

New Mexico State Fairgrounds Master Plan

Fairgrounds District Board Meeting



Monday, March 23, 2026

Master Plan Review

- Community Engagement findings
- Overall Master Plan review
- Phase 1 review
- Community Feedback



Master Planning Process

The Master Plan follows a three-stage process:

- Stage 1 - Data Collection & Analysis
- Stage 2 – Discussion Concepts Development
- Stage 3 - Final Master Plan Development



Multiple Stakeholders



Community Vision

Safe, walkable, affordable neighborhoods, that honor the historical character of the Fairgrounds and International District while centering families, sustainability, and economic prosperity.



“What do we want for Fairgrounds neighborhoods in the future?”



Community Stakeholder Kick-off Meeting Engagement Results - 7/23/2025



Community Goals

1. Safe, welcoming, walkable neighborhoods
2. Economic prosperity for area businesses and residents, including pathways to home ownership
3. Parks, nature and green spaces
4. Affordable, family-friendly amenities
5. Improved transportation and connectivity
6. Environmental sustainability

We need more housing options, more dwellings and structures for people and more stepping stones for housing and home ownership.

- Survey Response

"This has the potential to be a jewel in our community. Think Golden Gate Park. Think Riverfront Park in Spokane. We need more places to BE TOGETHER in the community."

- Community Meeting Participant

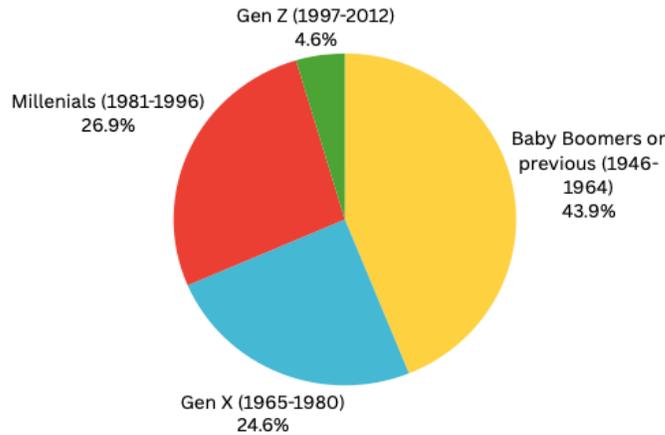
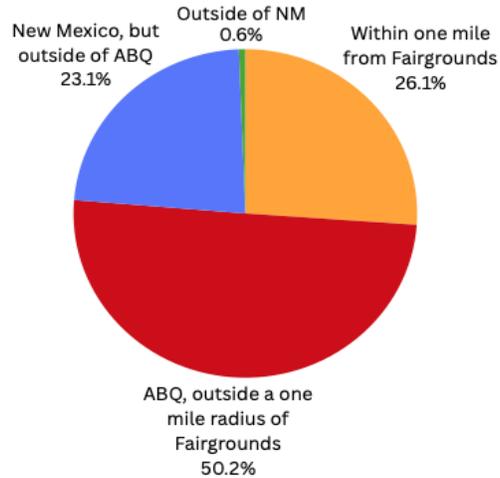
There is almost no access to walkable commercial goods. I can walk to one gas station that does not feel like a safe place and a Blakes where someone was recently stabbed. Everything else is car dealerships.

- In-Depth Interview

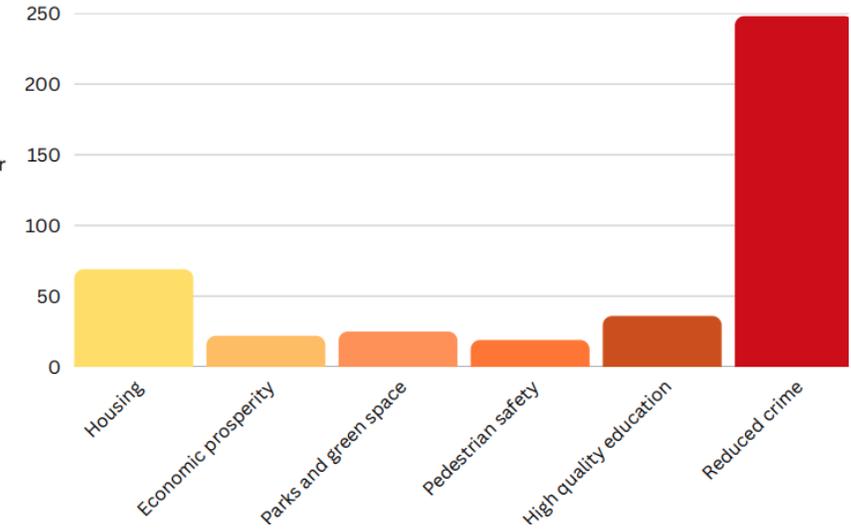
"There are not any safe spaces to hangout. I wish we had safe places we could walk to see our friends, play basketball, and just hangout." - Wilson Middle School Student

Highlights from Community Input

Who we heard from:



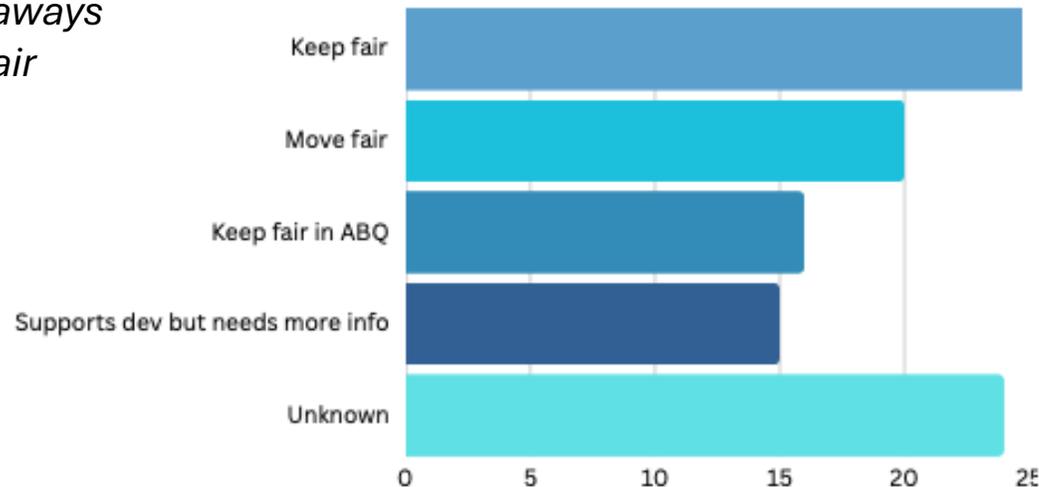
Survey 1
Community Priorities



Survey 2 – Concept Feedback

Major Takeaways

Re: State Fair



Concerns:

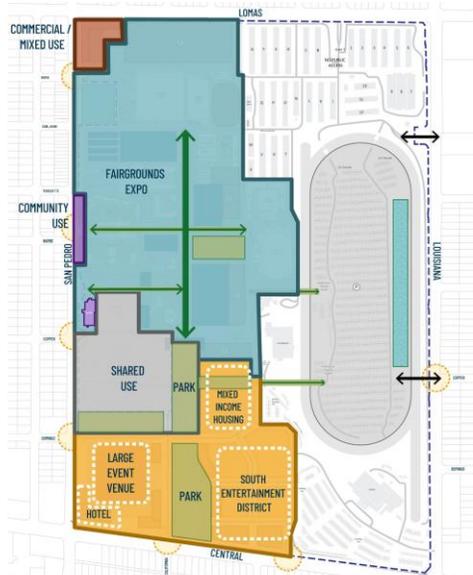
- Crime and homelessness
- Traffic
- Parking and ADA accessibility
- State water shortage
- Ongoing management of District
- Noise and light pollution
- Gentrification

Concept 1 Feedback

“Much of the vibe of what we have now seems to be enhanced (in Concept 01) without sacrificing the historic experience we’ve come to find reliable and comforting.” **–Fairgrounds Neighbor**

“We need more housing and parks in that area. The quality of events hosted at Expo NM do not put it to good use, definitely not enough to warrant a renovation.” **–NM Resident**

“Why are you leaving the white elephant - the racetrack - untouched. This is used only a few weeks a year and is vacant the remainder of the year. I understand their is a contract and a casino, but you should relocate it to a place outside town, perhaps combined with other racing venue.” **–ABQ Resident**

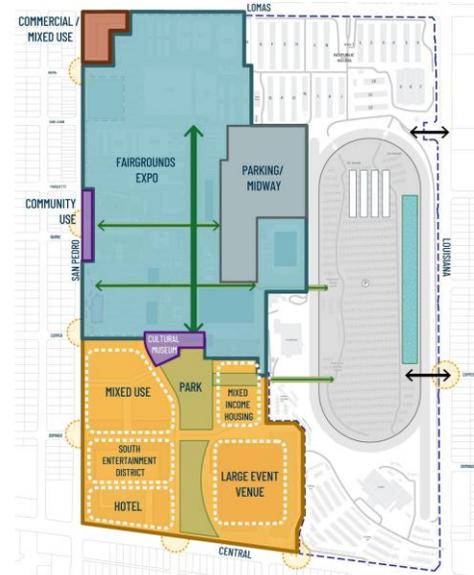


Concept 2 Feedback

“Makes San Pedro & Lomas an engaging outward-facing corner; keeps the Fair in place (basically); adds more housing than option 1 and mixes it with retail, commercial, and park space to form a walkable live-work *neighborhood*; proposed housing is convenient to local businesses along San Pedro, even if still secluded from Central.” **–ABQ Resident**

“I love the live-work-play neighborhood concept and that it has a large entertainment complex and a proper entertainment district. Also that it has a public park! This is my preferred concept plan.” **–ABQ Resident**

“Similar to Concept 1, I don’t think this goes far enough. I think Albuquerque (and New Mexico) have the opportunity to create a really vibrant economic hub in an area of town that needs it the most...” **–ABQ Resident**

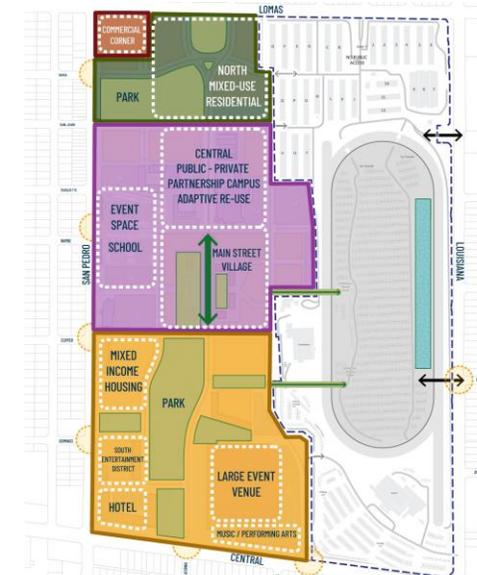


Concept 3 Feedback

“This is much better than the first two - and may have the ability to lead to improvement on central, lomas and buffer neighborhoods to the west. I see the critical issue is that the “fairgrounds” still presents a huge barrier between neighborhoods east and west, and doesn’t fully engage central.” **–Fairgrounds Neighbor**

“This concept completely changes an area that I feel is isolated from the city with how it’s walled off currently. This plan can make it feel more inviting for people living nearby and passing by.” **–ABQ Resident**

“This is my favorite plan. We NEED more housing and especially walkable housing in this city. I’m also not clear that the fair is served best by being in town. I am concerned about a loss of revenue to Albuquerque by moving the fair.” **–Fairgrounds Neighbor**



Future of The New Mexico State Fair

- Planning was "agnostic" of State Fair relocation
- Many want the Fair to remain at its current location
- Fewer feel the Fair should move and make room for other opportunities
- Many want the Fair to remain in ABQ
- Most want more information on where it would go, if we would miss a year, process and cost of move, etc.



Entertainment Districts

- Recognition that Tingley will require upgrades or replacement
- Sports arena or field frequently came up as potential use and GRT generator
- Performing arts center identified as potential use

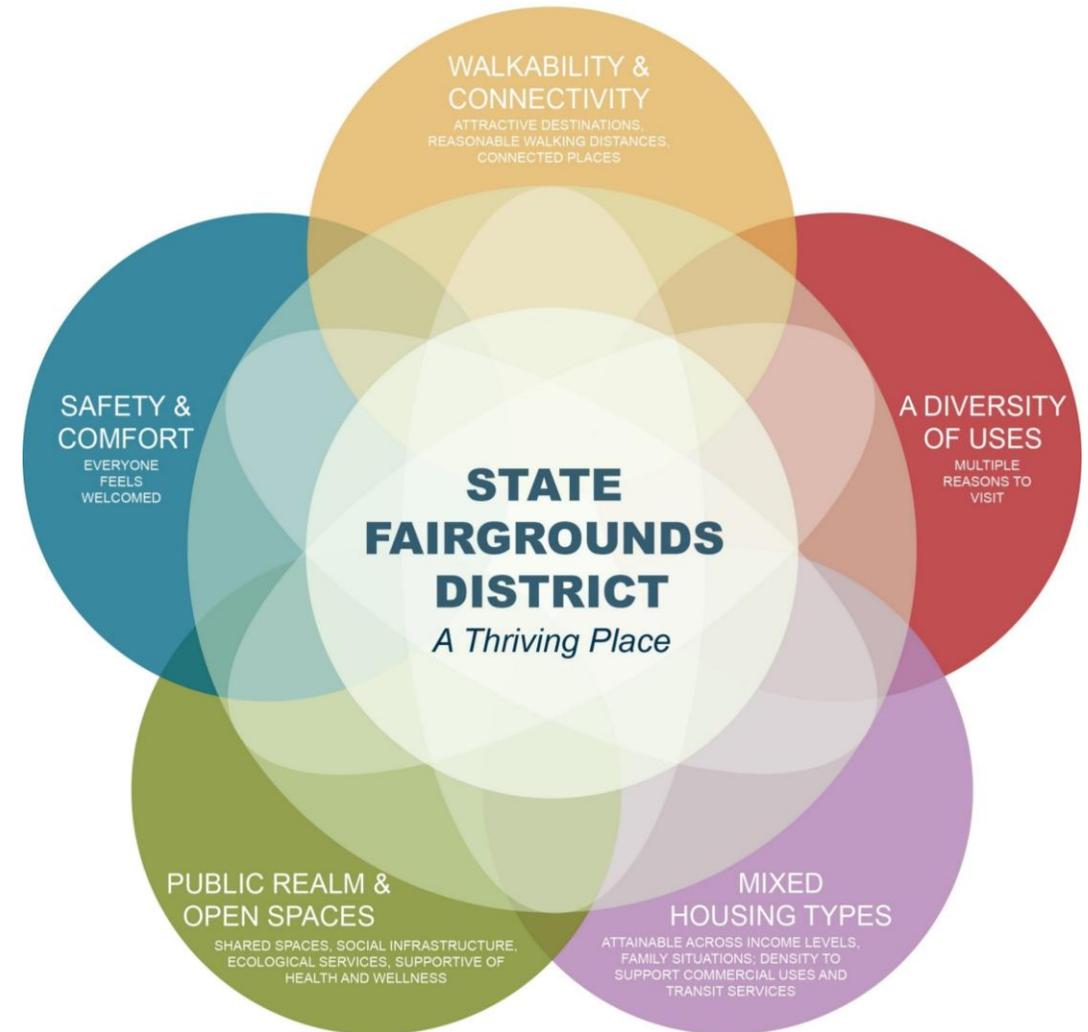


Framework Concept Strategy

Concept Development

Create an ecosystem of activity and diverse uses to support local resident's quality of life while providing a lively destination for the people of Albuquerque and beyond.

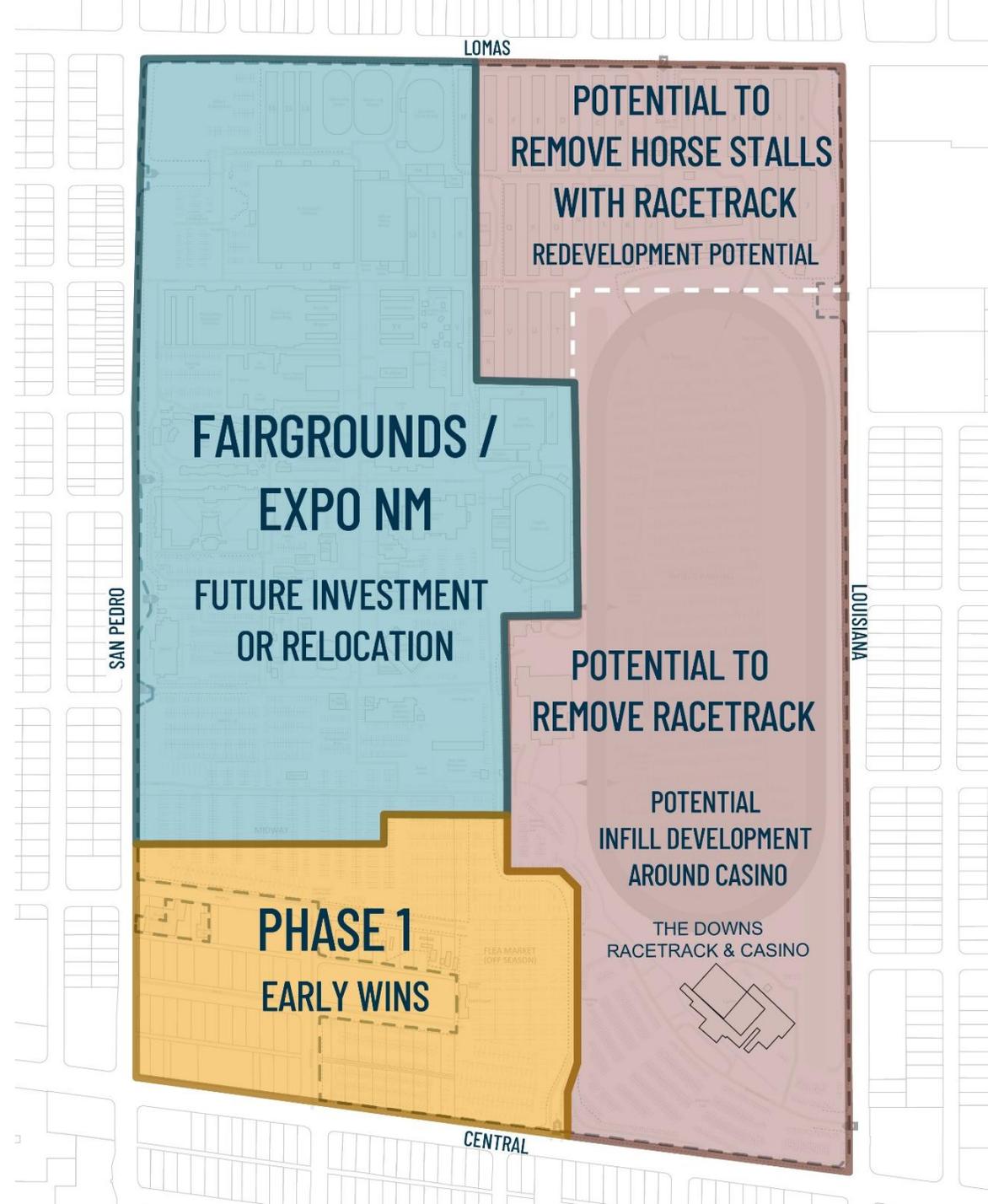
- Create a platform for **economic prosperity and social connection**
- Start with a small **nucleus** of diverse uses (**housing, park space, community uses, retail, entertainment**)
- Create **connections** to surrounding neighborhoods



A Flexible & Adaptive Plan

Implementation of the master plan is structured around a phased, decision-based approach that minimizes disruption to State Fair operations and aligns investment with funding and policy realities.

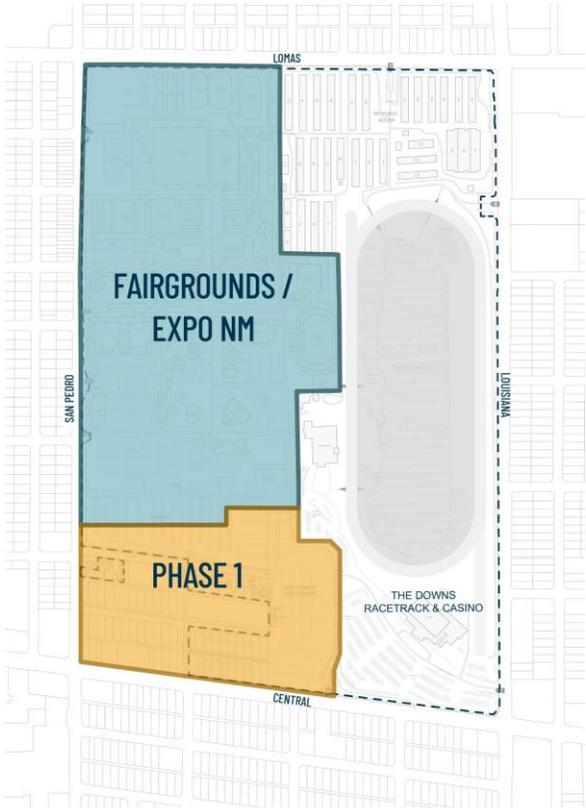
Future phases will also center community input with multiple opportunities to weigh in.



Future Phases

PREFERRED PATHWAY A OPTION – Relocate the Downs Racetrack

Phase 1 – Early Wins

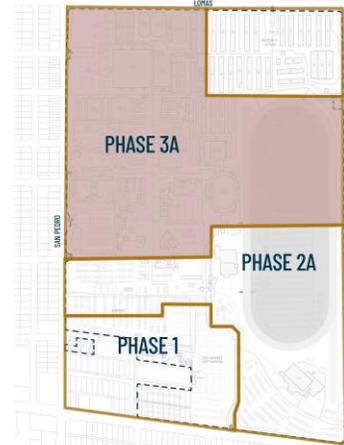


A

B



Phase 2A - Expand Mixed-Use District



Phase 3A (Optional) - Relocation of Fair and Redevelopment

PATHWAY B OPTION – Relocate the Fair (Downs remains)

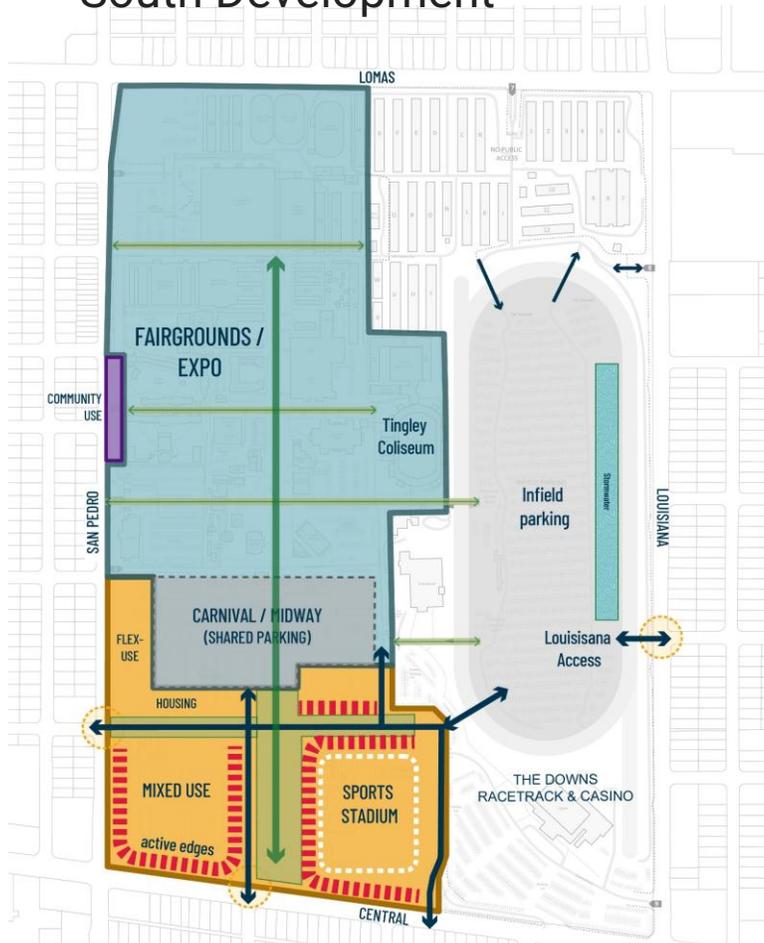
Phase 2B - Mixed-Use with Entertainment Focus



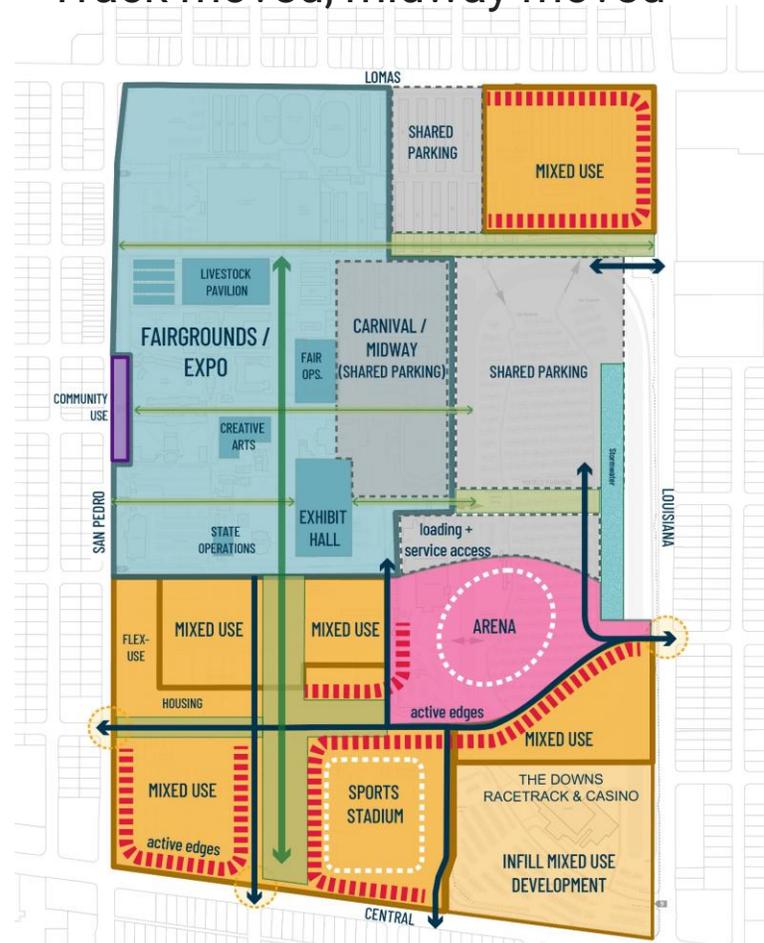
Phase 3B (Optional) - Relocation of Fair and Redevelopment

Pathway A

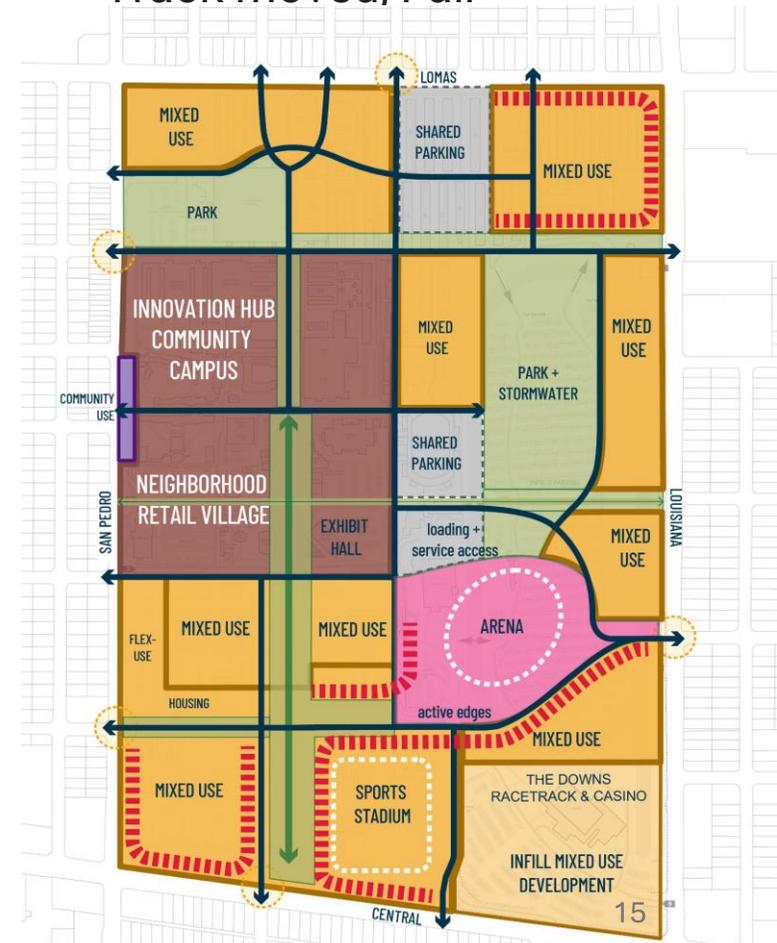
Early Phase Plan – South Development



Mid-term Plan – Track moved, midway moved

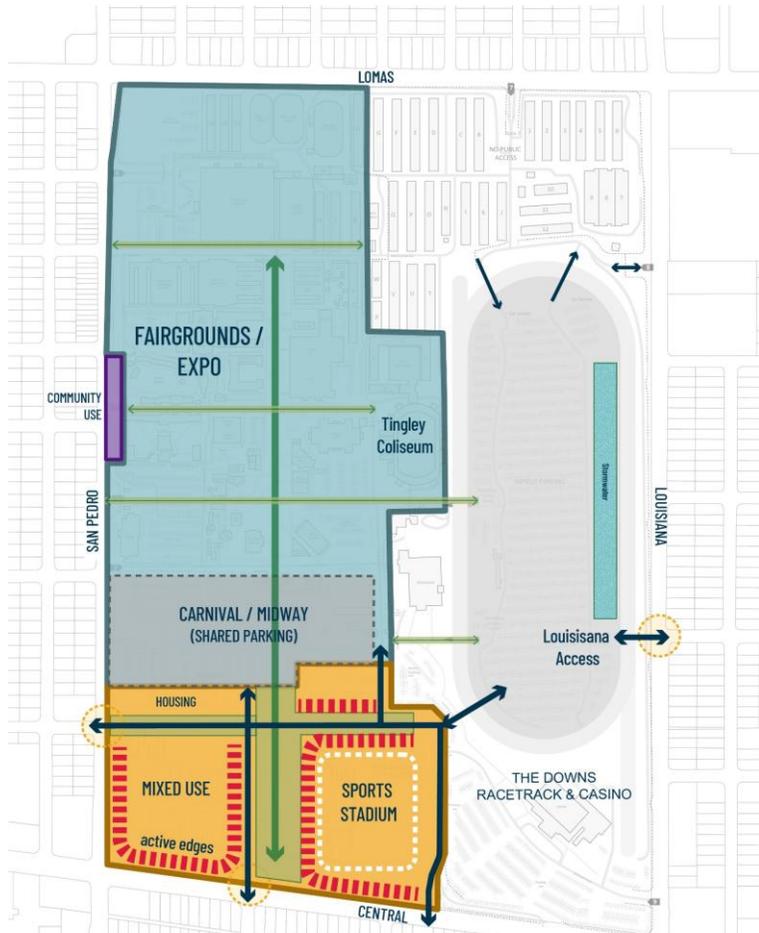


Long-term Plan – Track moved, Fair

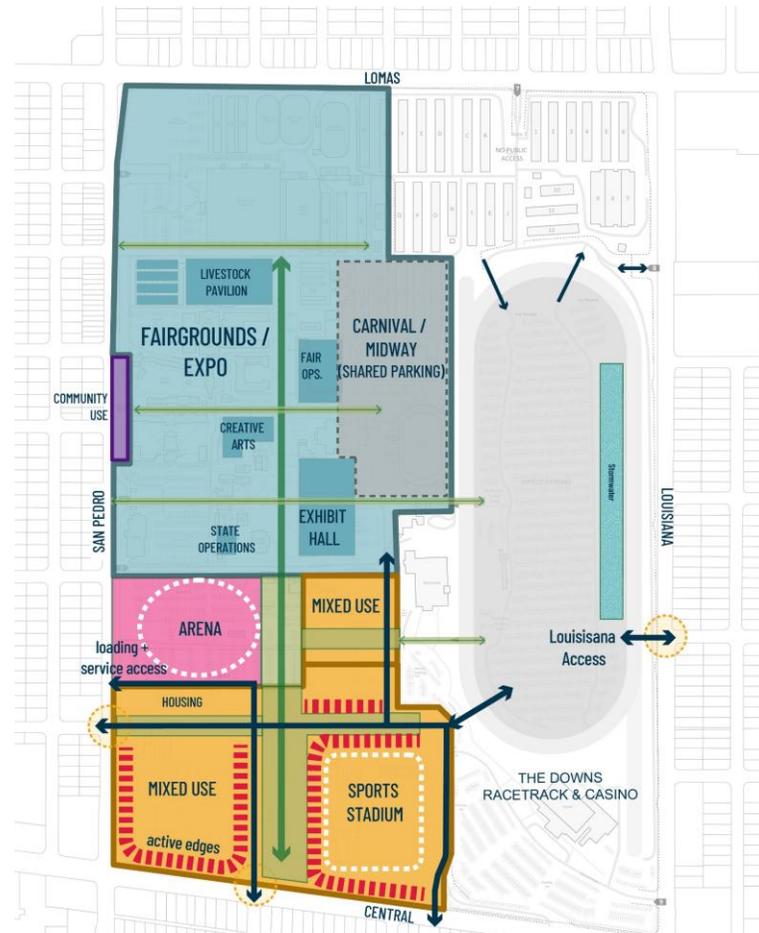


Pathway B

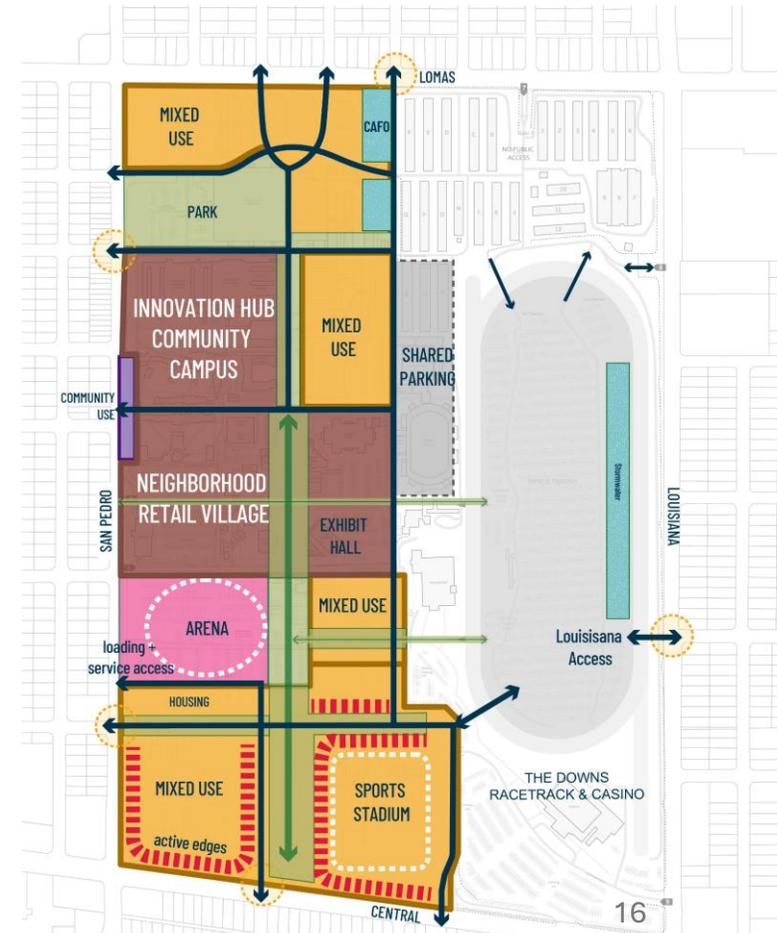
Early Phase Plan – South Development



Mid-term Plan – Midway moved + Arena

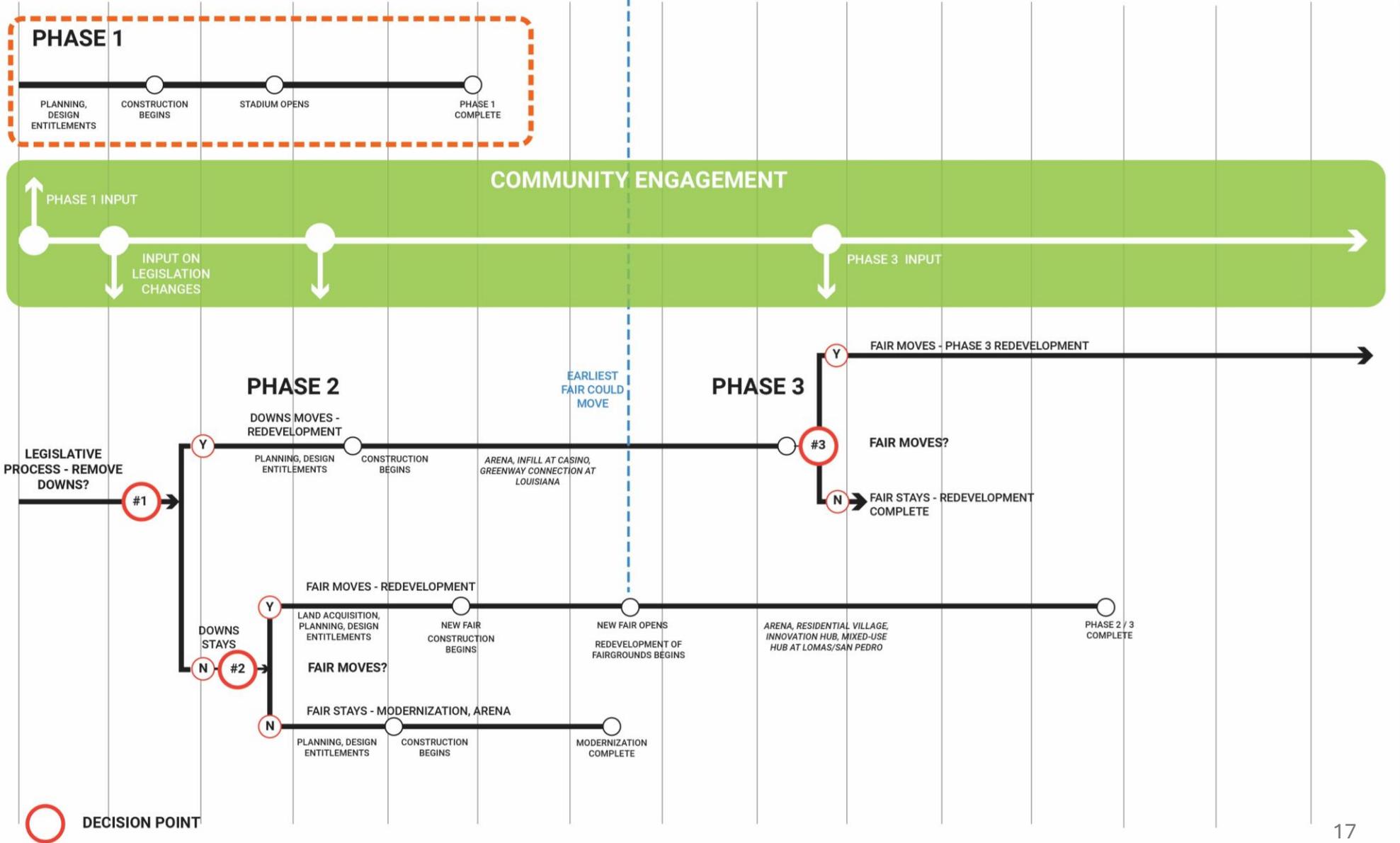


Long-term Plan – Fair moved



Timeline & Decision Points

2026 2031 2036 2041



Redevelopment and reinvestment at Fairgrounds could dramatically expand that footprint by:

- Increasing visitation year-round through new event formats and attractions.
- Capturing visitor spending on-site via hotels, restaurants, and retail.
- Leveraging public-private partnerships to fund new facilities and infrastructure.
- Stimulating adjacent neighborhood revitalization through improved access and design.

Every dollar reinvested in modernization multiplies through the economy by creating new jobs, growing tourism tax revenue, and supporting small business participation statewide.

	PREFERRED PATHWAY A OPTION			PREFERRED PATHWAY B OPTION	
	PHASE 1	PHASE 2A Expand Mixed-Use District	PHASE 3A (Optional) Relocation of Fair & Redevelopment	PHASE 2B Arena & Fair remains	PHASE 3B (Optional) Relocation of Fair & Redevelopment
	Fair Remains	Fair Remains	Relocation of Fair	Fair Remains	Relocation of Fair
Estimated Cost	\$240 Million	\$832 Million	\$1.1 Billion + \$870 Million for New Relocated Fairgrounds	\$695 Million	\$652 Million + \$870 Million for New Relocated Fairgrounds
Economic Impact <small>Albuquerque region and state-wide (30-year average annual revenue)</small>	\$ 127 Million	\$ 277 Million	\$ 360 Million	\$ 193 Million	\$ 220 Million
Economic Impact <small>Albuquerque region and state-wide (30-year total)</small>	\$ 3.8 billion	\$ 8.3 Billion	\$ 10.8 Billion	\$ 5.8 Billion	\$ 6.6 Billion
Fiscal Impact <small>GRT Revenues for State Fair District (30-year total)</small>	\$ 165 Million	\$ 363 Million	\$ 470 Million	\$ 257 Million	\$ 288 Million
Fiscal Impact <small>GRT Revenues for State Fair District (30-year average annual revenue)</small>	\$ 5.5 Million	\$ 12 Million	\$ 16 Million	\$ 8.6 Million	\$ 9.6 Million
Employment Impact <small>Fairgrounds/EXPO & New Development (Average annual jobs over 30 years)</small>	940 Jobs	1,700 Jobs	2,620 Jobs	1,240 Jobs	1,820 Jobs
Employment Impact <small>Fairgrounds/EXPO & New Development (Average New Earnings/Payroll over 30 years)</small>	\$ 63 Million	\$ 104 Million	\$ 178 Million	\$ 79 Million	\$ 136 Million

Phase 1

Early Wins

Phase 1 – Early Wins

Fair Remains - Moderate Investment

- Deferred maintenance
- Reorganization of Carnival/Midway
- Louisiana access improvements (if Downs Racetrack must remain)

New Sports Stadium & Mixed-Use

Public Sector:

- Housing
- Sports Stadium
- Park and plaza spaces, pedestrian safety improvements, infrastructure, land preparation, Fair improvements, community spaces (Bond)

Private Sector:

- Housing
- Commercial, retail, office
- Sports Stadium

\$240M

Total Estimate

Redevelopment Cost
(Phase 1 Costs)

\$3.8B

Economic Impact

Albuquerque region and
state-wide (30-year total)

\$165M

Fiscal Impact

GRT Revenues for State Fair
District (30-year total)

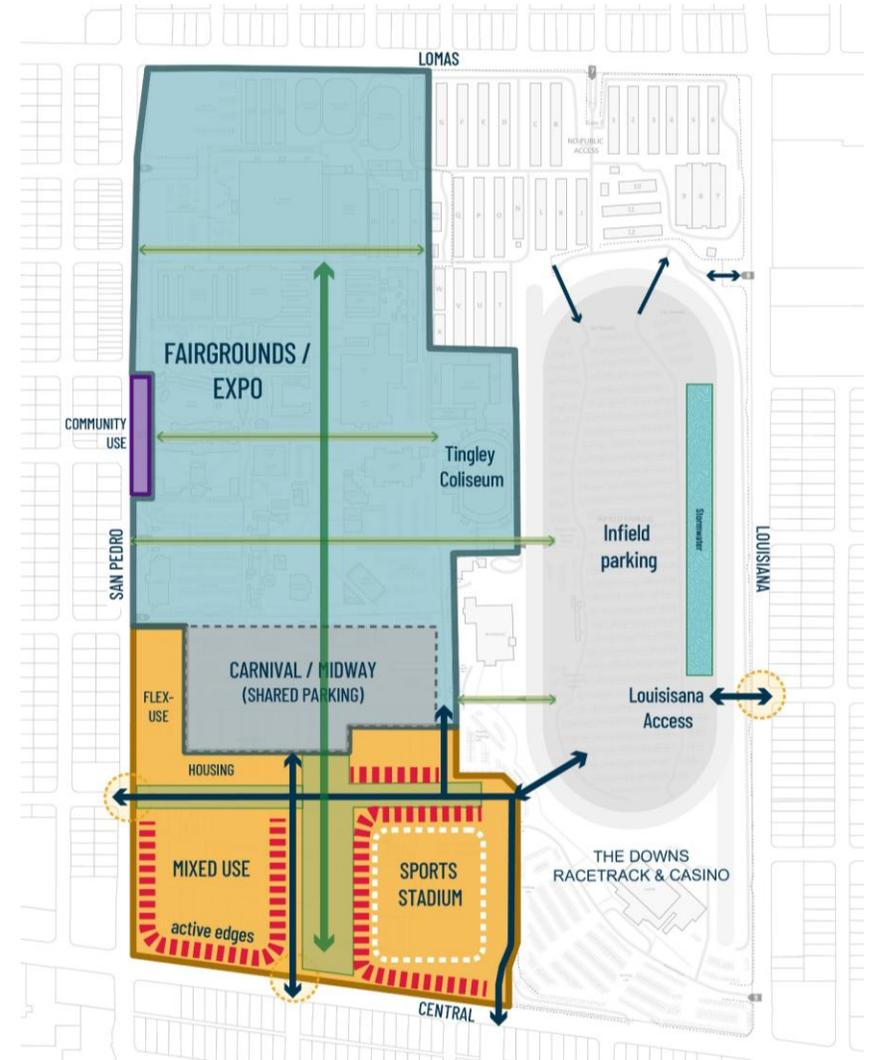
\$5.5M

Fiscal Impact

Annual GRT Revenues

940

Jobs Created



- 430+ Units** Residential
- 265,000 SF** Commercial—Hotel, Office, Entertainment Venues, Retail
- 50,000 SF** Community Facilities
- 8 Acres** Parks and Public Realm Improvements

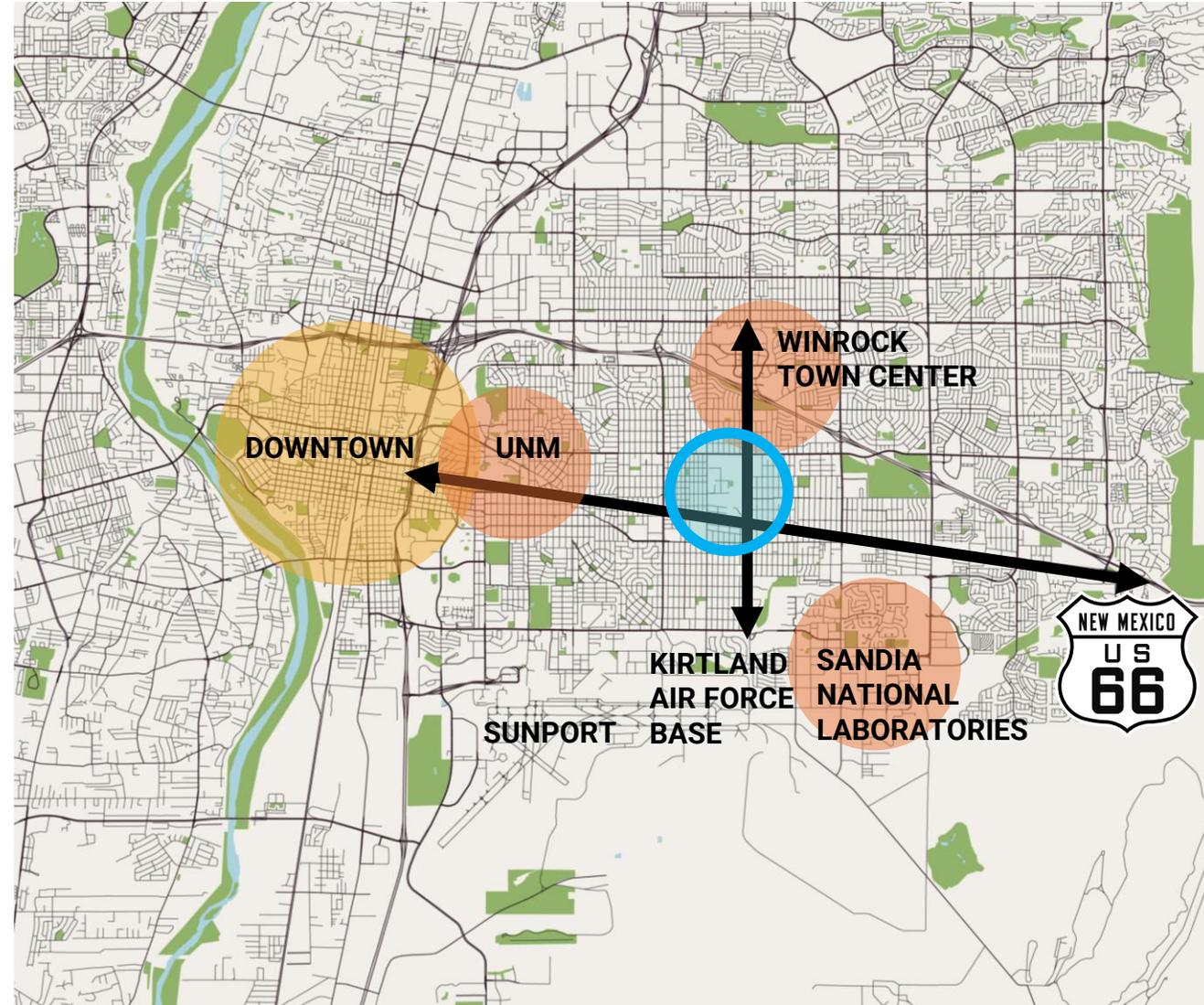
Initial Strategy - Four Major Steps

1. Re-organize and consolidate State Fair facilities to make room for future development
2. Establish a strong anchor with a modern stadium or arena
3. Activate the site with a walkable, mixed-use core
4. Phased redevelopment and key decision points



Potential Anchor Uses

1. Neighborhood decline and downward spiral – change is needed to stabilize area
2. Multiple potential uses explored – lack of market demand eliminated from consideration – innovation hub, healthcare / medical campus, large retail center.
3. Mixed-use district with strong anchor identified as most viable use
4. Market support for arena or sports stadium. Arena significantly more costly.



Major Anchor as Catalyst

1. Sports stadium or arena as year-round economic generator
2. Catalyst for housing, restaurants, retail, public space – emphasis on neighborhood rather than stand-alone sports facility
3. Cities using stadiums to reactivate underused land. Civic infrastructure first, entertainment venue second
4. Proven to amplify, accelerate housing development - Stadiums can increase housing density by 10 to 15%



Sports Stadiums that Fit the Neighborhood

1. Minor league and women's major league sports have exploded – baseball, basketball, soccer
2. Advantages – smaller seating capacity, lower cost, better fit with walkable neighborhoods
3. Result – affordable family entertainment, shared civic experience, local pride
4. Opportunity to reinforce district identity.
5. Stadium as community space



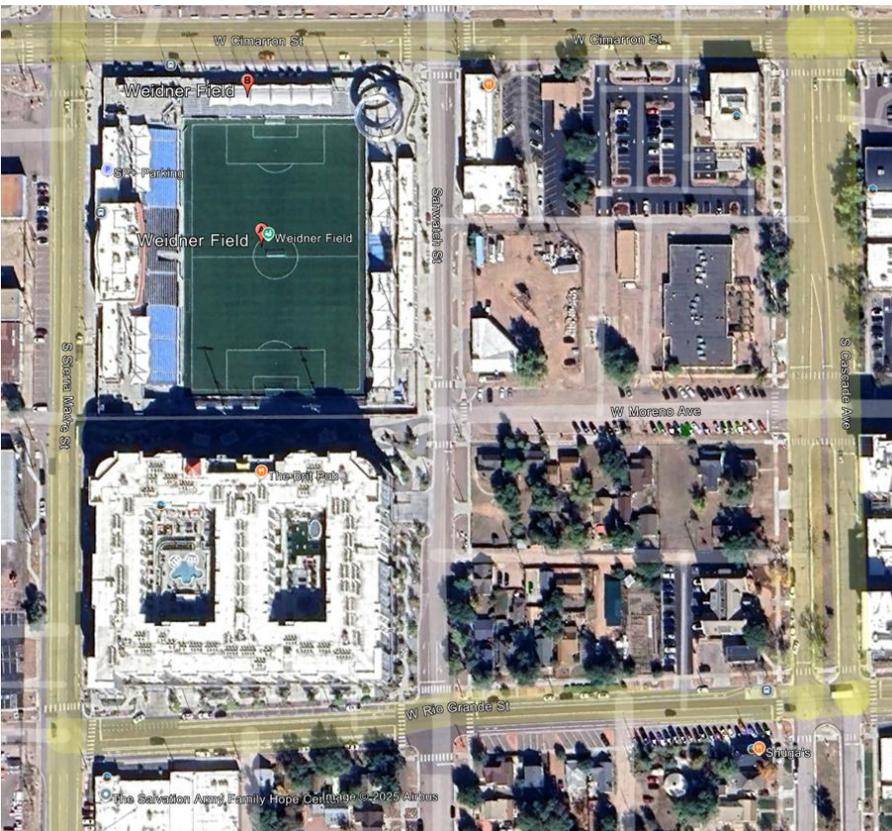
Successful Example – Durham, NC

- Durham Bulls stadium leads resurgence of downtown Durham
- 10,000 seat venue, opened in 1995
- Public sector strategy to draw visitors downtown, signal confidence in the urban core, justify infrastructure improvements
- Cultural identity – embraced “Bull Durham”, character of area
- Attracted businesses, investments in housing
- **Demonstrates importance of a community first, placemaking approach and successful result**



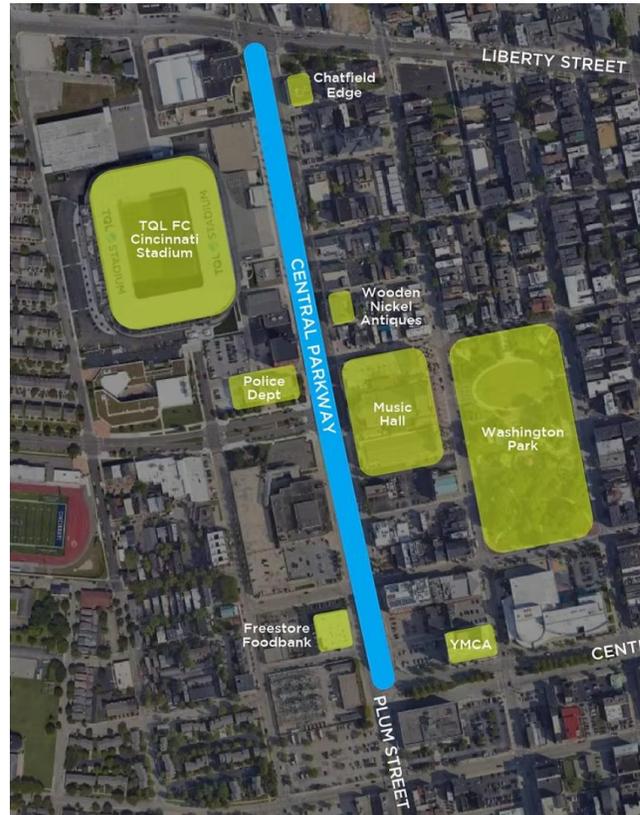
Successful Example – Colorado Springs

- Weidner Field inserted into historic street structure
- 8,000 seat venue – USL Championship Col Switchbacks
- Generates activity during games and non-event days – active “storefronts” and community uses at street-level
- Lower capacity results in neighborhood not being overwhelmed during big events
- Year-round programming generates “buzz”, foot traffic
- Housing investment supports commercial businesses

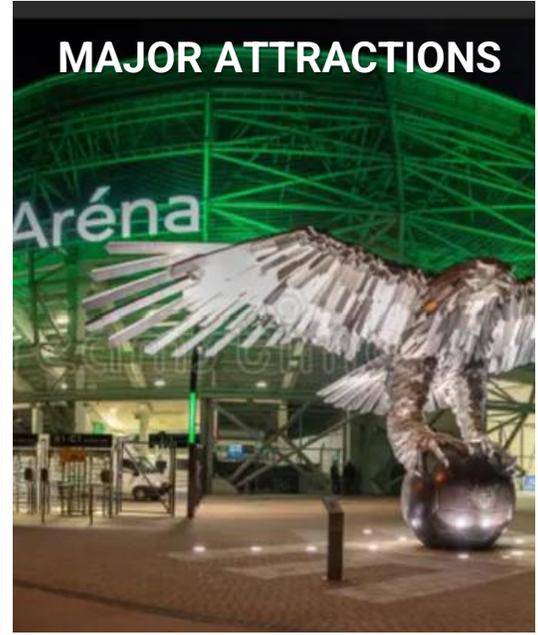


Successful Example – Cincinnati

- West End neighborhood – years of neglect and disinvestment
- TQL Stadium as “community hub”
- Public realm improvements improve quality of life – parks, plazas, local businesses
- Central Parkway improvement create connectivity to amenities, neighborhoods and downtown
- Created CBA

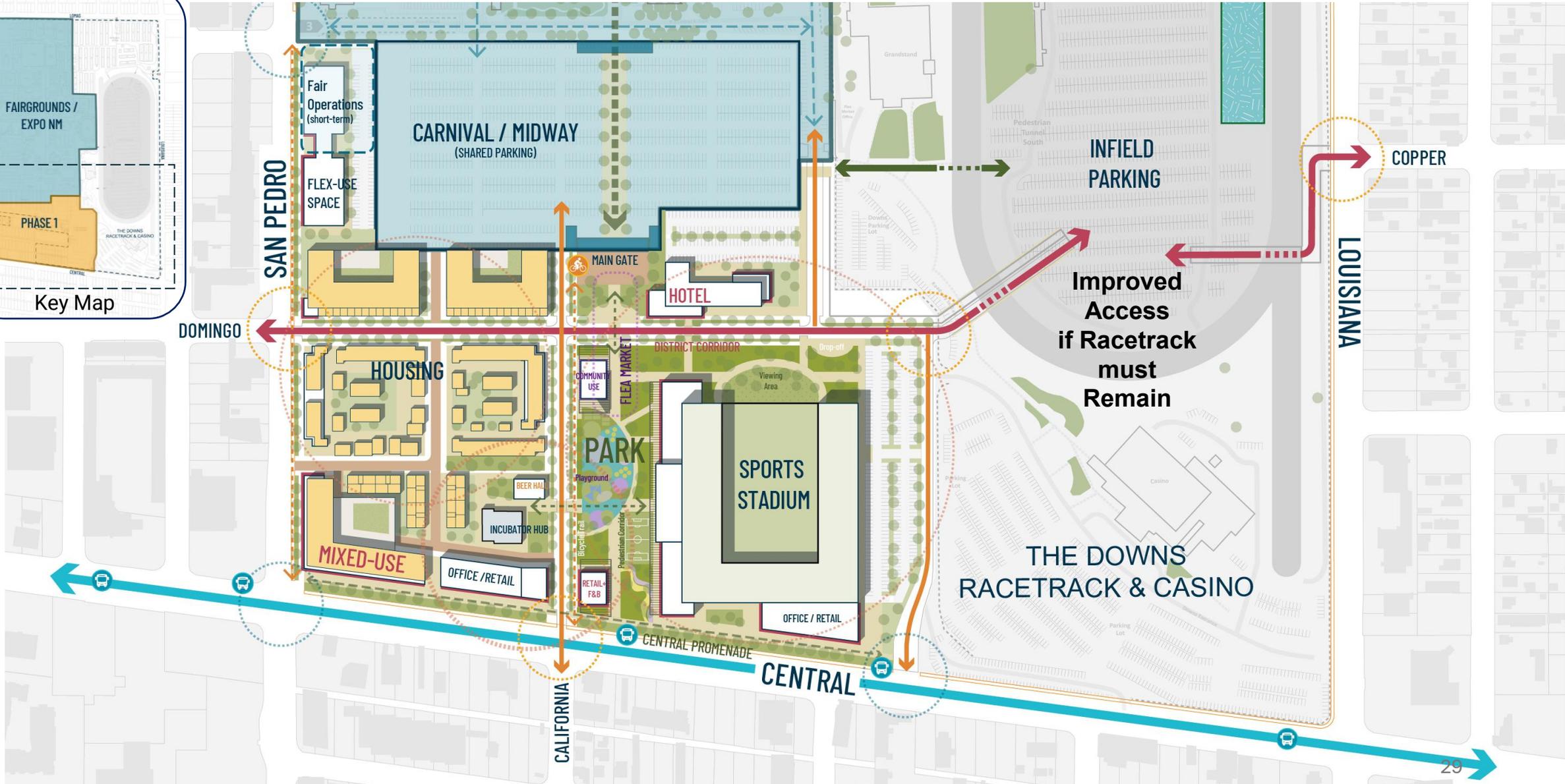
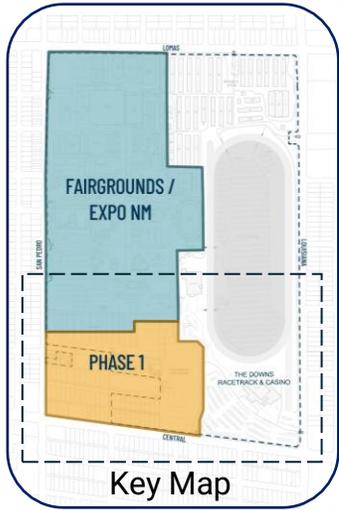


Elements of a Successful District



Phase 1 – Early Wins Concept

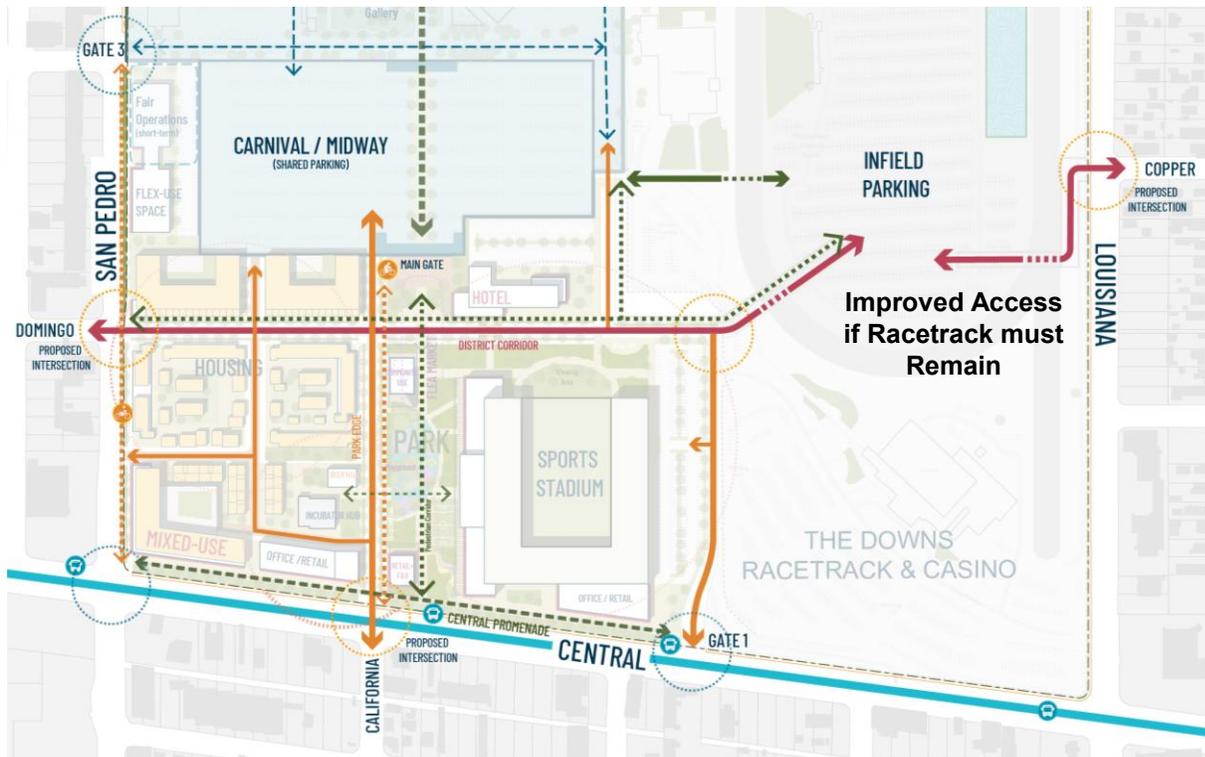
A Space for Gathering & Community



CIRCULATION DIAGRAM



COMMUNITY AMENITIES



A Unique New Mexican
Experience:

LOCAL
ACCESSIBLE
INVITING



Phase 1 – Early Wins Concept



Phase 1 – Early Wins Concept



Community Feedback – Master Plan and Phase 1

Survey and Community Input solidifies demand for large anchor, wide support for soccer stadium in particular

- Community meeting participants represented multiple perspectives on future development at the Fairgrounds, including a good mix of residents within a 1-mile radius, other residents of Albuquerque, and statewide.
- The community voiced strong support for a stadium or arena venue as a major anchor to the site.
- In survey responses since last community meeting, most expressly desired a new stadium for NM United, and noted the commitment the team has made to the people of Albuquerque.
- Soccer makes sense in terms of levels of immediate program, cost to build compared to GRT potential for the District
- Majority of comments expressed satisfaction with State Fair remaining, benefitting from upgrades, housing, and support for a soccer stadium. In fact, throughout the master planning process, there has been widely shared support for a sports stadium or arena.

Phase 1 Cost

District Development Cost Estimate	\$ 91 Mil
Fair Reorganization	\$19 to 56 Mil
Subtotal	\$110 to 147 Mil

Fairgrounds Improvements	Cost Estimate
PHASE 1	
Carnival/Midway Upgrades / RV Hook-ups	\$5-10 M
New South Main Entry Gate (Offices+ Bathrooms + Ticketing)	\$6 M
Fair Operations / Flex-Use Warehouse (Short-term)	\$3-5 M
Deferred Maintenance (FCA costs) for all facilities remaining	\$5-10 M
Downs Infield Parking access improvements <i>*If Downs Racetrack must remain</i>	\$25 M*
SUBTOTAL COST PHASE 1 (2026 dollars)	\$19-56* M

Major Takeaways – Major Wins

- Near-term positive change
- No immediate plans to move the State Fair
- Over 2x more jobs created – 940
- \$5.5 M GRT v. \$2.7 M Current
- Beyond Phase 1: a roadmap for the future – possibility for racetrack to move, better connectivity between neighborhoods, more community amenities
- Community engagement continues to shape the kind of city New Mexicans want to live in

