

*Photos will be used in long-term public promotion of projects awarded. High quality photos preferred.*

**55. Please attach any MOUs, MOAs, or letters of support here. (required) In hand**

*IMPORTANT NOTE: The Trails+ review committee scores based in part on the number and quality of letters of support for a project. Successful projects will demonstrate a high level of support from the greater community, especially Tribal governments, counties, municipalities, and federal and state land managers. At least one letter of support is required from a local entity.*