NEW MEXICO STATE FAIRGROUNDS DISTRICT
BOARD AGENDA
MARCH 23, 2026
10:00am

The Alice K. Hoppes African
American Pavilion
300 San Pedro, N.E.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87108

Members:
The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor
The Honorable Tim Keller, Mayor
The Honorable Mimi Stewart, State Senator
The Honorable Janelle Anyanonu, State Representative
The Honorable Nichole Rogers, City Councilor
The Honorable Adriann Barboa, County Commissioner
Dr. Peter Belletto, President, District 6 Neighborhood Coalition

1. Call to Order

    a. Roll Call of Board Members

        i. Hon. Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor of New Mexico (Chair)
        ii. Hon. Sen. Mimi Stewart
        iii. Hon. Rep. Janelle Anyanonu
        iv. Hon. Tim Keller, Mayor of Albuquerque
        v. Hon. Adriann Barboa, Bernalillo County Commissioner
        vi. Hon. Nichole Rogers, Albuquerque City Council
        vii. Dr. Peter Belletto, President, District 6 Neighborhood Coalition

2. Approval of Agenda **

3. Approval of December 11, 2025, Meeting Minutes **

4. Phase A of Master Plan Development **

5. Fairgrounds Reimagined- Stantec Master Planning Discussion

6. Approval of the Next Meeting Date

7. Adjournment

** DENOTES POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

MINUTES OF THE
NEW MEXICO STATE FAIRGROUNDS DISTRICT
BOARD
DECEMBER 11, 2025
The African American Performing Arts Center
300 San Pedro, N.E.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87108

The meeting of the New Mexico State Fairgrounds District Board for October was called to order by The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor and Chair, on December 11th, 2025, at 10:15 a.m. at the African American Performing Arts Center located at 300 San Pedro, NE. Albuquerque, 87108.

Members Present:
The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor
The Honorable Tim Keller, Mayor *(ABSENT)*
The Honorable Mimi Stewart, State Senator
The Honorable Janelle Anyanonu, State Representative *(ABSENT)*
The Honorable Nichole Rogers, City Councilor
Dr. Peter Belletto, President, District 6 Neighborhood Coalition

Staff:
Cecilia Mavrommatis, Clerk and Treasurer
Joseph Holloway, Esquire

Guests:
Colleen Ruiz, Stantec
Ben Lewinger, Fable Communications

Handouts:
Handouts and other written materials are in the meeting file and posted on the EXPO NM website.

Thursday, December 11th

Call to Order (10:15 a.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m. by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, serving as Chair of the State Fairgrounds District Board.

Roll call was conducted, confirming the presence of a quorum.

Approval of Agenda (10:20 a.m.)

Following introductions, the Chair requested a motion to approve the meeting agenda as published. A motion was made, seconded, and carried without opposition.

The agenda was formally adopted.

Approval of Minutes from October 30, 2025 (10:25 a.m.)

The Board moved to approve the minutes of the October 30, 2025, meeting.

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by those in attendance.

Action Item — Resolution No. 13 Institutional Trustee Services (10:30 a.m.)

The Board considered Resolution No. 13, which authorizes the procurement of institutional trustee services for the State Fairgrounds District. The Clerk-Treasurer presented the resolution, explaining that it establishes a mechanism for securely receiving, managing, investing, disbursing, and reporting on District revenues, bond proceeds, and third-party funds.

Board discussion emphasized fiscal transparency, accountability, and the layered approval process governing capital investments. Members clarified that adoption of the resolution authorizes the release of a competitive request for proposals (RFP), with RFP results returning to the Board for review and approval. The discussion also reaffirmed that all expenditures remain subject to Board of Finance and legislative approval.

Following discussion, the Board adopted Resolution No. 13 by roll call vote and passed unanimously by those in attendance.

Presentation — Fairgrounds Reimagined Master Planning Update (10:38 a.m.)

The Board received a presentation from Colleen Ruiz with Stantec and Ben Lewinger from Fable Communications on the ongoing “Fairgrounds Reimagined” master planning effort. The presentation summarized community engagement activities to date and introduced three preliminary redevelopment concepts for discussion.

Presenters highlighted priorities identified through public input, including modernization of infrastructure, housing affordability, economic development, sustainability, transportation connectivity, and year-round activation of the site. Board members provided policy-level feedback and raised considerations related to workforce development, urban agriculture, environmental sustainability, neighborhood impacts, and parking. No action was taken on this matter, as the presentation was informational and intended to guide continued planning and community engagement.

Future Meeting Schedule (11:13 a.m.)

The Chair recommended that the Board defer setting a formal next meeting date until additional planning information becomes available. The Board reached consensus not to take action at this time and noted that future meetings will be scheduled with proper public notice once the project reaches the next decision point.

Adjournment (11:20 a.m.)

With no further business before the Board, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and unanimously approved by those in attendance. The meeting adjourned at **11:20 a.m.**

New Mexico State Fairgrounds Master Plan

Public Meeting #3



Our FAIRGROUNDS Reimagined

Friday, March 13, 2026

Where we are today…

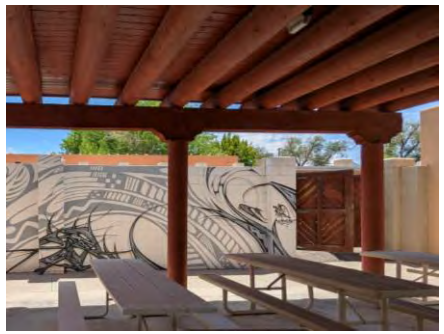
Community goals and Expo NM goals are defining the master plan vision and informing early development opportunities while supporting a broader vision for the Fairgrounds.













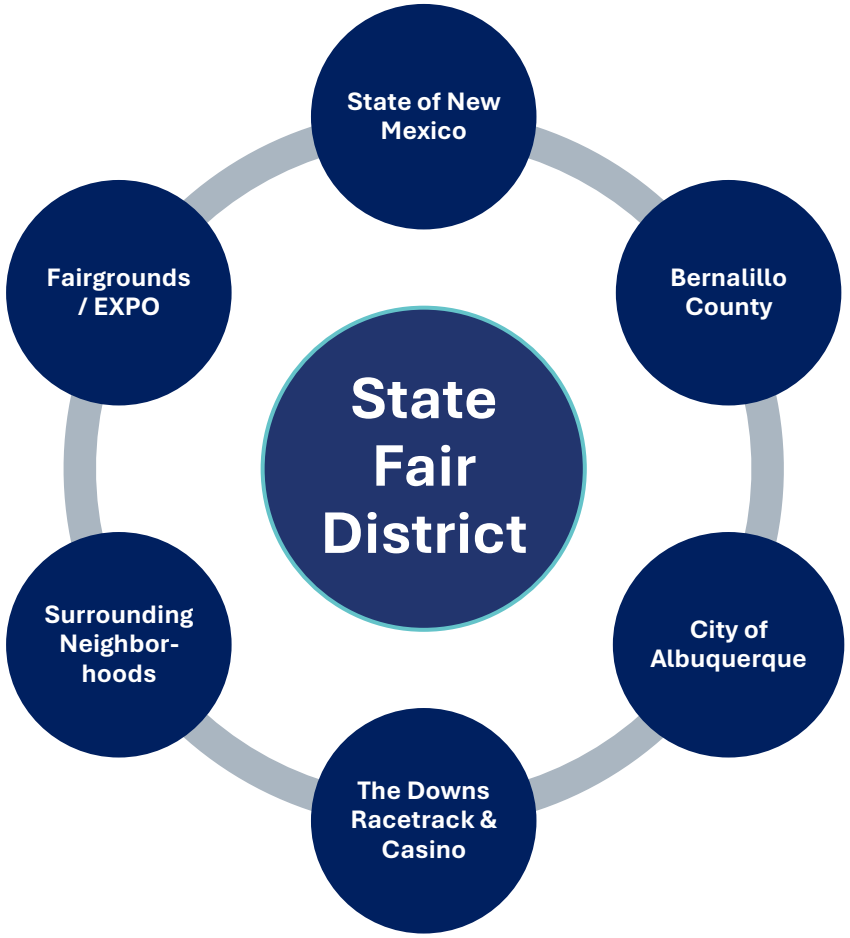


Master Planning Process

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



FAIRGROUNDS Reimagined

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

26 In-Depth Interviews

902 Survey Responses

3 Large, In-Person Community Meetings

3 Virtual Community Meetings

1 Neighborhood Bus Tour

6 Stakeholder Committee Meetings

21 Blogs posted to the website

1,900+ Estimated Community Interactions

16,000+ Unique Website Visits

5551 Total Email Sends

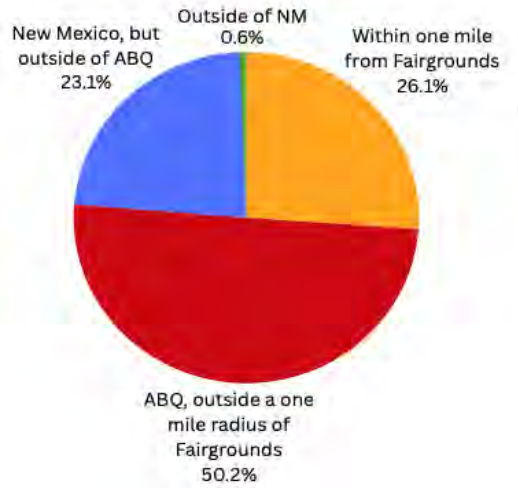
Future of The New Mexico State Fair

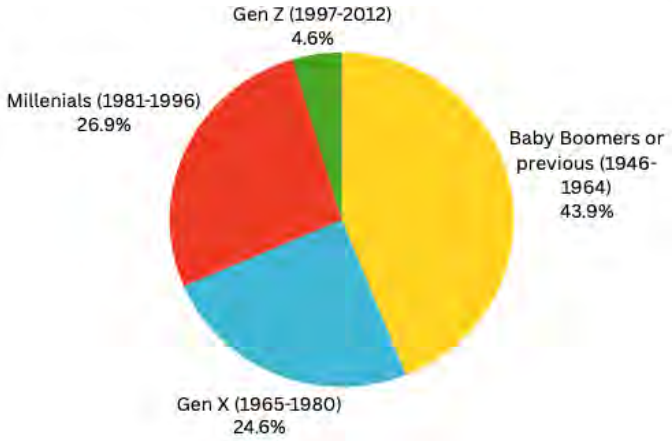
- Planning was "agnostic" of State Fair relocation
- Many want the Fair to remain at its current location
- Fewer feel the Fair should move and make room for other opportunities
- Many want the Fair to remain in ABQ
- Most want more information on where it would go, if we would miss a year, process and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



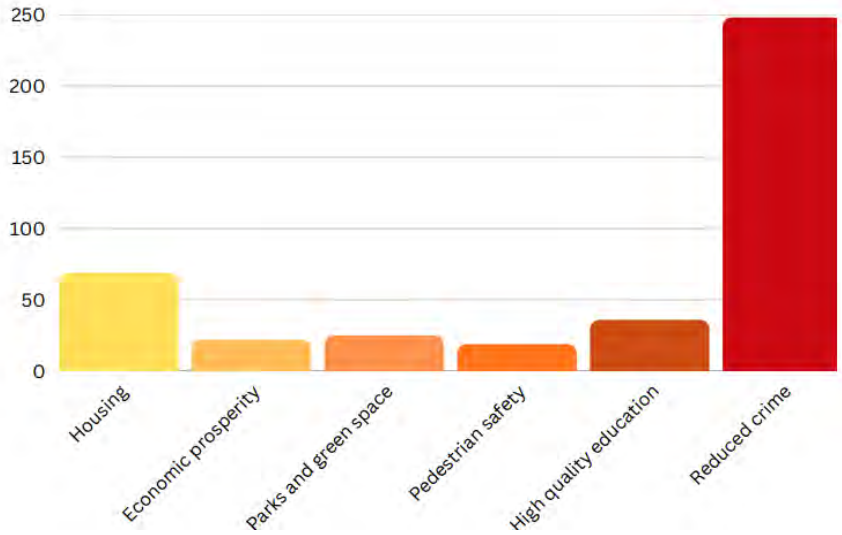
Highlights from Community Input

Who we heard from:

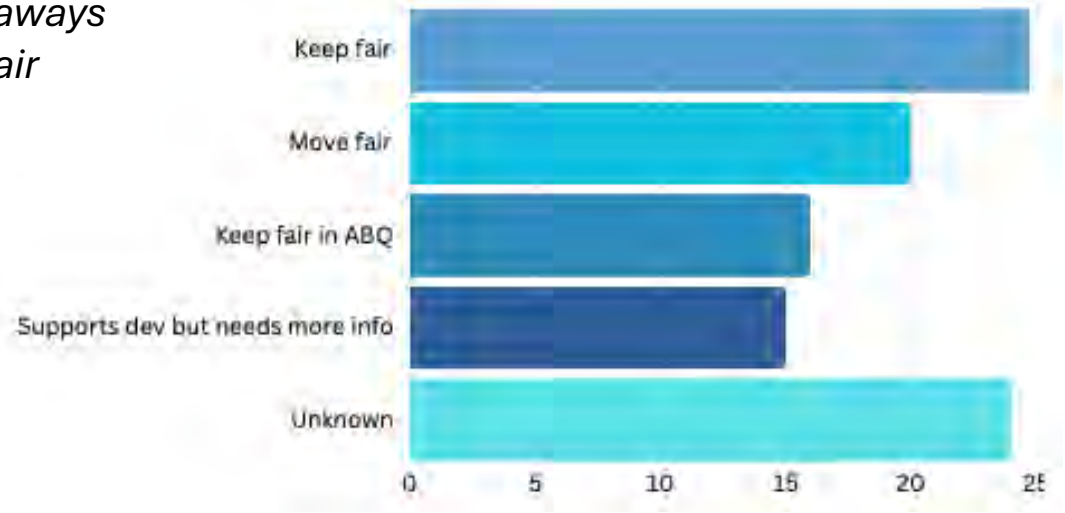




Survey 1
Community Priorities



Survey 2 – Concept Feedback
Major Takeaways
Re: State Fair



Concerns:

- Traffic
- Parking and ADA accessibility
- State water shortage
- Crime and homelessness

Community Goals

1. Safe, welcoming, walkable neighborhoods

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*





2. Economic prosperity for area businesses and residents, including pathways to home ownership

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





Community Goals

3. Parks, nature and green spaces

"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



4. Affordable, family-friendly amenities

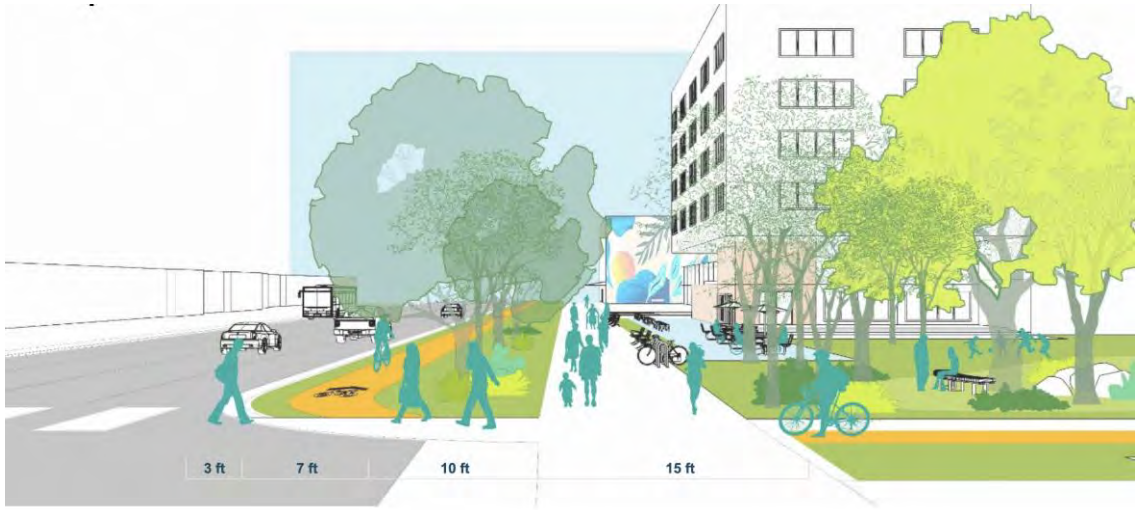
"There are not any safe spaces to hangout. I wish we had safe places we could walk to see our friends, play basketball, and just hangout." *- Wilson Middle School Student*



Community Goals

5. Improved transportation and connectivity

"When we finally get focused and fix the issue of the unhoused. Then the bus system becomes a different issue, the fact is it is a free service and likely most passengers are unhoused so if we fixed the issue then the bus system could go back to what it once was and come alive." - *In-Depth Interview*



6. Environmental sustainability

"I would love to see us do innovative things on the Fairgrounds to mitigate the climate challenge."
- Survey Response



Input Opportunity for this Meeting

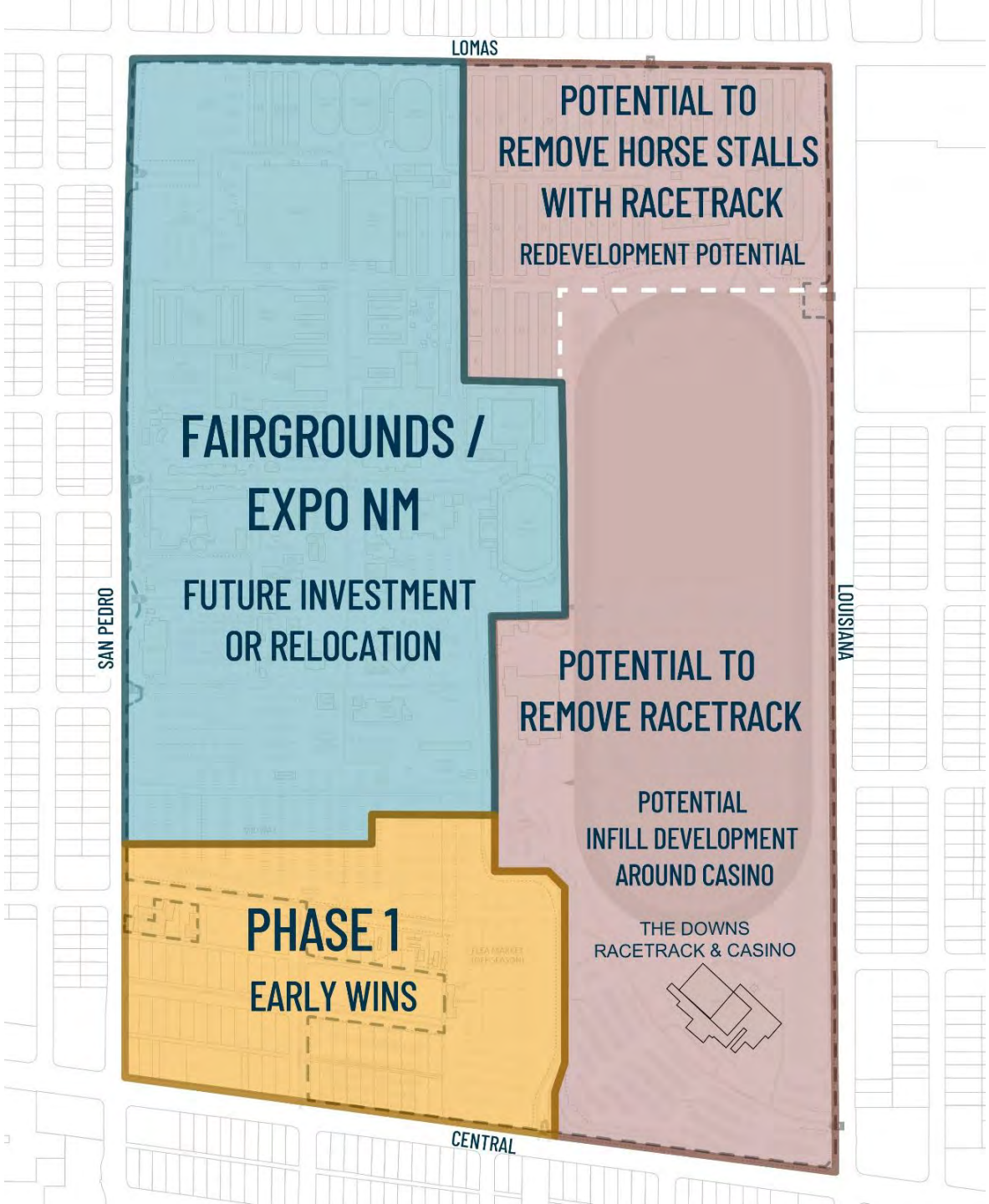
Inputs for final recommendations before presenting to the State Fairgrounds District Board include comments and Q&A following this presentation, plus a third electronic survey.



A Flexible & Adaptive Plan

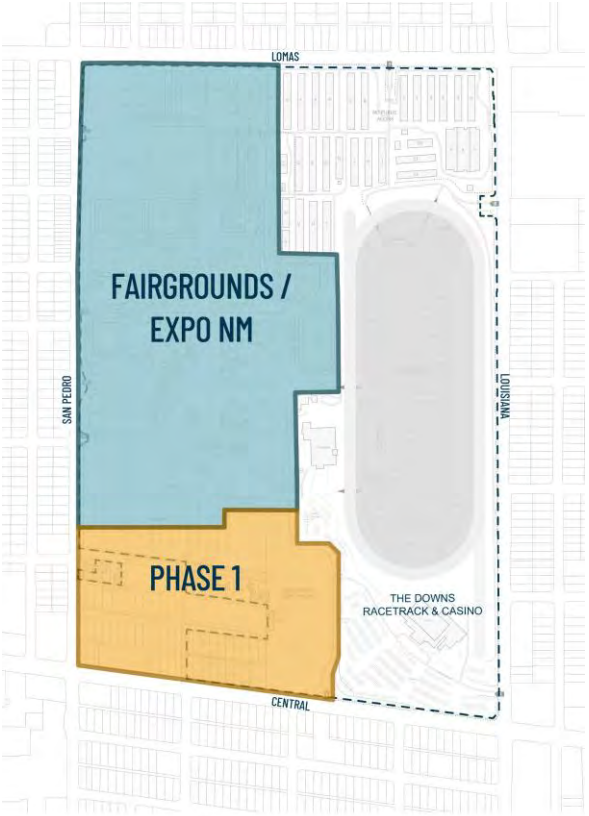
Implementation of the master plan is structured around a phased, decision-based approach that minimizes disruption to State Fair operations and aligns investment with funding and policy realities.

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



Future Phases

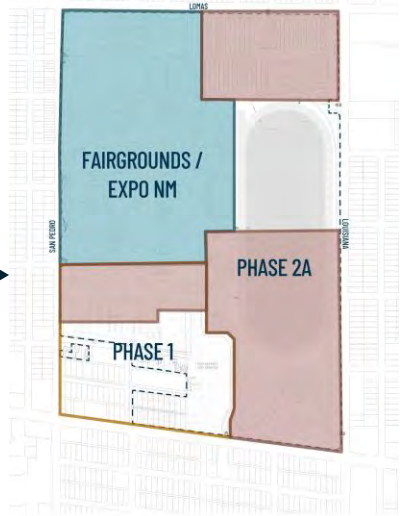
Phase 1 – Early Wins



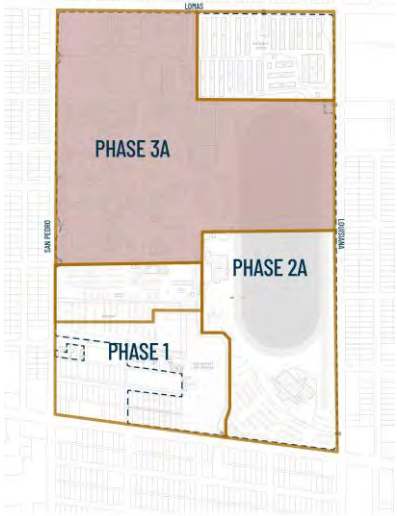
A

B

PREFERRED PATHWAY A OPTION – Relocate the Downs Racetrack

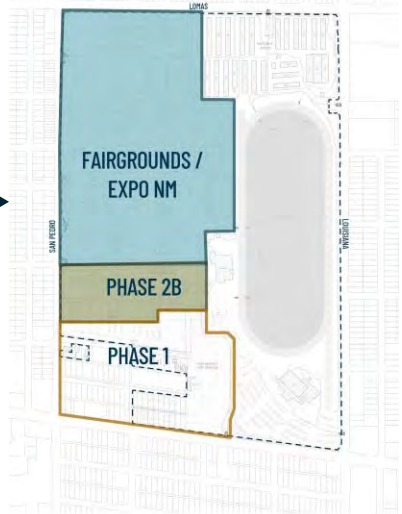


Phase 2A - Expand Mixed-Use District

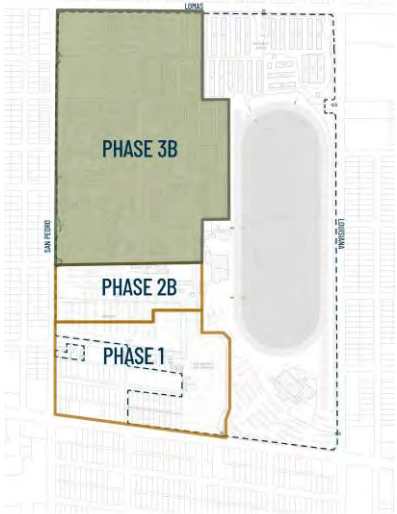


Phase 3A (Optional) - Relocation of Fair and Redevelopment

PATHWAY B OPTION – Relocate the Fair (Downs remains)



Phase 2B - Mixed-Use with Entertainment Focus



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

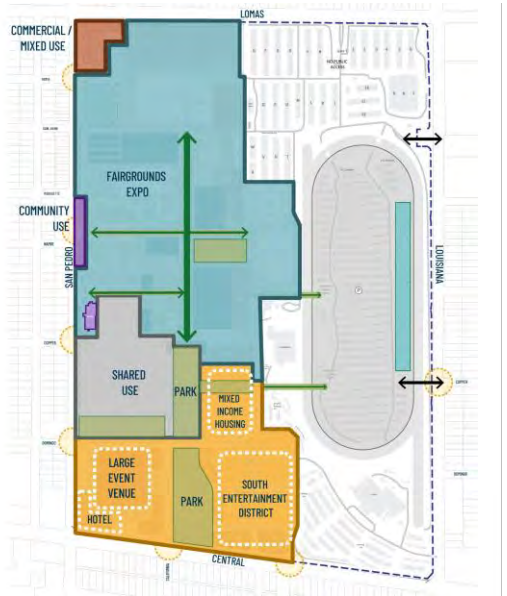
Community Feedback Discussion Concepts

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***

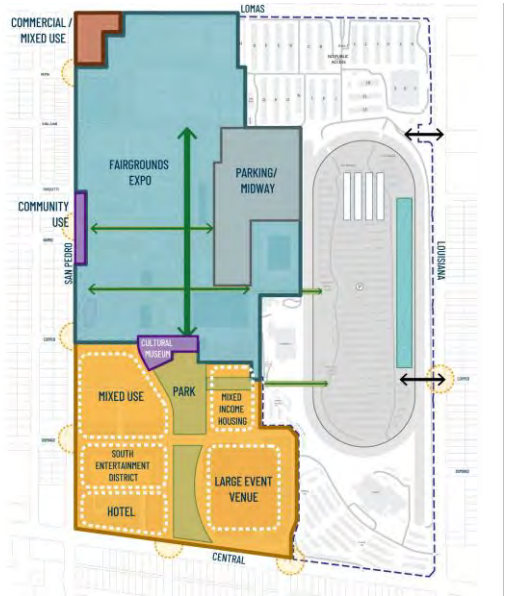


Concept 2 Feedback

*"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***

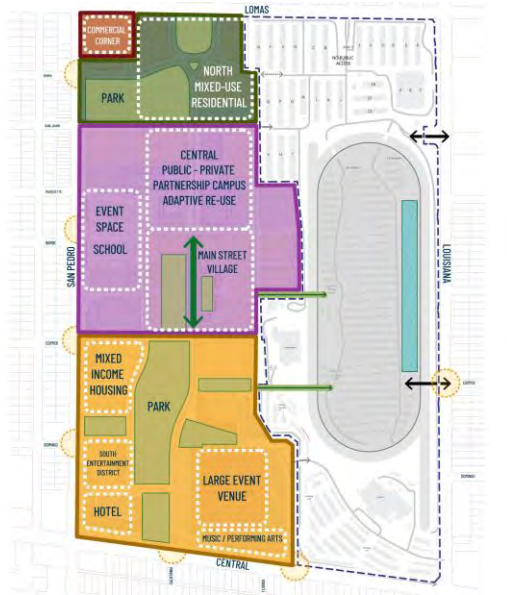


Concept 3 Feedback

"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***



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



Initial Strategy - Four Major Steps

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









Major Anchor as Catalyst

1. Sports stadium 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
4. Civic infrastructure first, entertainment venue second









Creating a Nucleus – Catalytic Anchors









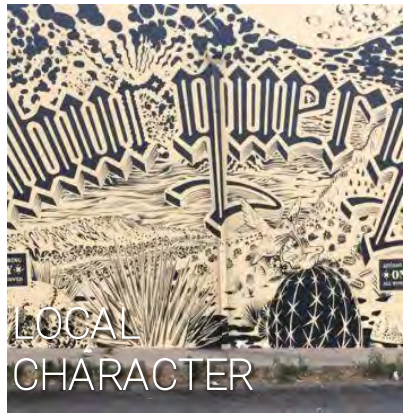




Sports Stadiums that Fit the Neighborhood

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. Blurred line between city and venue - opportunity to reinforce district identity.
5. Stadium as community space


NEIGHBORHOOD SCALE


LOCAL CHARACTER



LOCAL BUSINESSES


NEIGHBORHOOD SCALE



RT. 66



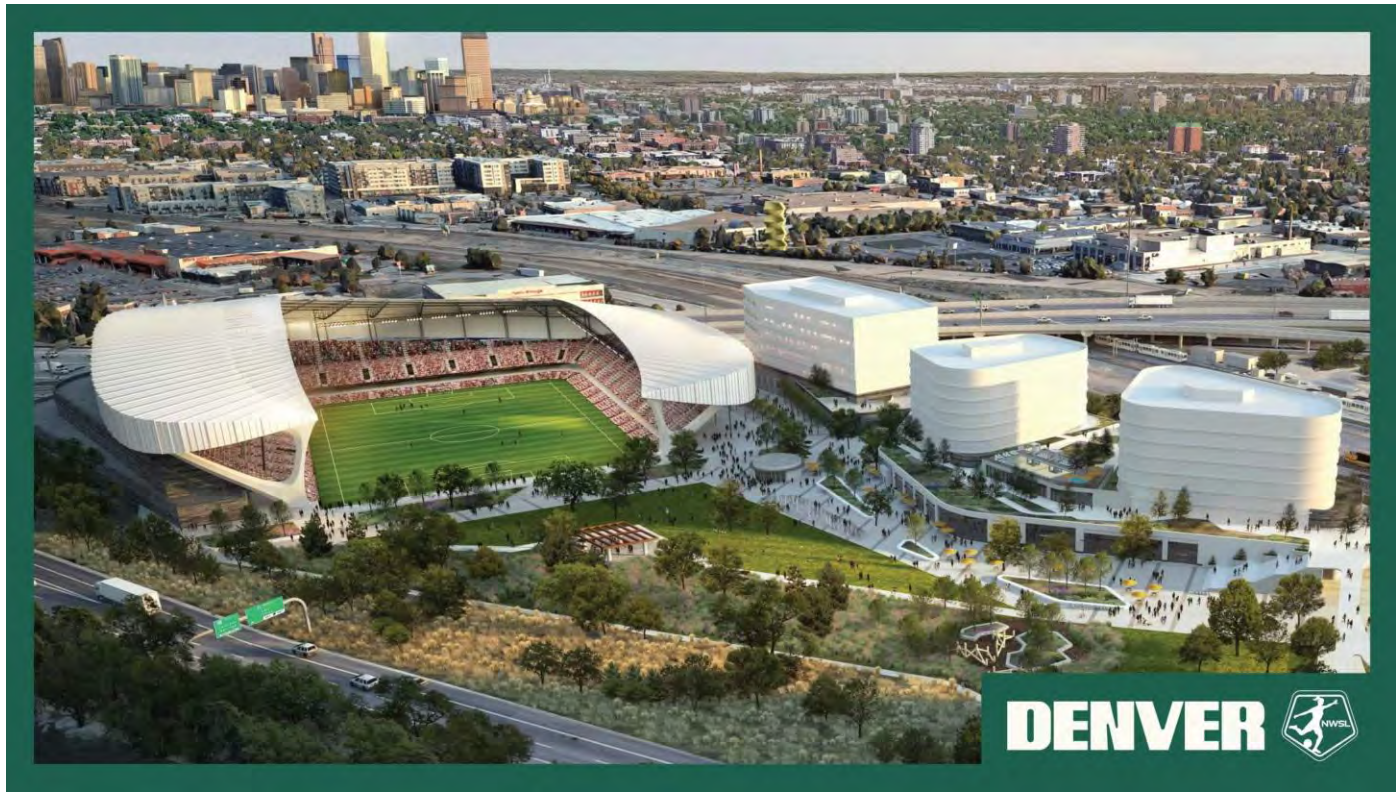
PUBLIC REALM



COMMUNITY ART

Reconnecting Neighborhoods – Denver Summit NWSL

1. Stitching together neighborhoods disconnected for decades
2. Catalyzing an urban site next to transit and parks/trails
3. Creating a live, work, play neighborhood







Economic & Fiscal Impact Potential

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

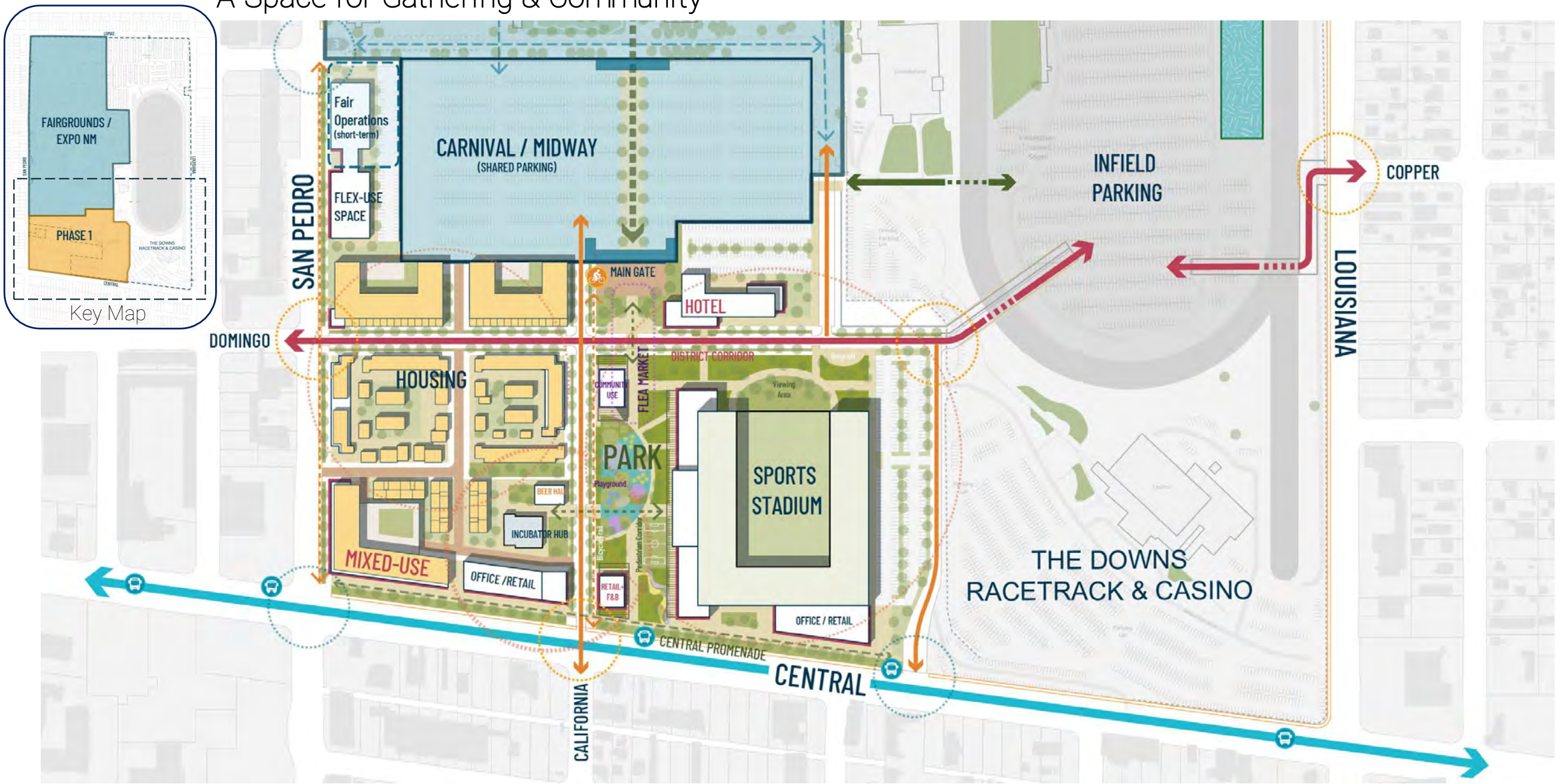
- Increasing visitation year-round through new event formats and attractions.
- Capturing visitor spending on-site via hotels, restaurants, and retail.
- Leveraging public–private partnerships to fund new facilities and infrastructure.
- Stimulating adjacent neighborhood revitalization through improved 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 Albuquerque region and state-wide (30-year average annual revenue)	$ 127 Million	$ 277 Million	$ 360 Million	$ 193 Million	$ 220 Million
Economic Impact Albuquerque region and state-wide (30-year total)	$ 3.8 billion	$ 8.3 Billion	$ 10.8 Billion	$ 5.8 Billion	$ 6.6 Billion
Fiscal Impact **GRT Revenues for State Fair District** (30-year total)	$ 165 Million	$ 363 Million	$ 470 Million	$ 257 Million	$ 288 Million
Fiscal Impact **GRT Revenues for State Fair District** (30-year average annual revenue)	$ 5.5 Million	$ 12 Million	$ 16 Million	$ 8.6 Million	$ 9.6 Million
Employment Impact Fairgrounds/EXPO & New Development (Average annual jobs over 30 years)	940 Jobs	1,700 Jobs	2,620 Jobs	1,240 Jobs	1,820 Jobs
Employment Impact Fairgrounds/EXPO & New Development (Average New Earnings/Payroll over 30 years)	$ 63 Million	$ 104 Million	$ 178 Million	$ 79 Million	$ 136 Million

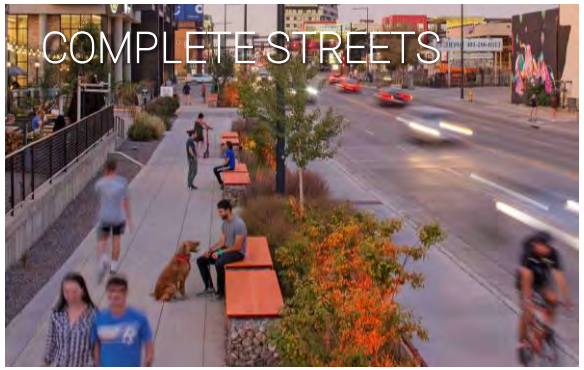
Phase 1 – Early Wins Concept

A Space for Gathering & Community

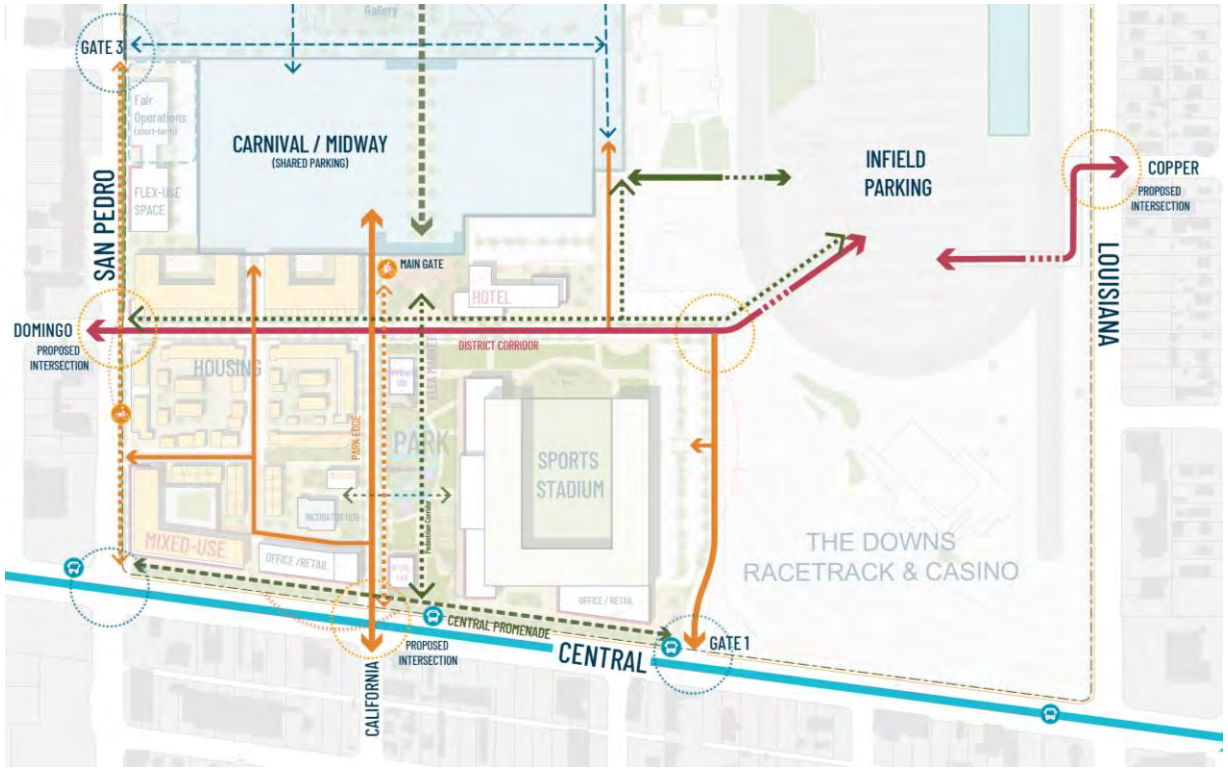


Phase 1 – Early Wins Concept

CIRCULATION DIAGRAM



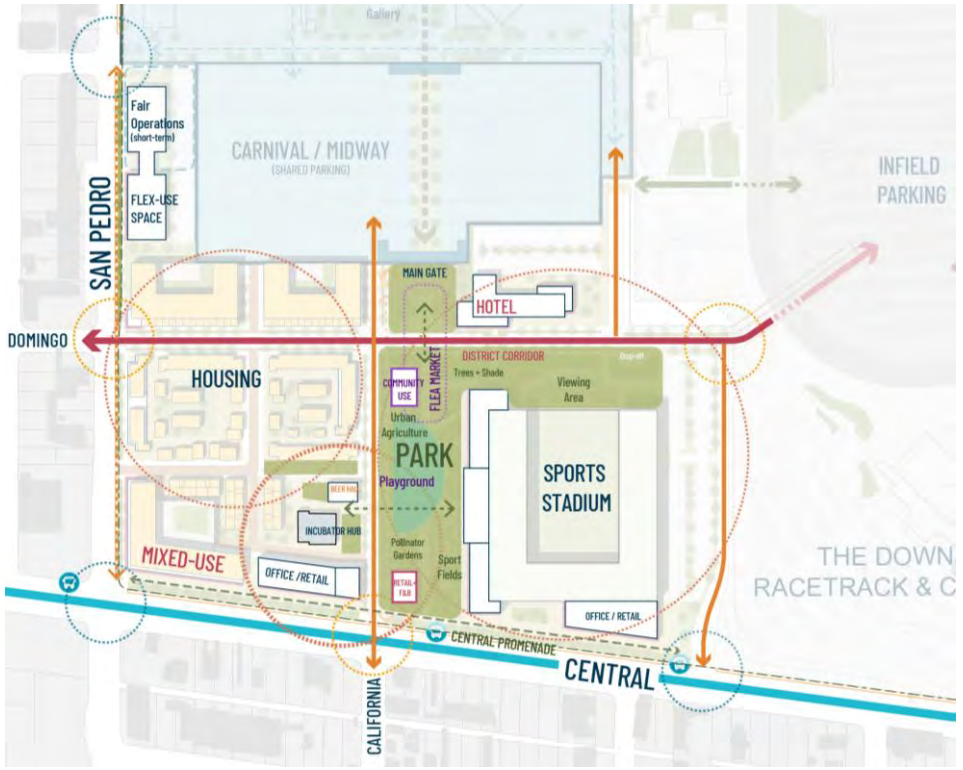




COMMUNITY AMENITIES







Phase 1 – Early Wins Concept



Phase 1 – Early Wins Concept



Funding for District Development will borrow against future GRT revenue

Ongoing GRT revenue:

- Services, retail sales (not groceries), restaurants, event tickets

One-time GRT revenue:

- Construction, housing and commercial (one-time, but substantial)



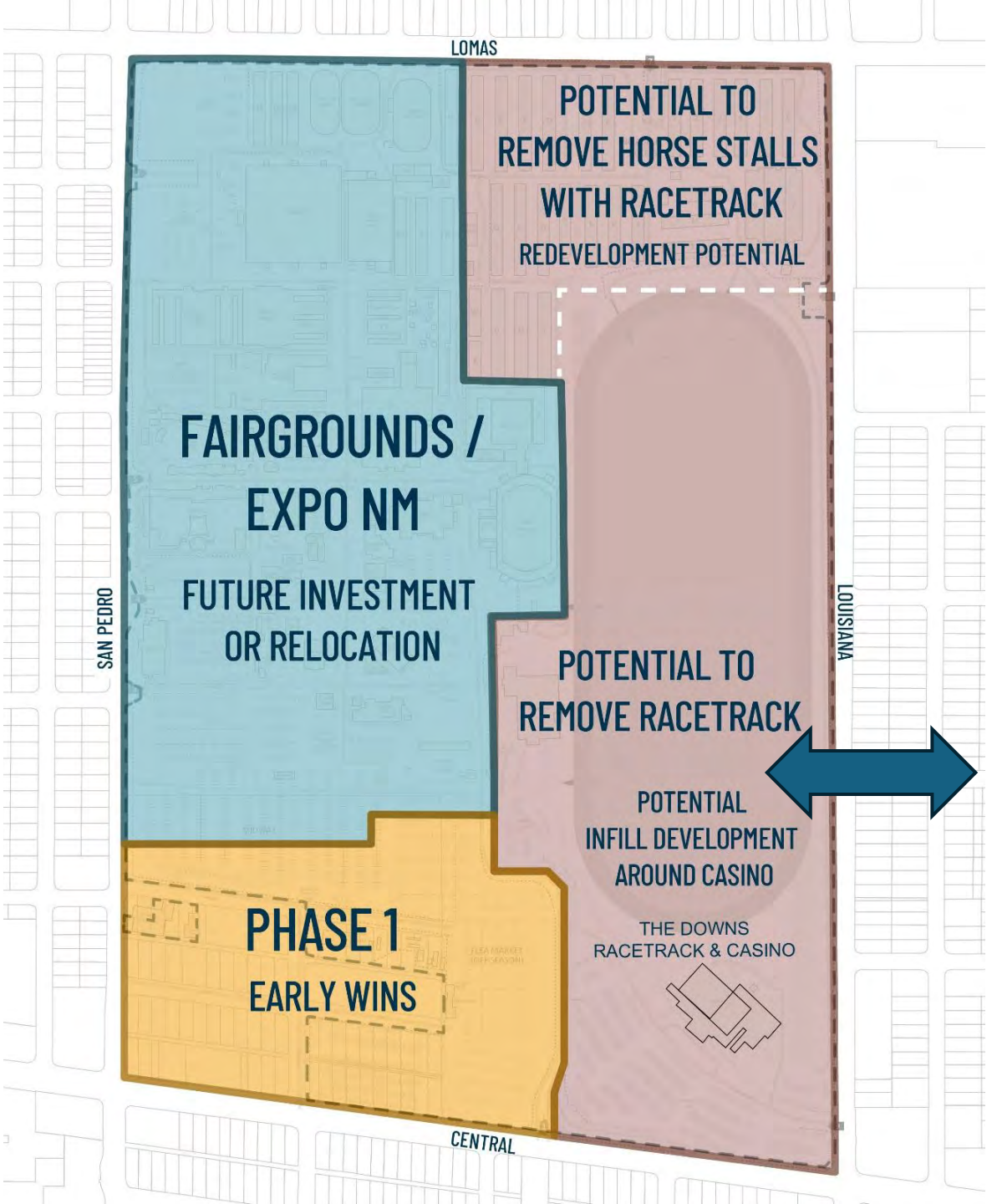






Major Takeaways – Major Wins

- 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



FAIRGROUNDS Reimagined

Stantec

Questions?
Comments?

Share your feedback:



FAIRGROUNDS Reimagined

DRAFT

NEW MEXICO STATE FAIRGROUNDS MASTER PLAN

March 20, 2026



I. MASTER PLAN SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

DRAFT

MASTER PLAN SUMMARY

Introduction

The re-envisioning of the New Mexico State Fairgrounds (NMSFG) offers a transformational opportunity to shape a resilient future and catalyze positive change for its surrounding neighborhoods and the city of Albuquerque. Over a nine month period, the community actively engaged in shaping a shared vision for the future of the site, thoughtfully considering significant changes and trade-offs necessary to support stronger, more resilient neighborhoods with an improved quality of life for all, and a more sustainable future for the Fairgrounds.

The recommendations that follow are the result of this collaborative effort. Rather than presenting a single, sweeping vision for the site, the master plan focuses on achievable, near term improvements in specific areas of the Fairgrounds, while also identifying longer term opportunities that will require continued dialogue, study, and, most importantly, partnership.

The master plan focuses on achievable, near term improvements in specific areas of the Fairgrounds.

These future considerations call for ongoing collaboration among community members, political representatives, and other vested stakeholders to ensure that change is intentional, equitable, and responsive to community priorities.

Purpose

The NMSFG is a 230-acre, multi-block area in the heart of Albuquerque, New Mexico, bounded North-South by Lomas Boulevard and Central Ave and East-West by Louisiana Boulevard and San Pedro Drive. This tract of land is home to Expo New Mexico (Expo NM), the state's multi-use entertainment and event complex, and the New Mexico State Fair. It is also the site of the Downs Racetrack and Casino, which holds a lease on the eastern portion of the property through February 2047.

The NMSFG land is managed by Expo NM, a state agency, and governed by the New Mexico State Fair Commission. Since 1938–the State Fair's re-introduction after WWI–the NMSFG has established itself as a historic and cultural beacon, hosting various events and programming including the NM State Fair, Gathering of Nations Pow Wow, high school graduations, the weekend Flea Market, concerts, livestock events, and art shows.

The NMSFG serves as a critical community gathering space and destination for showcasing New Mexico's unique cultures, industries, and agriculture (Figure 1). However, the NMSFG is at a point where substantial investment in facilities and the campus must be made in order to remain viable. Meanwhile, the state and the city of Albuquerque (CABQ) are experiencing a significant housing crisis, with a projected demand of 55,000 housing units by 2045. Compounding this issue, neighborhoods surrounding NMSFG are experiencing a state of decline. The area is marked by commercial and residential vacancies, higher rates of crime and drug use than elsewhere in the city, and a general lack of investment in community and social infrastructure. Together, these elements point to an opportunity and a responsibility to invest in this diverse, multi-cultural district and steward positive change.

The NMSFG is a prime potential catalyst for both local and regional transformation. The redevelopment of some or all of NMSFG promises the potential to create housing and economic development opportunities in a part of Albuquerque in urgent need of investment. The State Fairgrounds District (the District) was established as a political subdivision in early 2025 to direct gross receipts tax and gaming tax revenues from within the District to fund improvements and provide community benefits such as affordable housing, job creation, open space and health services. The District is authorized to issue up to $500 Million in bond financing.

Understanding this, the state engaged the international planning and design firm Stantec in June 2025 to conduct a master planning process, with the goal of providing an actionable framework to guide reinvestment, redevelopment, and long-term decision-making for the NMSFG and its impact on the surrounding neighborhoods.

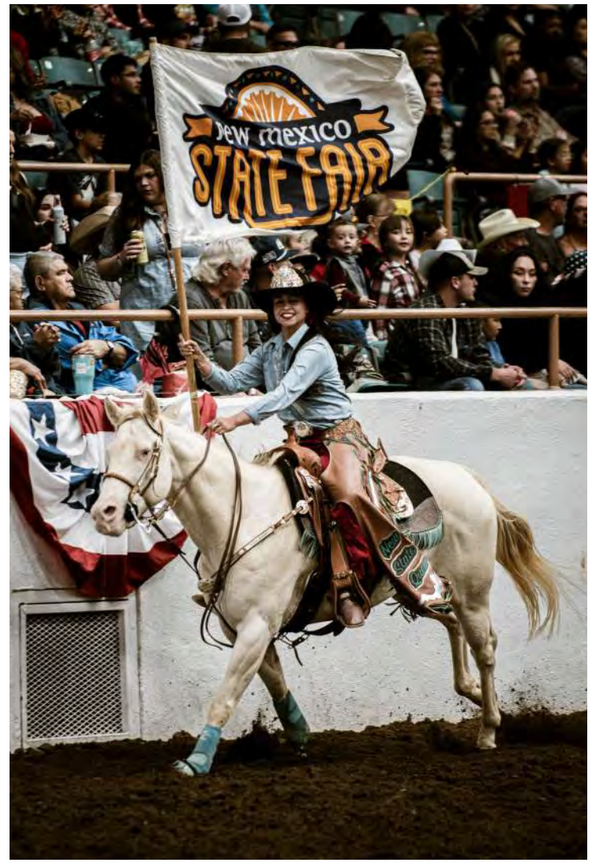


Figure 1: New Mexico State Fair Rodeo

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Master Planning Process

Stantec defined a master planning process that would establish clear direction with each stage of the project, engaging not only the state and Expo NM but the community at large. This process sought to coordinate the considerations of a diverse stakeholder group and align potential approaches, proposals, and recommendations with policy and priorities at the state, municipal, community, and Fair-specific levels.

The Master Plan followed a three-stage process:

- **Stage 1 - Data Collection & Analysis**
- **Stage 2 - Concept Plan Development**
- **Stage 3 - Final Master Plan Development**

Stage 1 evaluated existing facilities, infrastructure (Figure 2), operations, and market conditions to determine how the Fairgrounds can remain economically viable, operationally efficient, and responsive to community needs over time. Extensive engagement with the community was conducted concurrently with Fairgrounds and market assessments. An overarching project vision and guiding principles were established, enabling the team to outline a strategic path forward that balanced the Fair's mission with broader economic and community objectives.

From the beginning, the process was underpinned by the Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's commitment that every voice would be heard. Thus, outreach and community engagement was designed around the importance of hearing from a wide demographic of New Mexicans, not only in the neighborhoods surrounding the Fairgrounds, not only in Albuquerque, but statewide.

Next Steps

The master plan is intended to be a working document, providing a summary of work completed to date.

> *The master plan serves as a roadmap for further planning, design, and engagement with the community.*

The process to date has resulted in the plan represented here, but there is a lot of work ahead. The proposed Phase 1 will bring positive changes to the neighborhoods, and it is important the community's voice continues to guide that change. Parks, community spaces, streetscapes, fair improvements, sports venues, and private sector development all require continued discussion with the community to ensure the Fairgrounds are integral to the surrounding neighborhoods and reflect their culture, values, and aspirations.



Figure 2: Main Street at Fairgrounds

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Analysis & Community Engagement Findings

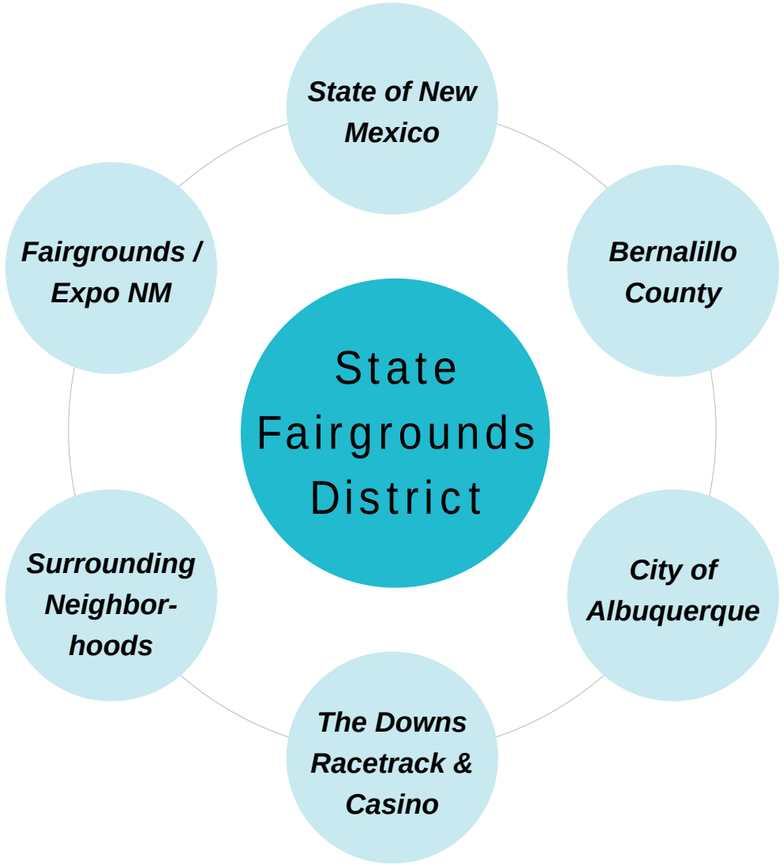
The findings within this document are intended to support informed decision making related to modernization, site optimization, phased investment, and potential long-term transformation, while maintaining flexibility to adapt to future policy, funding, and market conditions and changing community needs. These needs must be balanced between the State Fair District stakeholders.

The site consists of three primary areas –the Fairgrounds campus (approximately 73 acres), the Downs Racetrack and Casino (76 acres), and the South area of the site utilized by the Midway, the Flea Market, parking and several individual, privately-owned parcels.

The Fairgrounds Campus – Expo NM focuses their facilities and events in the area East of San Pedro Dr, South of Lomas Blvd and North of Copper Ave, west of the racetrack area. Facilities include Tingley Coliseum, Lujan Exhibition Hall, Livestock facilities and several smaller buildings as well as the open spaces, plazas, and transportation corridors that make up the campus.

The Downs Racetrack and Casino – The racetrack and supporting horse stalls on the east side of the NMSFG are not well suited to the relatively urban location. The property is leased through 2047. Indoor casino gaming operations are currently allowed here only in conjunction with the operation of the track for horse racing. The facilities negatively impact the surrounding neighborhoods, blocking access from the neighborhoods to the West and access to the Fair from Louisiana, the primary arterial connecting the Fairgrounds to I-40.

Pre-development Area (The South area at Central Ave) – The area south of Copper Ave. and west of the racetrack and casino utilized by Midway, the Flea Market, parking and several individual, privately owned parcels. The area is predominantly paved with little tree cover, poor drainage and is frequently underutilized.



New Mexico State Fairgrounds District Stakeholders

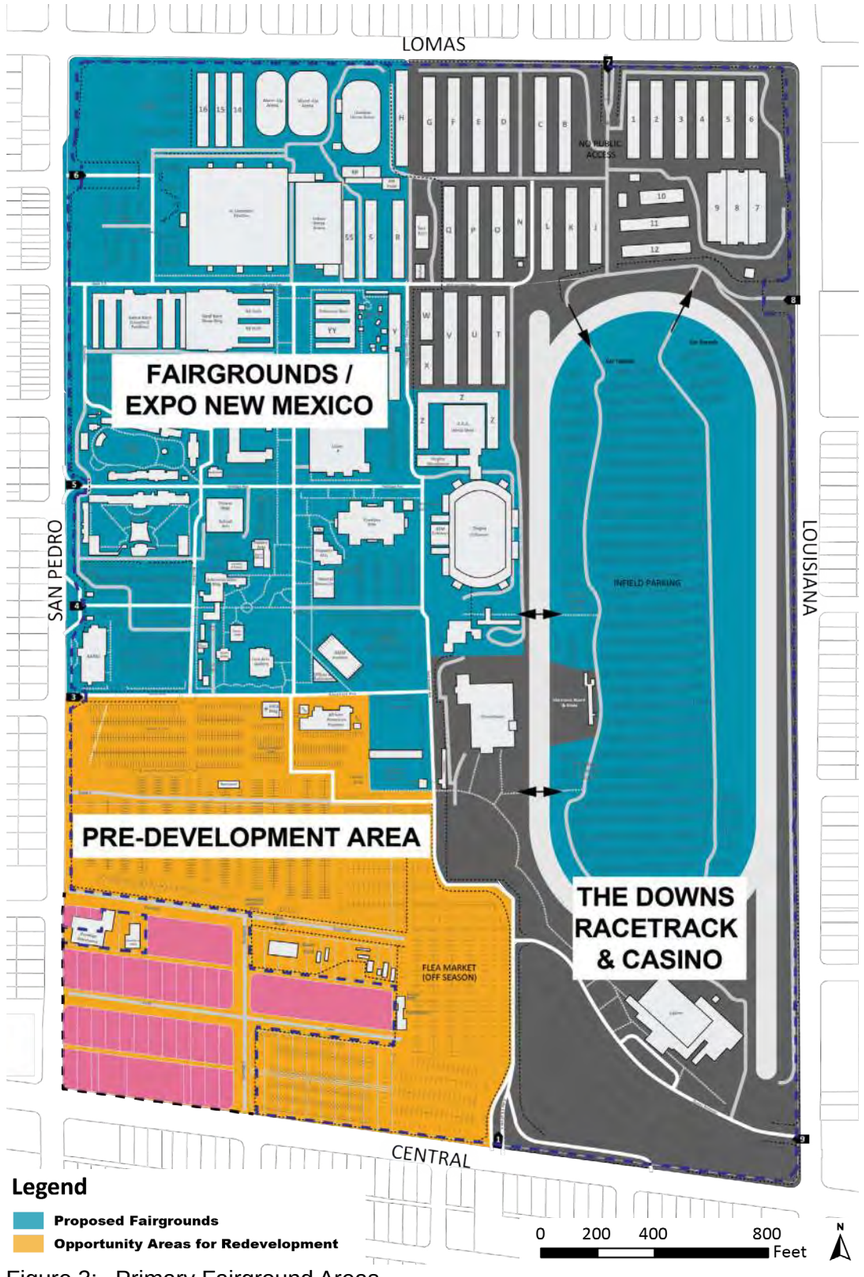


Figure 3: Primary Fairground Areas

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The planning process identified several core findings that shape the concept directions.

The Fair and Fairgrounds – Expo NM operates an economically sustainable, quality operation. Aging facilities and infrastructure, and operational inefficiencies represent challenges to future success. Many existing buildings and systems are functionally obsolete and suffer from many years of significant deferred maintenance, limiting flexibility, safety, and competitiveness, while dispersed facilities and outdated layouts increase operational complexity, staffing demands, and maintenance costs. The lack of modern venues limits the Fairgrounds' ability to increase economic performance in non-Fair periods.

Strong Market Opportunity – The Fairgrounds' central location, transit access, and regional visibility position the site to support entertainment, mixed-use development, and catalytic anchors including a potential arena replacement or new sports stadium.

Community Priorities – Public engagement emphasizes safety, walkability, economic opportunity, affordability, green space, and meaningful neighborhood integration. Most community members agreed positive change in the neighborhood was urgently needed but offered mixed feelings on whether the Fair itself should be relocated.

Need for Phased Decision-Making – Long term positive outcomes depend on decisions resolving key questions today, including the potential future relocation of the State Fair and the Downs Racetrack, both of which require a flexible, phased approach that can accommodate a range of future scenarios.

Together, these findings confirm the need for strategic reinvestment that delivers near-term improvements while preserving long-term opportunities.

"Much of the vibe of what we have now seems to be enhanced without sacrificing the historic experience we've come to find reliable and comforting."
- 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

"I like how much more community building capacity this design has. It seems like it has potential to be the kind of project that combats against the urban blight the neighborhood suffers from."
- FAIRGROUNDS NEIGHBOR

Community Engagement Dashboard (as of March 20, 2026)

2300+ Estimated Community Interactions	1035 Survey Responses	5551 Total Email Sends	16000+ Unique Website Visits

26 In-Depth Interviews	22 Blogs Posted on Website	07 Stakeholder Committee Meetings	03 In-Person Community Meetings	03 Virtual Community Meetings	01 Neighborhood Bus Tour



"What do we want for Fairgrounds neighborhoods in the future?"

Figure 4: Community Stakeholder Kick-off Meeting Engagement Results - July 23, 2025

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Community Vision & Big Ideas

Early conversations and inputs from the first survey helped to narrow down a singular, shared Community Vision, with discrete Big Ideas. Expanded detail regarding community engagement can be referenced in “Community Vision & Big Ideas” on page 49.

Community Vision

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

Safe, Welcoming, Walkable Neighborhoods

The Community Vision and first Big Idea lead with the word “safe” for a reason. Survey respondents identified “reduced crime” as a high importance for the Fairgrounds and surrounding neighborhoods in the future at a fifty-nine percent (59%).

Without a doubt, one of the most prominent problems that this initiative is attempting to tackle is the blighted conditions within the surrounding neighborhoods around the Fairgrounds and in Albuquerque’s International District, which experience the highest levels of homelessness, as well as property and violent crime.

While no development is a silver bullet, Master Planning focuses on catalytic opportunities within the Fairgrounds redevelopment, and how to utilize development and strategic investment to drive community progress.

Economic Prosperity for Area Businesses and Residents, including Pathways to Home Ownership

The importance of housing as part of the Fairgrounds development is split, with fifteen percent (15%) of survey respondents saying its crucial for the Fairgrounds itself and sixteen percent (16%) for the neighborhoods around the Fairgrounds. On those same questions, fourty-one percent (41%) and fourty-seven percent (47%) indicated it was the least important, respectively.

From the work of StreetVision Housing Strategies, formerly East Central Ministries, there are over 350 abandoned housing structures in a close proximity of the Fairgrounds. Community sentiment indicates that there should be a concurrent effort to create more pathways for homeownership with houses that already exist, alongside any efforts for new housing. Further, most New Mexicans, who are most familiar with single story, single family, stand alone housing, are unfamiliar with true mixed-use housing. These projects types have only recently begun to gain traction in Albuquerque.

The Fairgrounds Reimagined initiative offers an opportunity to expand on these mixed-use housing typologies.

Parks, Nature, Green Spaces

The initial pre-development bond funding supports plans for a nearly 10-acre community park. This would help to address several community priorities–reducing the heat index and increasing tree canopy, offering a no-cost third place (social space that is neither home nor work, where people regularly gather, interact, and build relationships) for the community, upgrading the current Flea Market venue, and others. Public support for green space is less pointed, but still of representative value with fourty-two percent (42%) of survey respondents listing it as a top three priority.

Affordable, Family-Friendly Amenities

Ensuring that future development on the Fairgrounds is accessible for all New Mexicans, and the flipside concern of pricing area residents out from concerts, sporting and cultural events, and retail and other commercial activity, is top-of-mind for area residents specifically (Figure 6).

Improved Transportation and Connectivity

“Albuquerque is just a driving city” is a sentiment we’re well familiar with and one that came up at several points during community outreach and engagement. The Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART), seen by many as a city of Albuquerque boondoggle, has two stops on Central near the Fairgrounds, and is not heavily utilized, even during the State Fair.

Biking however, has recently become a major mode of transportation to the Balloon Fiesta, and the city has made huge investments in the Albuquerque Rail Trail. Biking is under-utilized around the Fairgrounds because of rider safety and high rates of property crime.

Environmental Sustainability

As a whole, New Mexico residents are supportive of renewable energy and water conservation. This translates to interest in solar and geothermal generation to power activities on the Fairgrounds, as well as ensuring that landscaping is appropriate for the current drought and future water conditions in Albuquerque.



Figure 5: Community Leaders Interviews



Figure 6: Community Prioritization Engagement

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Future of the New Mexico State Fair

The master planning process was agnostic as to whether or not the State Fair programming (occurring during two weeks every September) would move and always included scenarios with the State Fair remaining on the Fairgrounds property. Nonetheless, media, legislative debates and kitchen table discussions focused on the question of whether the Fair would be relocated. Overall, community members felt they did not have enough information.

In general, those who expressed the sentiment to keep the Fairgrounds exactly as it is are Albuquerque residents over 65 with fond generational memories of attending the State Fair. During community meetings, this perspective was widespread from individuals within this age demographic. However, in other interactions–in-depth interviews (Figure 5 on page 6), stakeholder meetings, virtual community meetings–people were far more open-minded about moving the Fair to another part of town, and willing to entertain a dialogue about alternate better and higher uses for the Fairgrounds property.

For young New Mexico residents from rural parts of the state, the State Fair is the key venue to show—and in some cases sell—their livestock. Young leaders of 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) emphasized that the most important thing is to not skip a State Fair, even for one year.

The next most important thing is that the State Fair remain in Albuquerque, although where in Albuquerque is not as important. From conversations with young people (Figure 8) who show animals at the State Fair, there was no friction about moving it to another part of town, based on accessibility for livestock trailers at the current location, and the potential for significantly upgraded facilities (seventy-three (73%) of meeting attendees indicated that animal facilities needed updating) that don't seem achievable at the current location.

The connection for rural New Mexicans to urban Albuquerque, as offered through the State Fair, as well as the learning and experiential opportunities for urban Albuquerque youth to better understand and connect to where our food comes from and the state's rural and agricultural heritage, is something that must be honored and planned for when thinking about the future of the State Fair.

While the question was not asked specifically, as it wasn't in the purview of Fairgrounds Master Planning, analysis of data related to sentiment about the future of the State Fair is included.

In response to Discussion Concept Three in the second online survey, the draft design depicting the State Fair and Expo NM completely removed from the property, fourty-one percent (41%) explicitly state they do not want the Fair to move. However, out of those comments, sixteen percent (16%) define their specific worry as the Fair moving out of Albuquerque, not necessarily from the Fairgrounds. Frustration at the lack of information about where the Fair might move, results in twelve percent (12%) of respondents desiring the Fair stay in its current location, with some implying that if they knew more, they might feel differently. Conversely, twenty percent (20%) of all survey respondents explicitly state that they think the State Fair should move.

Finally, nine percent (9%) of all respondents support the redevelopment and though they do not specifically indicate that the State Fair should move, it can be deduced that they are not necessarily against the Fair moving to a new location, while six percent (6%) could potentially be in support of moving the State Fair if they had more details on where the Fair could relocate to in Albuquerque.

New Entertainment District

The potential for a new entertainment district, including a replacement for Tingley Coliseum (Figure 7), featured prominently in discussions, especially with the encouraging preface to "Think Big."

While there was similar nostalgic sentiment for Tingley Coliseum, the need for a replacement due to the age and condition of Tingley was easier to understand than the need to remodel other buildings on the Fairgrounds and other elements of the State Fair. Similarly, a new professional sports arena or field frequently came up for potential inclusion in the Master Plan.

Additionally, there was interest in building a Performing Arts Center, suggesting the right size was a 2,500-seat theater, a smaller 600-seat theater, designated practice and meeting spaces, and commercial spaces for performing arts organizations, like the New Mexico Philharmonic, to locate their headquarters.

While there is Popejoy Hall nearby on the UNM Campus which has sufficient seating, the theater itself struggles with seating dynamics and acoustics, and the loading and backstage areas are not sufficient to attract the biggest concerts and broadway shows.

With a thoughtfully-planned entertainment district, looking ahead to realistic programming that would be accessible to middle income Albuquerque residents, the potential for GRT revenue on the Fairgrounds to repay district bonds for infrastructure development and land acquisition become more realistic.



Figure 7: Tingley Coliseum NMSFG



Figure 8: Youth Community Engagement

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Site Analysis & Findings

History & Neighborhood Context

The NMSFG was part of the rural outskirts of Albuquerque at its current location in the mid 1900s, with little development in the surrounding areas (Figure 9). By the 1960s, roadway infrastructure laid the groundwork for further development of the Fairgrounds, along with suburban single-family residential on all sides and commercial development along Central Ave. (Historic Route 66). Today, the Fairgrounds are situated in the International District of Albuquerque. Adjacent surrounding neighborhoods include Fair West, La Mesa, Mark Twain, South San Pedro, and Trumbull Village.

Existing neighborhood assets serve as long standing and valued community anchors. International grocery stores, and a diverse mix of highly rated, multi ethnic restaurants attract visitors from well beyond the immediate neighborhood. The area is also home to several religious institutions, along with non-profit organizations, which provide important community services and support to local residents. Though neighborhood assets are varied, they are relatively low in number and there is a lack of walkable destinations. Much of the commercial corridors surrounding the Fairgrounds are occupied by auto-centric shops. Property vacancy is also a significant issue that contributes to illicit activities and safety concerns.

Despite its role as a regional and statewide destination, the Fairgrounds offers limited public access outside of scheduled events, contributing to a shortage of publicly accessible park space in the surrounding area. Expanding green space and strengthening pedestrian connections to nearby schools and community amenities would help to address this gap.

Transportation & Site Access

Today, access to the site generally accommodates the needs of both employees and visitors today, yet opportunities remain to strengthen transportation and mobility options, particularly for those who rely on alternative modes, and where safety and reliability improvements would increase their use. The Fairgrounds are well served along Central Ave, Louisiana Blvd, and Lomas Blvd with public transportation. The ART bus rapid transit service that runs along Central Ave is a major east-west connector to downtown with stops adjacent to the Fairgrounds.

Despite positive efforts to support non-vehicle modes of transit, there are still many barriers to safety within the existing roadway infrastructure that may disincentivize their use. There are limited pedestrian access points to the Fairgrounds site and walking distances are long between gates and to/from transit. There is no bicycle infrastructure or connectivity to nearby bicycle networks, and limited crosswalks along adjacent roads, including mid-block crossings. The Louisiana Corridor has been identified as one of the most dangerous in the city for pedestrians and bicyclists, and is one of the critical roads on the High Fatal and Injury Network map (developed by the Mid-Region Council of Governments), see Figure 10 and the supporting Table 1 on page 9 for crash data near the NMSFG.

Existing plans specify Louisiana Blvd as a vehicular corridor, while San Pedro Dr is envisioned as a main street corridor: safe, well-lit, tree-lined, walkable, and family-friendly (Revitalize San Pedro). Roadways and intersections adjacent to the Fairgrounds should be further studied to identify potential contributing crash factors and improvements to increase safety through measures such as higher crosswalk visibility, leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs), protected bicycle lanes, and Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFBs).



Figure 9: Historic Fairgrounds view looking west over the grandstand, c.1948 (Albuquerque Museum, gift of New Mexico State Fair, Charlie Frelund)

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Utilities

Water, sewer, and drainage infrastructure are currently present within the Fairgrounds; however, upgrades and capacity increases may be required to support future redevelopment, as existing systems are not sized for higher intensity uses. Redevelopment planning must account for existing utility infrastructure and easements, including a 60-inch sanitary sewer that traverses the northern portion of the site and a recently installed 10-inch fire line looping the racetrack.

Stormwater management is a critical consideration, as the site currently functions as a regional drainage conveyance, retaining runoff from the surrounding neighborhoods to the east before discharging into the San Pedro storm drain. Ongoing horse racing operations impose additional regulatory constraints, including Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) designation. Should horse racing operations be discontinued, drainage patterns, flood mitigation—particularly in the northwest portion of the site—and downstream storm drain capacity should be reevaluated.

Fairgrounds Site

The Fairgrounds facilities are oriented to the internal Main Street – a green corridor lined with mature trees that serves as the main spine of the fair event and supports pedestrian circulation to all major facilities along with vendors and food stalls (Figure 11). When the fair is taking place, the southern end of the fairgrounds serves as the Carnival/Midway, with arts, culture, exhibits and shows at the center, and livestock activities to the north end. Tingley Coliseum is located to the east of the Main Street facilities, closer to the infield parking, but disconnected from the rest of the Fairgrounds' facilities. Parking on the far south near is utilized for the Flea Market that takes place every Saturday and Sunday throughout the year, except during fair time.

KABCO (Severity)	Type of Crash	Count
K	Fatal	12
A	Serious Injury	31
B	Non-serious Injury	115
C	Possible Injury	262
O	Property Damage Only	820

Table 1: Crash Data (2017-2021)

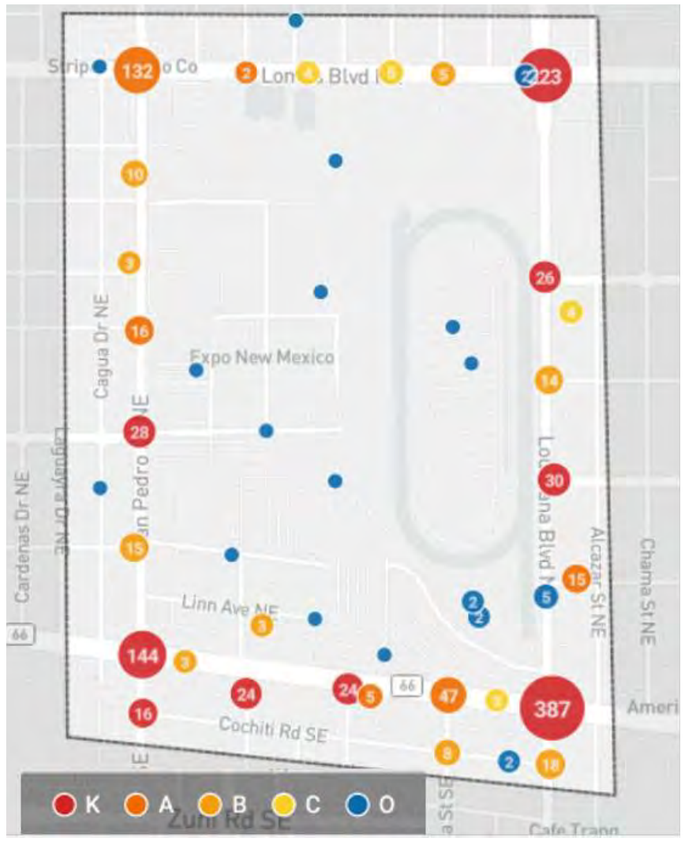


Figure 10: Crash Data (2017-2021)



Figure 11: Fairgrounds Landscape Areas

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Sustainability & Environmental Considerations

The fairgrounds provides opportunities to integrate aesthetic landscape and nature-based infrastructure that can beautify the neighborhood and enhance public sense of well-being, all while efficiently processing stormwater, CAFO runoff, and the pervasive heat island effect challenging built urban environments in the southwest.

The Fairgrounds are primarily paved with asphalt and dirt or gravel for livestock uses. Green spaces are comprised of mainly turf grass and trees that are maintained to be flexible for vendor uses and pedestrian access along Main Street and within the Indian Village, Villa Hispana, McDonald's Farm, and the Grandstand at the Downs. Some xeric planting and rock landscape areas are incorporated throughout the site and surrounding streetscapes.

Overall, the fairgrounds are approximately ninety-three percent (93%) impervious and seven percent (7%) landscaped areas. There is a concentration of tree canopy along Main Street, but minimal coverage across the site contributes to urban heat island effects across the Fairgrounds and to the surrounding streets and neighborhoods.

Sustainable landscape strategies can be implemented throughout the Fairgrounds such as:

- Rainwater capture & re-use
- Heat island mitigation through a combination of increased tree canopy and native low-water xeriscapes (Figure 12)
- Water treatment & Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GI) systems

Additionally, energy resilience and waste considerations should be part of any new development:

- Geothermal heating and cooling
- Solar energy (PV)
- Passive heating and cooling through architectural design standards
- Energy conservation standards
- E.V. charging
- Composting & recycling
- Low carbon/local materials

Future development should plan for these environmental considerations and potential improvements while preserving and enhancing existing assets.

Lush and native low-water xeriscapes can amplify the distinct New Mexico character for visitors while providing cooling shade and urban heat island mitigation.



Figure 12: Albuquerque International Sunport (Sites Southwest)

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Fair Facilities Programming Analysis

The intent of a programming analysis is to understand the past, current, and future potential uses of existing assets (buildings, outdoor spaces, and other spaces) by assessing existing facility conditions and future opportunities, needs, and priorities.

As part of this Master Plan, the Stantec Programming Team synthesized various types of data. Data collection consists of many formats with the goal of gaining a comprehensive understanding to support data-informed decisions. Both qualitative and quantitative data collected in August 2025, focused on various aspects of departmental operations including:

- Expo NM Department interviews (16)
- Expo NM Department surveys
- Existing departmental occupancy and location
- Current space usage and workflows
- Staffing need and growth expectations
- Event schedule (from 6-28-2024 to 8-02-2025)

Gap Analysis

A gap analysis evaluates the available office and programmable event space against the required space determined by factors such as staffing growth, operational changes, modernization processes, and space standards. The goal of this analysis was to identify surpluses and deficits to determine optimization strategies for Expo NM and the NMSFG.

Expo NM's vision for the NMSFG focuses on improvements around their current operations, improved efficiency, the types of programming they want to offer, how they stay competitive with other multi-use entertainment districts, and the overall goal of providing a fun, safe environment for the community and visitors to the Fairgrounds.

Expo NM's overall goal is to provide a fun, safe environment for the community and visitors to the Fairgrounds.

The existing square footage of the Fairgrounds facilities was used as a baseline for comparing the space required by Expo NM into the future. Comparing the existing available square footage to the projected square footage to meet programming needs results in a square footage gap. This gap analysis provides insights into current spaces and potential capacity of facilities and the Fairgrounds site to establish a modern, optimized, and flexible campus (Figure 13).

The total existing gross square footage (GSF), which includes interior and exterior space, is 10,280,160 GSF. A proposed right-sized square footage of 10,615,107 GSF would require an additional 334,947 GSF (approximately 7.7 acres) in order to meet Expo NM's overarching goals for the facilities and infrastructure. The right-sizing effort also incorporated benchmarking and standards of other State Fairs and Entertainment Districts to better understand the required square footage of a modern, flexible Fairgrounds.

334,947 GSF

Increased need in square footage from existing to right-sized program



Figure 13: NMSFG Gap Analysis

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Recommended Program

The recommended program is the projected square footage need required to manage Expo NM's current operations–providing improved efficiency, the ability to host various types of events, and achieving the overall goal of creating a fun, safe environment for the community and visitors to the NMSFG.

The gap analysis shows a recommended program that would increase overall square footage need on the Fairgrounds. Despite the gap projections, the recommended program could actually reduce the overall campus acreage. Many of the existing facilities are smaller, inefficiently laid out buildings that spread out staff and increase operational workload. For example, Expo NM administrative staff currently occupy over six separate buildings across campus and would benefit from being collocated in one building.

This condensing of spaces and establishment of a more effective layout provides an opportunity to reduce the number of buildings and improve operational efficiency for the existing NMSFG site.

Potential Relocated/New Fairgrounds

Expo NM remains one of the largest and most recognizable event venues in the state between the annual State Fair and dozens of year-round activities. However, compared with similar facilities nationwide, its utilization, revenue diversity, and visitor capture are relatively modest.

Other fairgrounds across the U.S. have diversified their revenue streams and established "entertainment districts" to support this year-round activation. This is creating long-term self-sustaining success for other state fairs. While there are opportunities and benefits to creating this "entertainment district/modern Fair" at the NMSFG's current site, it also comes with challenges.

One such challenge being the existing mid-20th-century facilities with deferred maintenance costs surpassing the cost to upgrade or expand. The ability to create this type of Fairgrounds would require a re-envisioned campus layout.

The projected square footage need for the NM State Fair along with case study examples of modernized Fairgrounds helped to establish the vision of a "future Fairgrounds" if the Fair is relocated in the future.

A more detailed description of the NMSFG programming analysis can be referenced in the "Fairgrounds Planning Analysis" on page 73.

Gap Analysis Program Recommendations for Concept Plan Consideration

Proposed New Fair Facilities to Meet Program Recommendation

Administration Building

- Combine administrative functions into one location

Multi-Purpose Building

- Venue to host newer, larger events and provide better space for vendors
- Opportunity to collocate functions

Livestock Pavilion

- Larger, modern facility helps to meet Expo NM's desire to enhance the Fair
- Allows for synchronic programming such as 4-H and FFA educational events
- Ability to add public facing programs

Creative Arts Center

- Provide modern, upgraded facilities for Fair arts
- Combine similar programs into one facility creating one destination to bring people in
- Limit operational challenges due to dispersed buildings
- Opportunity for public facing programming

Proposed State Fair Program for Consolidation and / or Relocation

- Administration Building
- Livestock Arena
- Rodeo Queen Boulevard (Palomino Barns)
- Livestock Barns
- Livestock Support (feed/dirt storage)
- Multi-purpose / Exhibition Hall
- Creative Arts Center
- Operations Building
- Main entry gate (offices, bathroom, ticketing, Bank)
- State Emergency Operation
- Youth Hall & Dorms
- Indoor Rodeo Arena
- Exterior Concert Venue
- Midway
- Sitework & Parking
- Infrastructure & Utilities

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MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Visioning Process

Early in the Master Planning process information was gathered from multiple sources: past reports, existing site conditions analysis, interviews with Expo NM staff, and community feedback (Figure 14 and Figure 15).

Expo NM's vision for site improvements focused around their current operations, improved efficiency, the types of programming they want to offer, how they stay competitive with other multi-use entertainment districts, and overall goal of providing a fun, safe environment for the community and visitors to the campus.

From the beginning, the process was underpinned by the Governor's commitment that every voice would be heard. Thus, outreach and community engagement was designed around the importance of hearing from a wide demographic of New Mexicans state-wide. Many of these priorities had commonalities with Expo NM's vision and goals for the campus.

The community priorities for the NMSFG are listed below in order of importance:

1. Economic prosperity for neighborhood residents
2. Safe, welcoming neighborhoods
3. Public health and social service amenities
4. Community participation and input in development of the existing site
5. Affordable, family-friendly amenities
6. Nature and green spaces
7. Preserving the character of the neighborhoods
8. Environmental sustainability
9. Improved transportation and connectivity
10. Providing pathways to home ownership

A further breakdown of the community engagement portion of this Master Plan can be referenced in section "Community Vision & Big Ideas" on page 49.

Before alternative concepts for the future of this campus could be created all of this data and perspectives were collated. An overarching vision and guiding principles were established. This helped to outline a strategic path forward that balanced Expo NM's mission with broader economic and community objectives.



Figure 14: Presentation to Expo NM



Figure 15: Expo NM Visioning Workshop

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Vision & Guiding Principles

Vision and guiding principles were formed to outline a strategic path forward that balance Expo NM's mission with broader economic and community objectives.

> ***Vision:*** *"The New Mexico State Fairgrounds will be a safe, vibrant, and activated gathering place—a year-round campus that supports live, work, and play—creating a hub for entertainment, culture, and community."*

These guiding principles represent a principle-forward framework within which three preliminary discussion concepts were created and analyzed –two focusing on redevelopment of the southern portions of the site excluding the Fairgrounds lands, one focusing on relocating the State Fair elsewhere and incorporating mixed-use development across the entire vacated Fairgrounds. Page 17 provides a summary of community feedback on the preliminary discussion concepts.

Based on the analysis of these concepts, it was determined the best approach was to consider the master plan as a series of phases coupled with key decision points and options.

Guiding Principles:

ACTIVATION & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- Preserve the neighborhood and Fairgrounds character and culture
- Offer affordable, family-friendly amenities and housing options
- Activate the campus year-round with events and entertainment
- Create jobs and economic opportunity for nearby residents and businesses

SAFETY & COMFORT

- Enhance safety and comfort through better lighting, security, and wayfinding—day and night
- Improve access through safe connections to surrounding neighborhoods

QUALITY OF LIFE

- Provide parks and open spaces for recreation, learning, play and community gathering
- Invest in green infrastructure including bioswales, tree canopy, biodiverse plantings and trails

SUSTAINABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY, & OPERATIONS

- Ensure that buildings and landscapes are appropriate for Albuquerque's climate and responsive to climate change
- Accommodate renewable energy generation on-site, supporting future Fairgrounds uses.

ACCESSIBILITY & OPERATIONS

- Reduce long-term environmental impacts by incorporating environmentally sustainable and climate-responsive design
- Promote efficient use of resources and resilient infrastructure
- Ensure easy, convenient access to Fairgrounds for visitors, staff, vendors, and neighbors

MODERNIZATION & ADAPTABILITY (EXPO NM)

- Invest in modern, competitive, multi-use venues
- Design facilities that can evolve over time without limiting future options, such as a flexible arena and support spaces

PEOPLE-CENTERED WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Improve Fairgrounds workspaces, break areas, and amenities for staff and vendors
- Support attraction and retention of talent
- Enhance operational efficiency

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Framework Strategy

The framework strategies lay the foundation for a cohesive development connected through a dynamic public realm and anchored by entertainment attractions. Five key program elements comprise the essential framework toolkit that will be used to realize a successful neighborhood hub and entertainment destination for residents and visitors alike (Figure 16).

Diverse/Flexible Uses—A vibrant place is born from a mix of affordable activities and destinations that attract people throughout the day, month and year. By integrating agricultural education, food-focused experiences, youth programming, sustainability features, and community spaces, the environment becomes a vibrant hub where learning, entertainment, recreation, and commerce overlap. This diversity ensures there's always something happening and invites repeated visits from a wide range of people.

Safety & Comfort—A welcoming environment is created through infrastructure that is safe and comfortable. Sidewalks are buffered to protect pedestrians from traffic and landscaped to provide shade during warmer months. Shortened street crossings and right-sized streets are designed to support traffic flow at appropriate, pedestrian-friendly speeds. Well-maintained facilities, comfortable gathering spaces, activated edges, and improved lighting and landscaping all contribute to a sense of safety and belonging. These design choices help ensure that users —regardless of age, background, or purpose—feel comfortable and safe.

Mixed Housing Types—A thriving place provides housing options that reflect the diverse needs of a community. By encouraging density near commercial areas and transit and allowing a range of housing types at attainable price points, the Fairgrounds become more inclusive and better able to sustain year-round activity. Mixed housing strengthens the economic ecosystem and reinforces the site as a place where people can live, work, and participate in daily life.

Walkability & Connectivity—Attractive destinations, reasonable walking distances, safe pedestrian connections, improved access to a range of mobility options to and from the site, and intuitive circulation create a walkable environment that links key attractions and encourages visitors to spend time. Enhancements such as dedicated bike routes, centralized parking, clear wayfinding signage, and more accessible gateways encourage people to navigate the site on foot or by bike. By clustering destinations within comfortable distances, the area becomes easier to explore and more enjoyable to experience.

Public Realm & Open Spaces—Well-designed public spaces—such as teaching gardens, outdoor demonstration areas, parks, plazas, and flexible gathering zones—form the social and ecological core of a thriving place. These shared environments promote community interaction, support health and wellness, and provide opportunities for education and cultural expression. Integrating sustainable systems like green infrastructure and enhanced tree canopy also strengthens resilience and improves long-term environmental quality.



Figure 16: Framework Strategy

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Physical Framework Opportunities

The Fairgrounds are currently a restricted-access site enclosed by walls and fences. Gates at key access points must be maintained to support the existing internal roadway network (Figure 17).

The Fairgrounds present an opportunity to improve access and create activated edges along surrounding streets. By integrating the physical framework strategies with the overarching guiding principles, the plan supports an enhanced public realm and open space network, improved connectivity, and greater walkability within future mixed-use development (Figure 18).

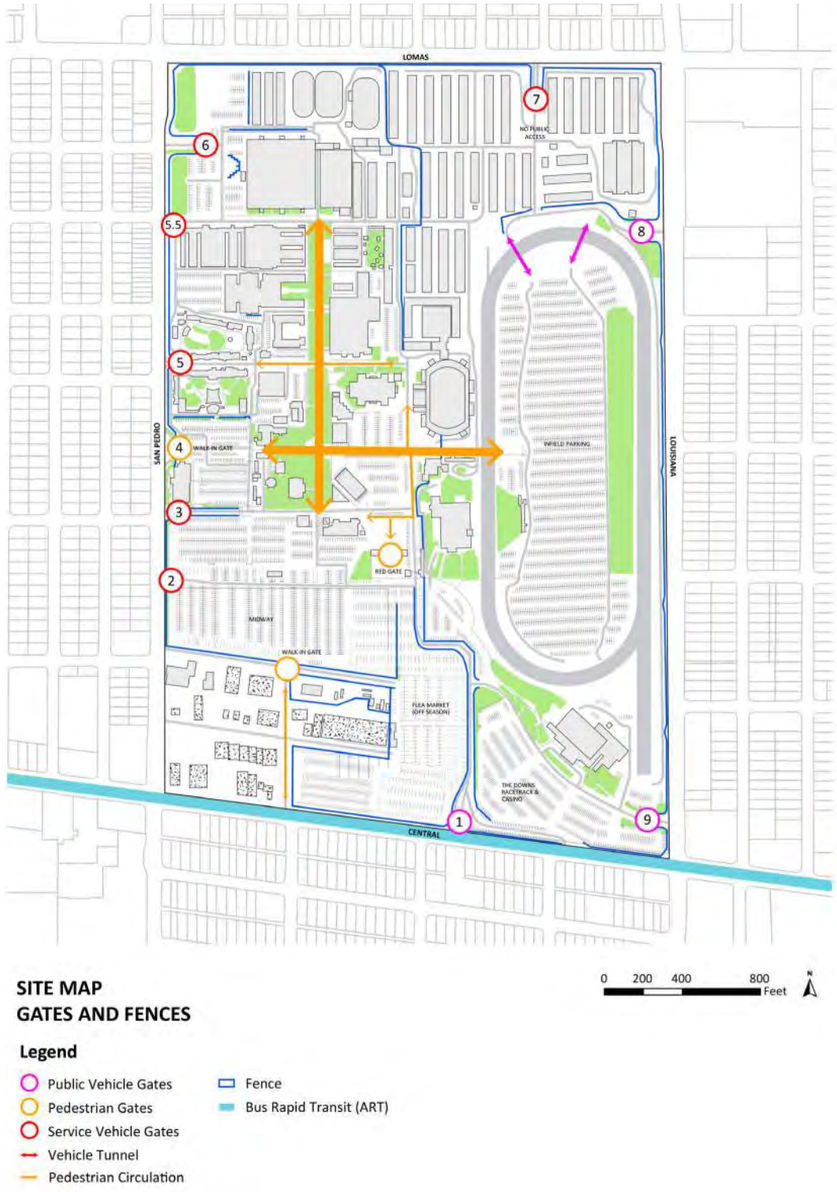


Figure 17: Existing Site Perimeter Barriers & Access

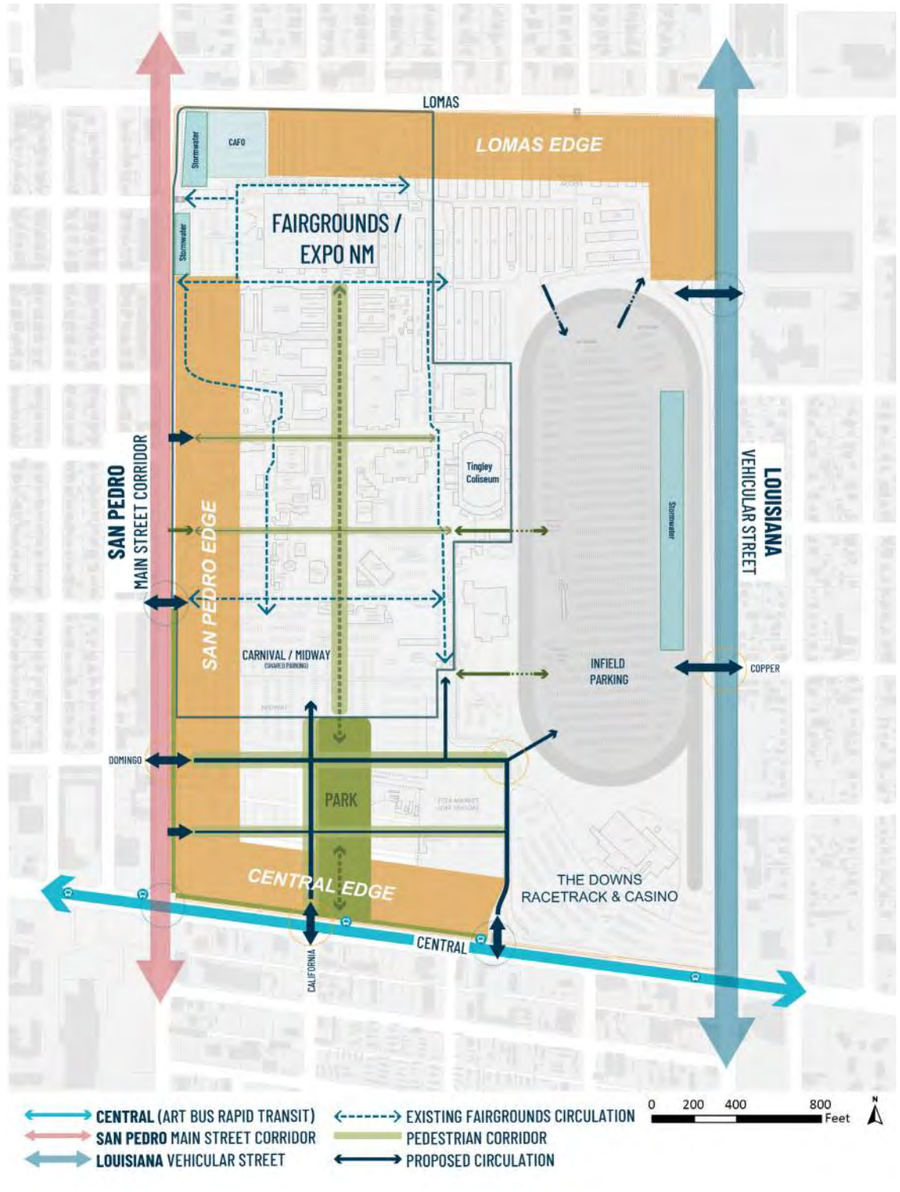


Figure 18: Proposed Physical Framework Opportunities

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Community Feedback on Preliminary Discussion Concepts

One important series of touchpoints was the community workshops, allowing participants to voice opinions, concerns, likes/dislikes, and vision for the future of the New Mexico State Fairgrounds.

Through the process, many ideas were explored and analyzed with the community, leading to three preferred alternative concepts. Across all concepts, the project creates opportunities to modernize the site (Figure 22 and Figure 23 on page 18), improve year-round use, and introduce new housing, parks, and economic activity. Together, the options reflect community values by balancing preservation of the State Fair's legacy with varying levels of reinvestment and change.

No single concept fully resolves concerns related to safety, traffic, cost, and long-term community impact. Trade-offs remain between preserving cultural identity, achieving meaningful revitalization, managing public risk, and ensuring clear, achievable implementation.

"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 race track - 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

*"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

"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

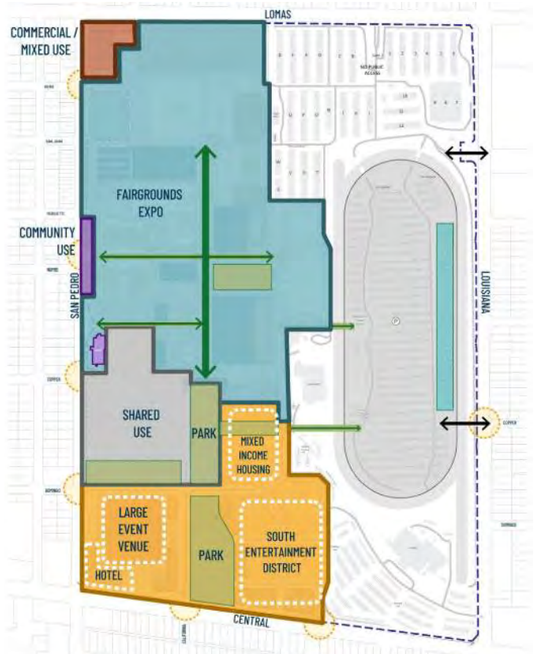


Figure 19: Concept 01 - Modernization of Fair & Limited Redevelopment

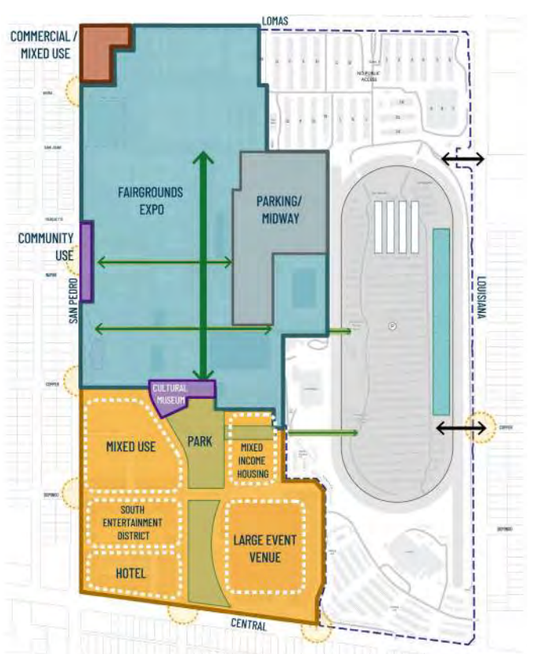


Figure 20: Concept 02 - Southwest Redevelopment Focus

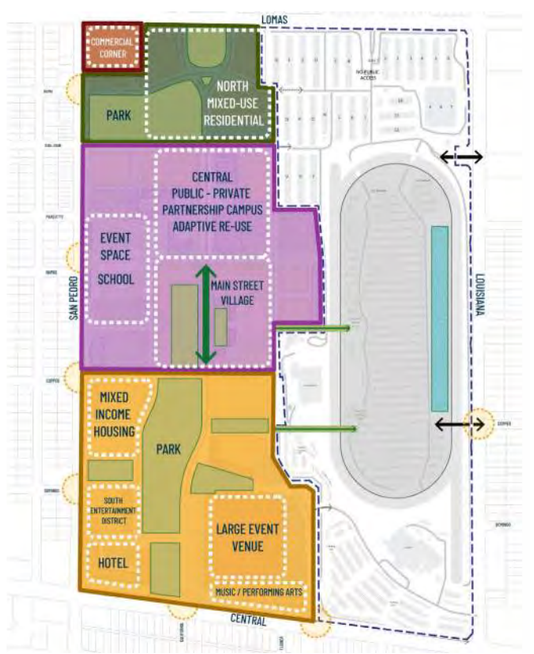


Figure 21: Concept 03 - Site Transformation

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A Flexible & Adaptive Plan

Implementation of the master plan is structured around a phased, decision-based approach (Figure 24) that minimizes disruption to Fair operations and aligns investment with funding and policy realities.

- **Phase 1 - Early Wins:** Focus on deferred maintenance, safety improvements, public realm upgrades, and initial catalytic investments that deliver visible impact and build momentum.
- **Phase 2 - Mid-Term Phases:** Introduce additional major anchors, consolidate Fair facilities, expand entertainment and mixed-use development, and improve infrastructure and connectivity.
- **Phase 3 - Long-Term Phases:** Respond to key strategic decisions—such as potential Fair and/or racetrack relocation—to unlock additional redevelopment potential and broader site transformation.

This approach ensures flexibility, supports continuous operation, and allows the state to advance redevelopment incrementally while maintaining public trust and fiscal responsibility.



Figure 22: Downs Racetrack



Figure 23: South Area

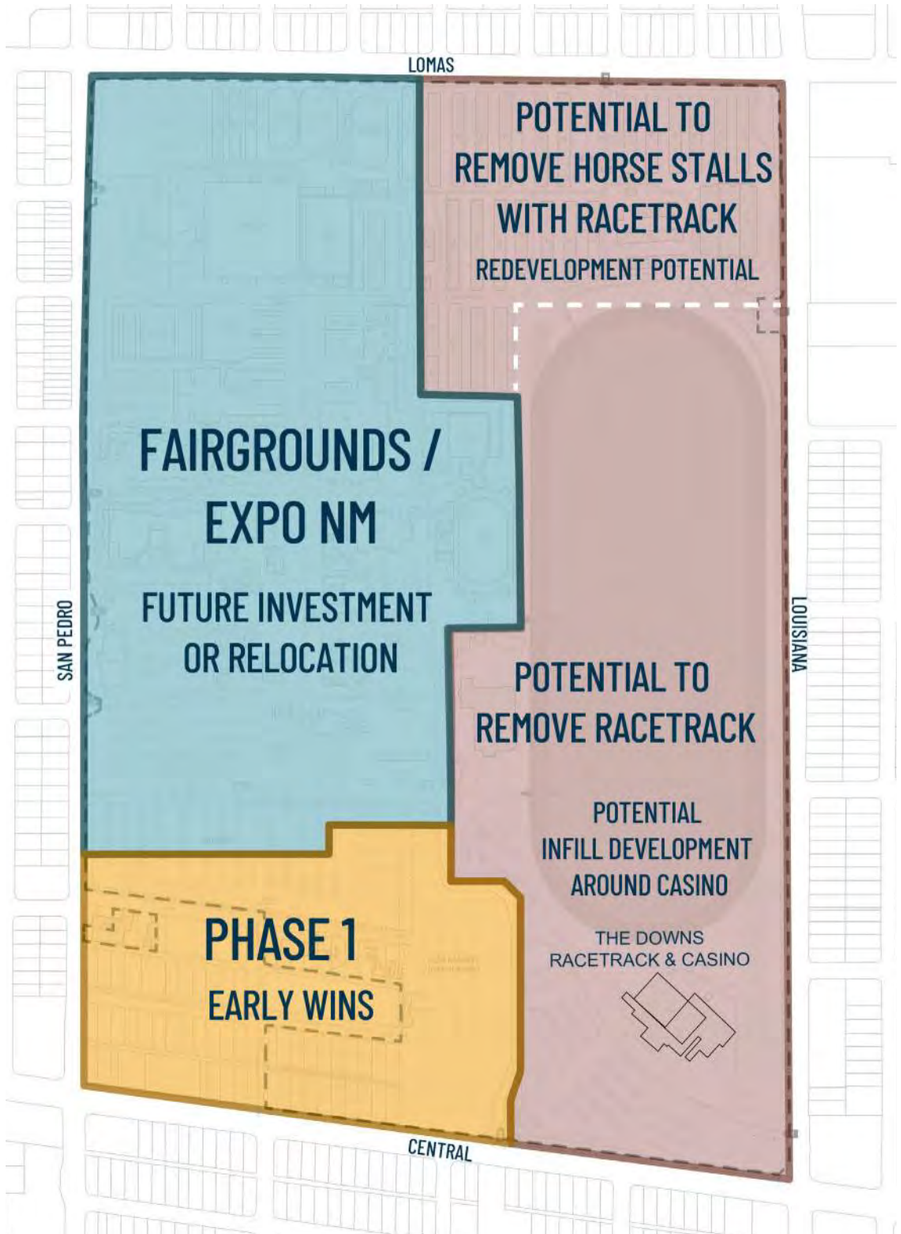


Figure 24: Master Plan Development Potential

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Phase 1 - Early Wins

Focus redevelopment efforts on Phase 1 improvements to the South area of the site and create an identifiable, uniquely New Mexican destination for both residents and visitors. Recent approval of $92 Million in bond funding enables acquisition of private parcels near the intersection of Central and San Pedro and implementation of infrastructure including parks, pedestrian safety improvements, and site preparation. Build upon these early improvements to activate and create a desirable destination for nearby residents, the people of Albuquerque and all New Mexicans.

These Phase 1 elements are consistent for all scenarios including the two alternate pathways described below. The two pathways build off these preliminary elements in different ways.

***Goal** – Create an Entertainment District comprised performance and event venues, restaurants, public spaces, shops and community spaces to generate an active, delightful destination for visitors and residents, and deliver amenities that contribute to a higher quality of life for residents.*

Initial Strategy - Four Major Steps

1. Re-organize and consolidate State Fair facilities to make room for future development, address deferred maintenance and provide essential support for operational and efficiency needs.
2. Activate the site with a walkable, mixed-use core (Figure 27). Convert the Fairgrounds from a seasonal campus into a place where residents and visitors can meet, dine, shop, stay, recreate, learn, live, and work throughout the year. Mixed-use environments (Figure 28) are activated even on non-event days through housing, community venues, parks, and workplaces and can significantly expand Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) generation. Integrate the Fairgrounds into the surrounding neighborhood context through connected streets, parks and active edges.
3. Implement phased redevelopment based on key decision points – Phased redevelopment balances near-term fiscal returns with long-term economic resilience. A phased approach supports the creation of complete, economically sustainable districts implemented over time, acknowledging both the scale of the site and the duration needed to realize successful, market-supported redevelopment (Figure 26).
4. Establish a strong anchor with a modern sports stadium (Figure 25). Demand exists for modern, flexible venues capable of hosting concerts, sports, conventions, and large scale events. Create a year-round centerpiece that drives visitation, catalyzes investment, and defines a new identity for the site and larger district.



Figure 25: Sports Stadium Concept | Denver, CO | Populous/Denver NWSL



Figure 26: Plaza Ciudaña | Albuquerque, NM | Hartman & Majewski Design Group



Figure 27: Klyde Warren Park | Dallas, TX | OJB



Figure 28: Halcyon | Forsyth County, GA | RocaPoint Partners

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Major Anchor as a Catalyst

Many areas within the International District are struggling to maintain stable commercial businesses and residential neighborhoods. Countless vacant storefronts and empty, neglected homes populate the area. This is particularly true along the commercial corridors and in neighborhoods east and south of the Fairgrounds. Significant change is needed to reverse this downward spiral, and that change is possible through the placement of a major catalytic anchor on the underutilized lands of the Fairgrounds.

The market assessment explored a variety of catalytic anchors that could be located on the Fairgrounds, including an innovation hub, a medical campus, and other uses that support major industries in the area. Research showed little market demand for these options. However, a mixed-use district supported by an entertainment venue showed the most promise. The highest and best use for this site is an entertainment district with a major anchor—such as an arena or sports venue—serving as a catalyst for mixed-use development.

There is market demand for an indoor arena, but the cost of an arena is significant. A sports stadium, especially one scaled for non-major sports leagues, is a more affordable and attractive option for early-phase redevelopment. There are many examples where thoughtfully planned sports venues have catalyzed investment in housing and other community amenities across the country. Minor league baseball, in particular, has led the way in revitalizing downtowns in small- to mid-sized cities. In many cases, stadiums have helped spark and accelerate neighborhood investment in housing, infrastructure, and community amenities. However, building a stadium alone is not enough. Investment in placemaking and community infrastructure, including social infrastructure, is essential to creating more resilient redevelopment and people-centered places.

Small-scale stadiums fit well within neighborhoods. Their scale allows them to adapt to existing street networks and integrate with surrounding land uses and amenities. These venues typically have lower seating capacities and lower construction costs and, as a result, offer more affordable family entertainment, shared civic experiences, and a stronger sense of local pride.

Small-scale stadiums fit well within neighborhoods. Their scale allows them to adapt to existing street networks and integrate with surrounding land uses and amenities.



Figure 29: Entertainment and Residential District near CPKC Stadium | Kansas City, MO



Figure 30: Climate Pledge Arena | Seattle, WA



Figure 31: Durham Bulls Athletic Park | Durham, NC

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Placemaking

Placemaking is critical in new development because it turns mixed uses into a cohesive, human-centered place rather than just a collection of buildings (Figure 32). By preserving historically significant buildings and spaces, development retains authenticity, cultural memory, and a sense of identity that anchors new growth and builds community. At the same time, pairing that heritage with walkable streets, mixed-use housing, and thoughtful density supports daily activity, local businesses, transit, and social interaction—creating places that are active, economically resilient, and meaningful to both existing and future residents of the International District.

A Unique New Mexican Experience:

LOCAL
ACCESSIBLE
INVITING















Figure 32: Local Placemaking Examples

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Phase 1 Investments & Impact Projections

Fair Remains - Moderate Investment

Fairgrounds/EXPO NM Improvements:

- 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:

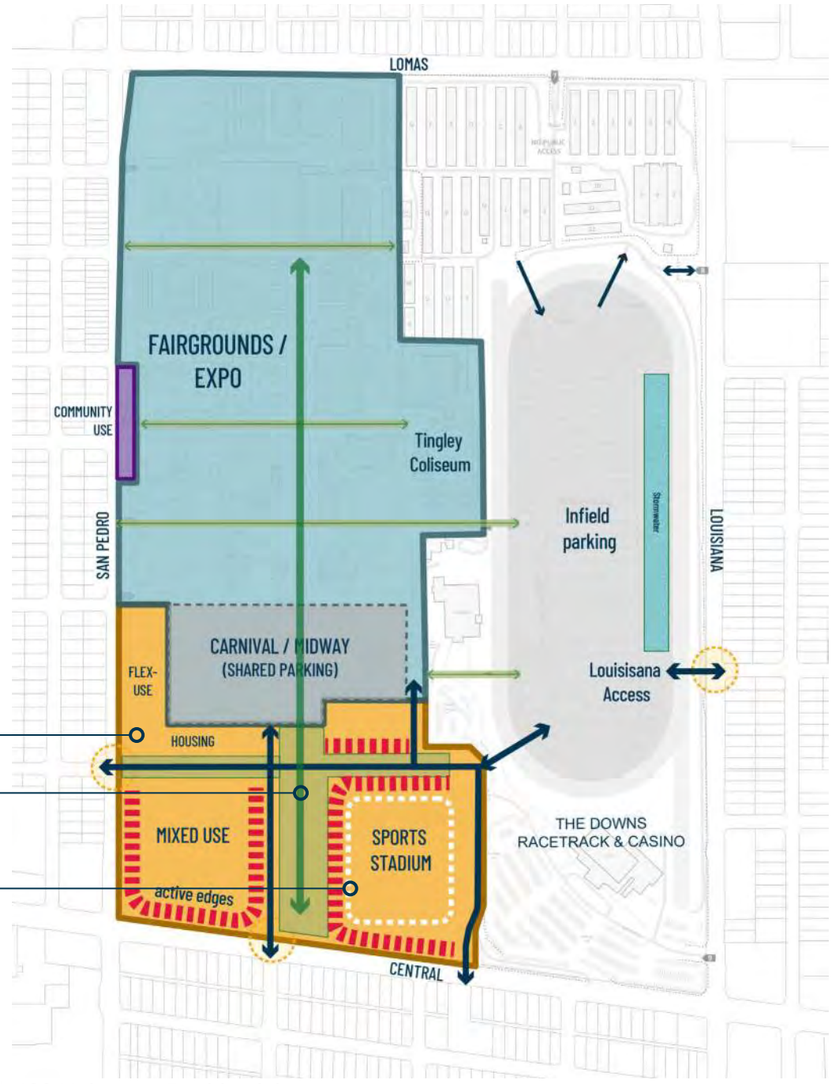
- Commercial, retail, office, and housing
- Sports Stadium







$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

Figure 33: Phase 1 Early Wins Concept Plan Diagram

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Phase 1 Concept Plan Diagram

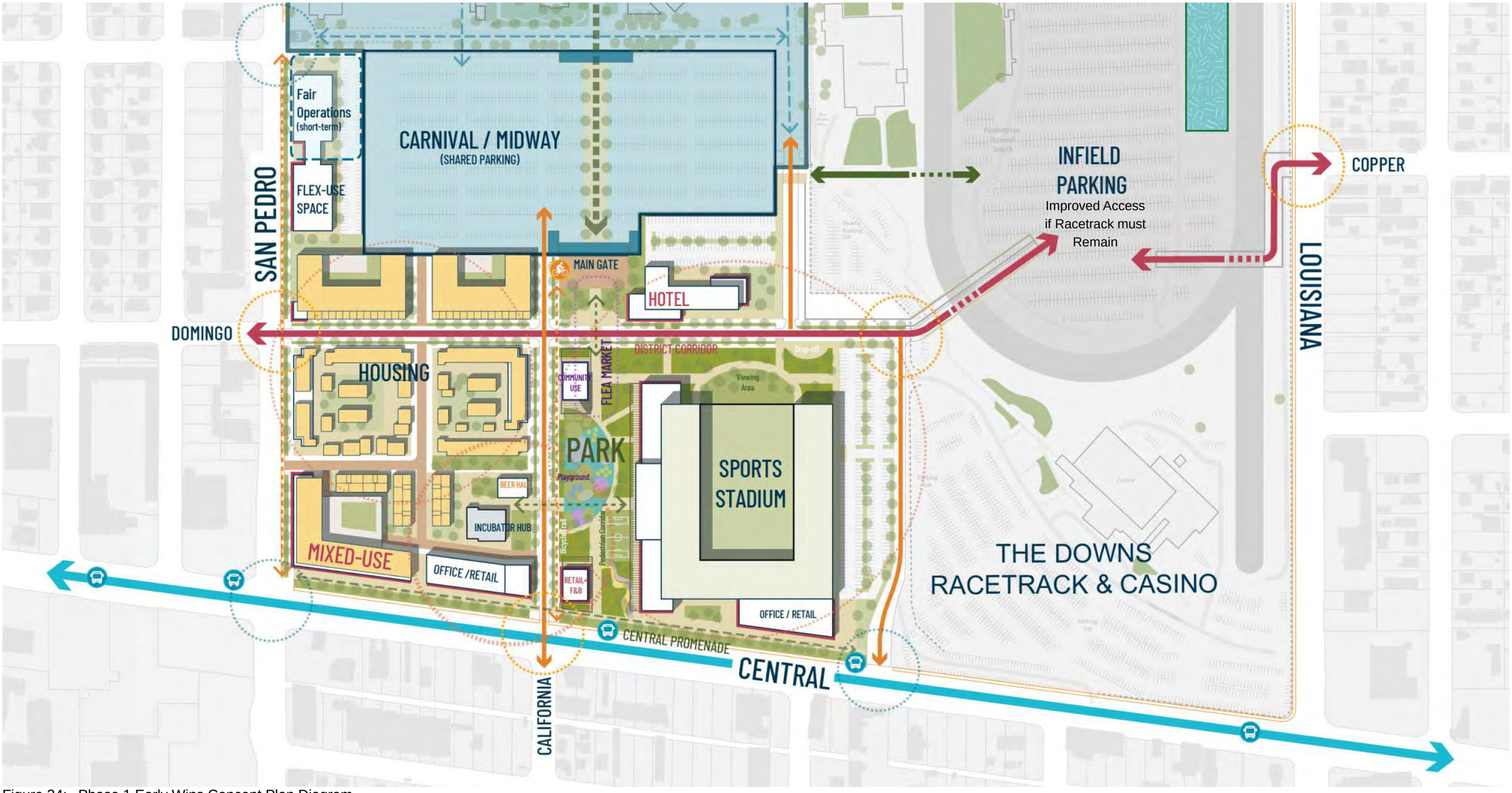


Figure 34: Phase 1 Early Wins Concept Plan Diagram

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Phase 1 Early Wins Improvements

The neighborhood street grid is expanded into the Phase 1 area, increasing connectivity and more evenly dispersing traffic (Figure 39). A new intersection is created at Louisiana to allow for two points of access and egress to the existing infield parking area. Additionally, access from Central Ave and San Pedro to the infield parking is now possible.

A new park is created on axis with the existing tree-lined Main Street, providing 8 acres of community space including a destination playground, agricultural gardens, outdoor gathering, and flexible play fields (Figure 40).

Circulation Diagram

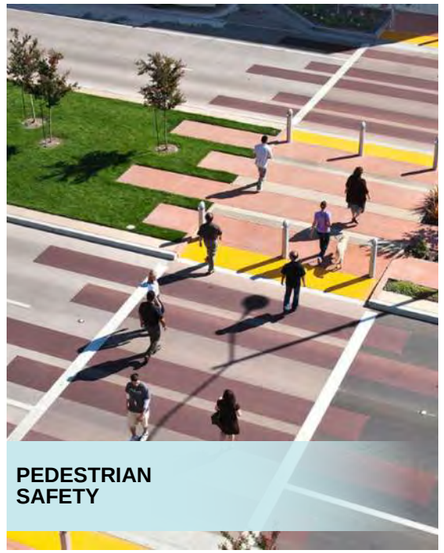


Figure 35: Pedestrian Crossing | W. Sacramento, CA

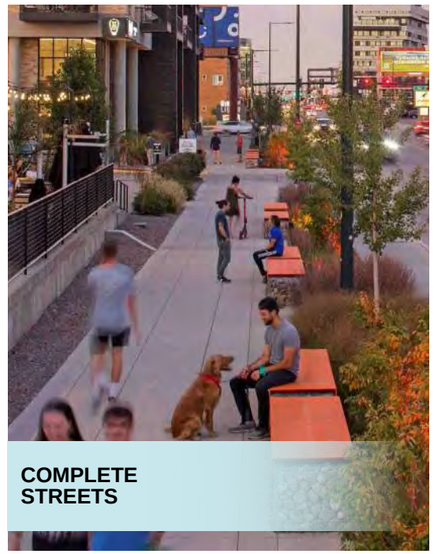


Figure 36: Brighton Boulevard

Community Amenities



Figure 37: Paco Sanchez Park



Figure 38: Rio Grand Food Project

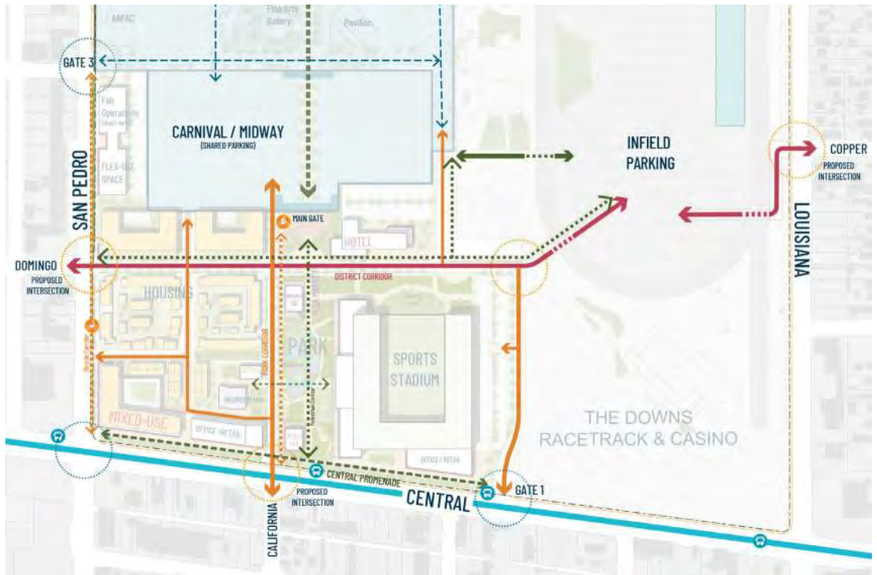


Figure 39: Site Circulation

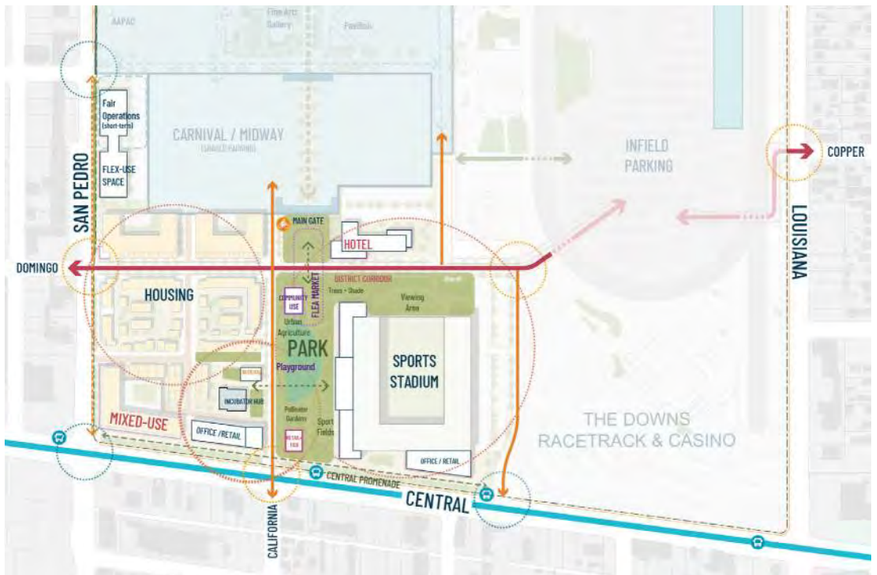


Figure 40: Proposed Community Amenities

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Phase 1 Concept Rendering: Non-Event Day



Figure 41: Phase 1 Early Wins Concept Rendering - Non-Event Day

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Phase 1 Concept Rendering: Fair and Sports Stadium Event Day



Figure 42: Phase 1 Early Wins Concept Rendering - Fair and Sports Stadium Event

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Phase 1 Concept Rendering: Park



Figure 43: Phase 1 Early Wins Concept Rendering - Park

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Phase 1 Concept Rendering: Complete Streets



Figure 44: Complete Streets Concept Diagram

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Required Adjustments to Fairgrounds in Phase 1

Strategic steps must be taken in phase 1 implementation to both minimize operational impacts to the fairgrounds and minimize future costs. The following facilities and parking areas are affected by phase 1 implementation:

- Carnival/midway configuration & support parking reduced
- South red gate pedestrian entrance that serves the park & ride shuttles and VIP parking must be relocated
- South parking areas removed: VIP lots, trailer storage and vendor parking
- Operations warehouse & storage yard displaced (located on Domingo Rd)

The southern parking area is also used for the flea market year-round. The flea market can continue to operate but must be relocated to areas within the proposed park space and/or within the adjusted carnival/midway lot.

With the removal of the south parking areas (approximately 1,200 spaces), the infield parking within the racetrack is the primary public parking zone for fair-time, providing 3,196 spaces. Entry to the infield parking lot can be improved by providing vehicular access along Louisiana at Copper and/or from the south along Central, north of Gate 1. Infield parking access improvements should only be pursued if the Downs Racetrack must remain in place. New agreements would need to be secured between the Downs and the Fairgrounds for any new ingress/egress from the infield. The existing pedestrian access tunnels should also be widened and improved to meet ADA accessibility standards where possible.

Additional off-site parking for the fair will be required for some employees, vendors, exhibitors, and especially trailers for livestock showing that used to be stored in the southern parking area. It is recommended that a combination of the following alternative parking options be utilized:

- Purchase of nearby vacant parking lots for fair-time parking and other uses year-round
- Expanded Park & Ride (P&R) Agreements with Coronado Center Mall (current P&R location) or other nearby sites for 11 days of the fair

Full implementation of Phase 1 will require rebuilding the operations warehouse storage and exterior lay down space within the fairgrounds, adjacent to the carnival/midway. This flexible-use warehouse can accommodate both expanded storage space for the fair and can be rented out for alternative uses. It is recommended that the existing warehouse is preserved until a new operations facility is built.

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 ***If Downs Racetrack must remain***	$25 M*
SUBTOTAL COST PHASE 1 (2026 dollars)	**$19-56* M**

Table 2: Phase 1 Fairgrounds Improvements Cost Estimate

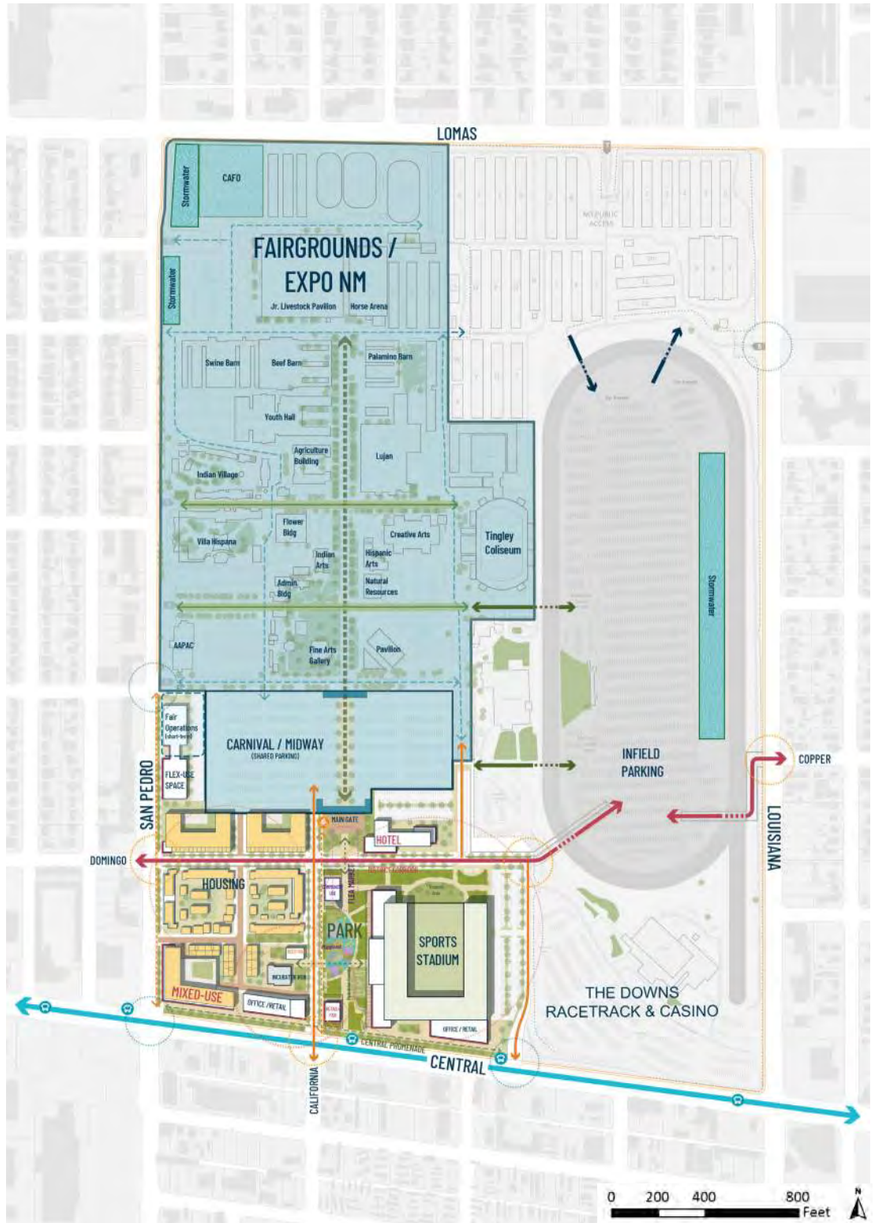


Figure 45: Phase 1 Fairgrounds Improvements

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Future Fairground Phases 2 & 3

Additional investment in the Fairgrounds past Phase 1 is reliant on the future long-term vision for the fair to remain at its current location. This future phase concept envisions preserving the existing Fairgrounds footprint while enhancing functionality and community engagement through strategic incorporation of new facilities. This scenario balances modernization with heritage, ensuring the fairgrounds remain a vibrant, multi-use destination.

The facilities programming analysis has identified a need to right-size and proposes numerous existing programs and uses be collocated into new facilities to both optimize and modernize the fairgrounds for long-term success.

Proposed NMSFG Program

Multi-Purpose Exhibit Hall / Administration

- Venue to host newer, larger events and provide better space for vendors
- Opportunity to collocate functions
- Combine administrative functions into one location

Livestock Pavilion

- Larger, modern facility helps to meet Expo NM's desire to enhance the Fair
- Allows for synchronic programming such as 4-H and FFA educational events
- Ability to add public facing programs

Creative Arts Center

- Provide modern, upgraded facilities for Fair arts
- Combine similar programs into one facility
- Limit operational challenges due to dispersed buildings
- Opportunity for public facing programming

Fairgrounds Improvements	Cost Estimate	Phase
FUTURE PHASES		
Multi-purpose Exhibit Hall / Administration	$80-100 M	Early Next Phase
Fair Operations (Replace Lujan)	$10 M	Early Next Phase
Remodel/Renovate Existing Facilities	$10-15 M	Any Phase - reliant on fair remaining
Livestock Pavilion (multi-purpose)	$68 M	Any Future Phase
Other Livestock Improvements	$8-10 M	Any Future Phase
State Emergency Operations	$5 M	After Multi-purpose Exhibit Hall is built
Creative Arts Center	$25 M	Any Future Phase
Food / Vendor Hall	$5-10 M	Ideally built adjacent to new Operations Bldg.
Restroom / Family Building	$3 M	After Multi-purpose Exhibit Hall is built
Demolition of Existing Facilities	$3 M	When proposed to be removed in phasing
Utilities & Stormwater Improvements	$5-10 M	Any Future Phase
SUBTOTAL COST (2026 dollars)	**$222-259 M**	**Subtotal Cost for Future Fairgrounds Improvements**
TOTAL COST (2026 dollars)	**$266-315 M**	**Total Cost for Fairgrounds to Remain**

Table 3: Future Phase Fairgrounds Improvements Cost Estimate

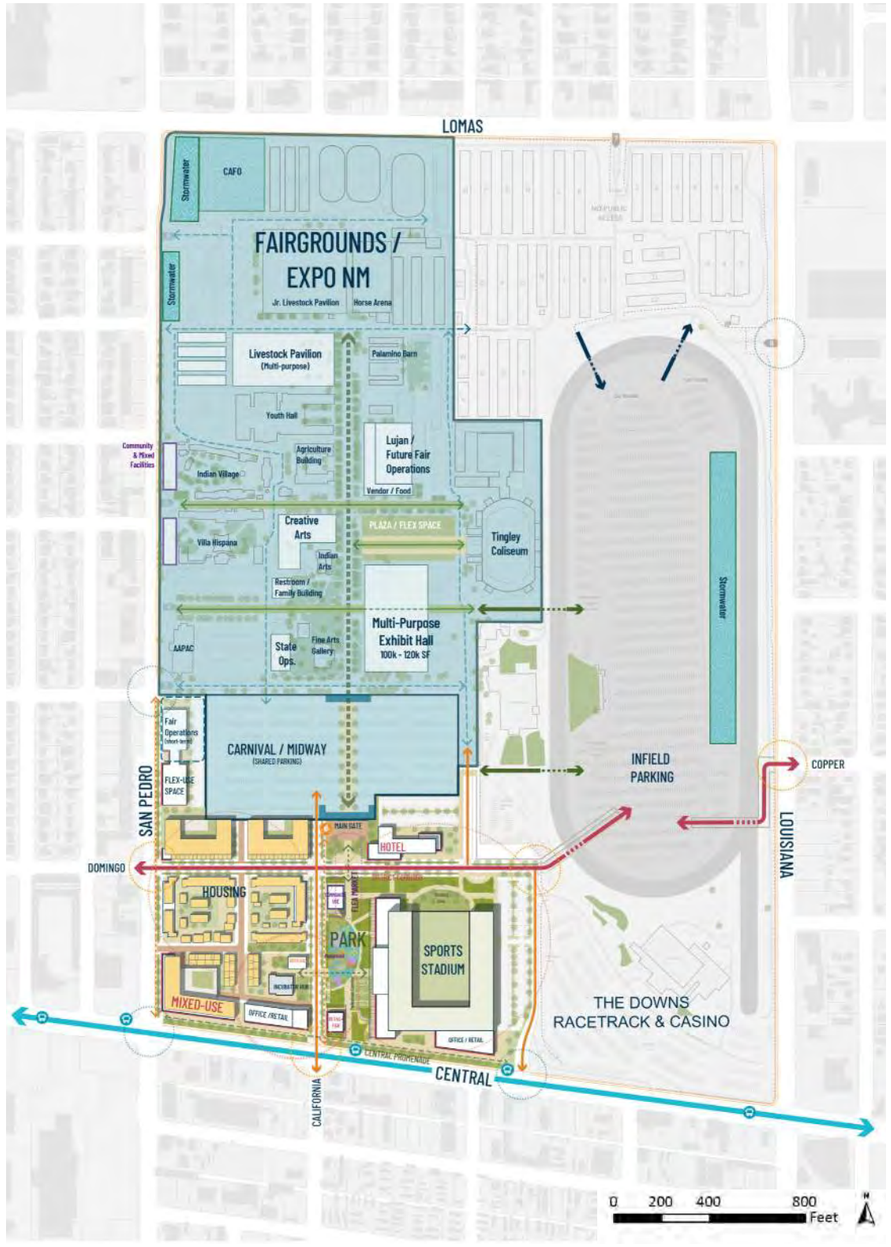


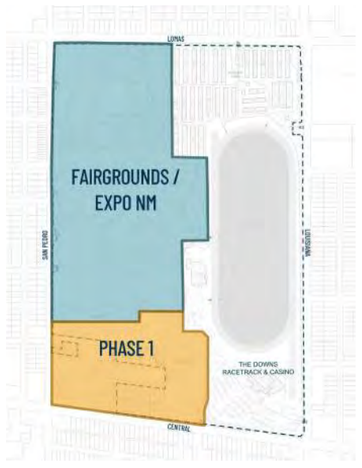
Figure 46: Future Phase Fairgrounds Improvements

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Implementation & Phasing Pathways

The three primary areas of the site present unique opportunities for redevelopment but with constraints and limitations that can be addressed and resolved within the next several months to a year. The two alternative pathways for future phases are reliant on the potential relocation of the Downs Racetrack and decision points outlined in the following section (Figure 47).

PHASE 1 - EARLY WINS

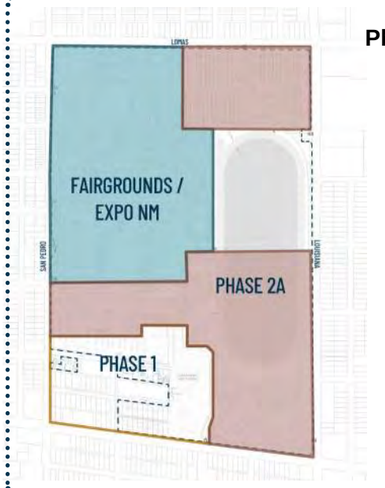


A

B

PHASE 2 POTENTIAL

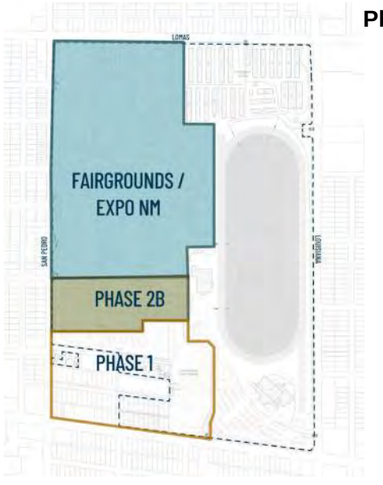
PREFERRED PATHWAY A OPTION – RELOCATE THE DOWNS RACETRACK



Phase 2A - Expand Entertainment District

- Arena
- Mixed-use
- Infill at casino
- Community uses
- Park
- Regional storm

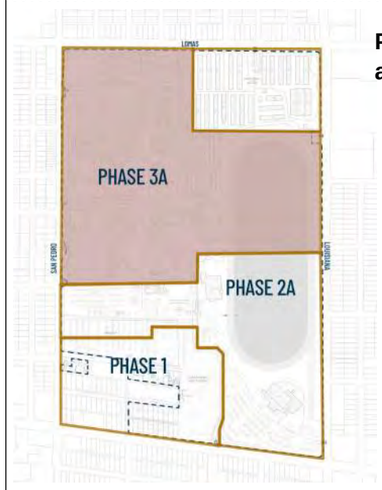
PATHWAY B OPTION – RELOCATE THE FAIR (DOWNS REMAINS)



Phase 2B - Arena

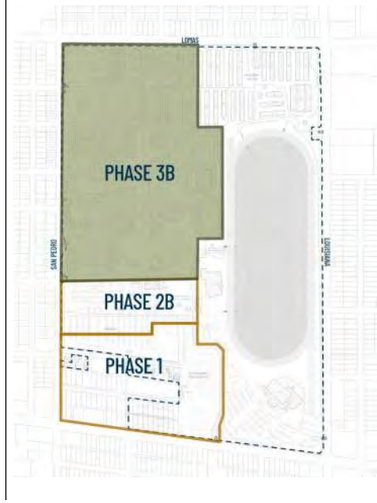
- Arena
- Housing and Retail
- Exhibit Hall
- Operations Center

PHASE 3 POTENTIAL



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

- Fair moves
- Innovation hub
- Community campus
- Mixed-use
- Park
- Regional storm



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

- Fair moves
- Innovation hub
- Community campus
- Mixed-use
- Park
- Regional storm

Figure 47: Future Phases - Alternative Pathways

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Preferred Master Plan Pathway A - Relocate the Downs Racetrack

Relocating the racetrack presents significant opportunities to revitalize the fairgrounds and adjacent neighborhoods. Approximately 76 acres of land can be redeveloped by removal of the track, horse stalls and grandstand, with the important Louisiana and Lomas intersection made available for commercial mixed-use redevelopment. Additional access points from Louisiana and neighborhoods to the east are also possible with the removal of the track, providing better connectivity and access for all.

Key Benefits:

- Positions development fronting Louisiana Ave, a designated vehicular arterial with direct connectivity to Interstate 40 and the Uptown neighborhood, and South to Sandia Laboratories.
- Enables activation and access at Louisiana Ave and neighborhoods to the east.
- Expands area for addition of an arena and a reimagined Racino and infill opportunities.
- Provides significantly more redevelopment opportunity than the fair area, with 108 acres of total redevelopment compared to 39 acres in South area.
- Results in significant economic impact and community benefits.

Relocation of the racetrack will require legislative changes to the Gaming Compact, which currently allows gaming only when a racetrack is co-located. The benefits of relocating the track are significant and work to revise legislation should begin within the year.

Decision Points

- Upon approvals, Phase 1 planning and design can begin late spring or early summer 2026.
- Decisions regarding Phase 2A follows resolution on whether the racetrack can be relocated. This is anticipated by Spring 2027, following legislative session.
- Phase 2A is a significant redevelopment effort with an anticipated development timeline of 5-10 years. If a phase A is desired, a decision to relocate the fairgrounds to a new location could be made in 2027 when all factors are fully understood.

Phasing

Redevelopment is proposed to occur in the two phases following the “early wins” scope of work. Phase 2 concentrates on the redevelopment of the south portion of the site, from the proposed sports stadium east to Louisiana Ave and North to Copper Ave NE, along with development of the northeast corner while reserving infield parking. Phase 3A, if a decision is made to proceed, considers relocation of the fair and expansion of mixed-use development into the campus.

- Phase 2A – the entertainment district is expanded to include an arena, infill development adjacent to the racetrack and casino, additional housing, parks and plazas, and additional parking.
- Phase 3A – relocation of the fair and redevelopment of campus. Redevelopment of infield of track for parks and mixed-use.

Investment in the Fairgrounds

With the completion of Phase 1 and the redevelopment of the Domingo warehouse and storage spaces, the fairgrounds will need a new central operations facility. This facility is proposed in place of the existing Lujan exhibit hall. As Phase 2A gets underway, proceed with investments in needed facilities including a new Multi-purpose Exhibit Hall (to replace Lujan) and administrative space, consolidated operations, state operations facility, creative arts center, multi-purpose livestock facility, and upgraded restroom facilities. Ensure building design is flexible and can be adapted to alternative uses if a decision is made to relocate fairgrounds.

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Preferred Pathway A - Summary

Phase 1 Early Wins

$240M Total Estimate Redevelopment Cost

$3.8B Economic Impact
Albuquerque region and state-wide (30-year total)

Phase 2A

$832M Total Estimate Redevelopment Cost

$8.3B Economic Impact
Albuquerque region and state-wide (30-year total)

Phase 3A (optional)

$1.1B Total Estimate Redevelopment Cost

+$870M Relocated Fairgrounds Estimate Cost

$10.8B Economic Impact
Albuquerque region and state-wide (30-year total)

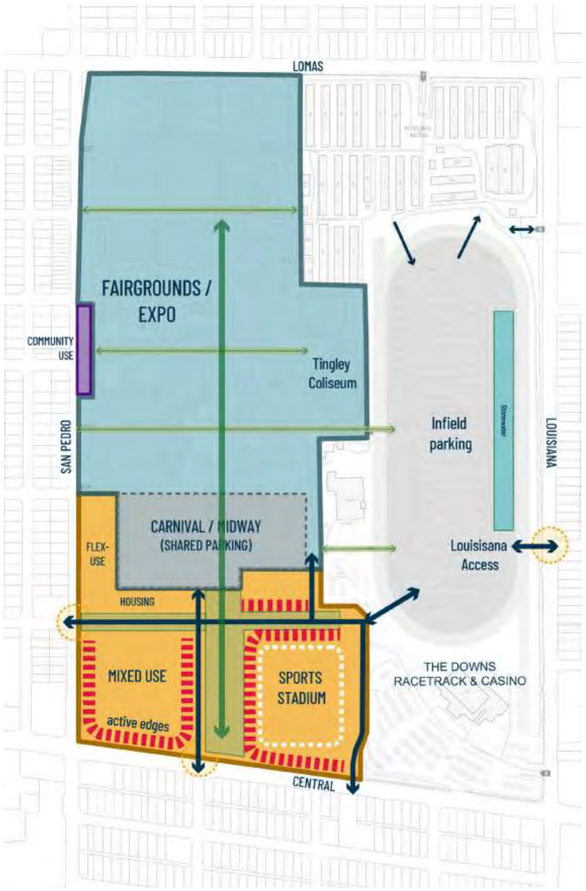


Figure 48: Phase 1 Concept Diagram

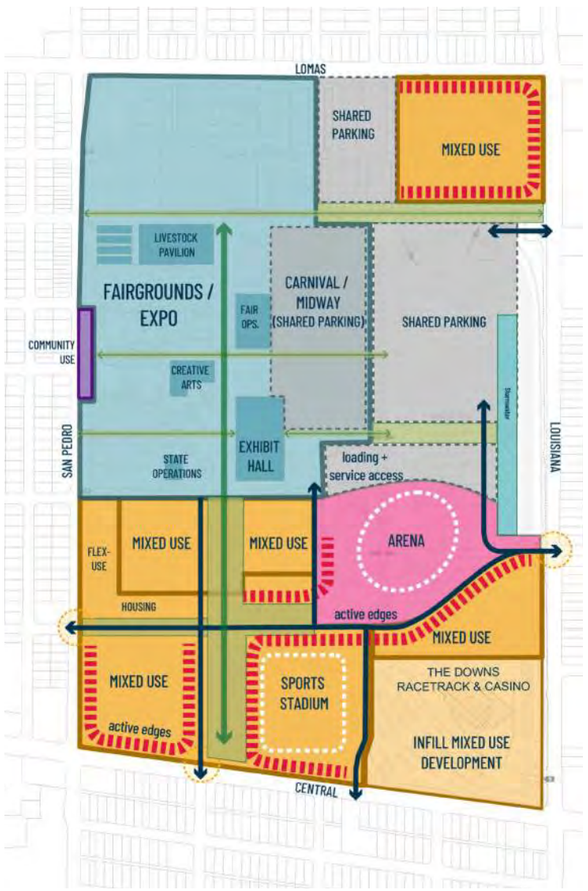


Figure 49: Phase 2A Concept Diagram

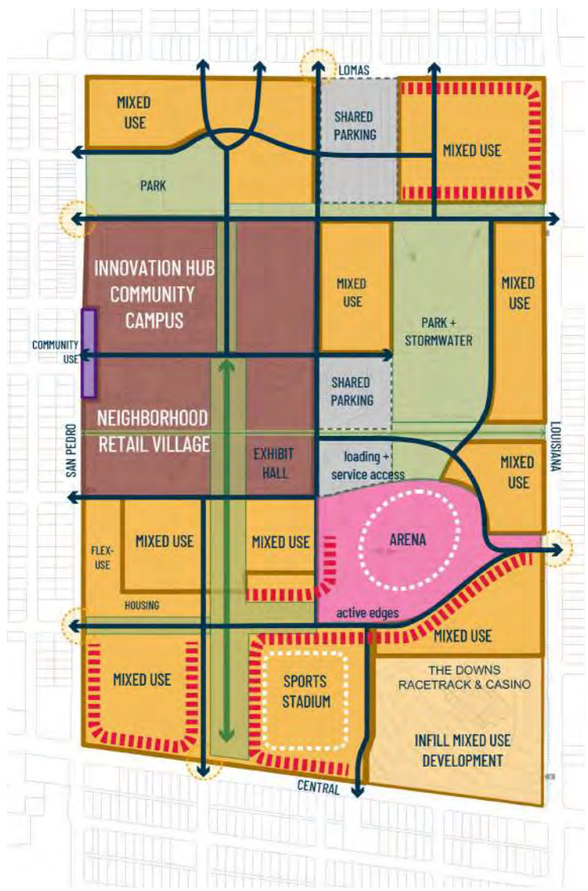


Figure 50: Phase 3A Concept Diagram

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Phase 2A - Expanded Mixed-Use District

Fair Remains and is Modernized

Fairgrounds/EXPO Improvements:

- Fairgrounds/EXPO NM Improvements (20-year lifespan)
- Carnival/Midway relocated
- Tingley demolished
- New facilities

Downs Relocated, Arena & Mixed-Use Development Expanded

Public Sector:

- $200M+ indoor arena
- Greenway connection to La Mesa neighborhood
- Additional intersection at Louisiana

Private Sector:

- Commercial, retail, office
- Housing (+1,170 additional units)

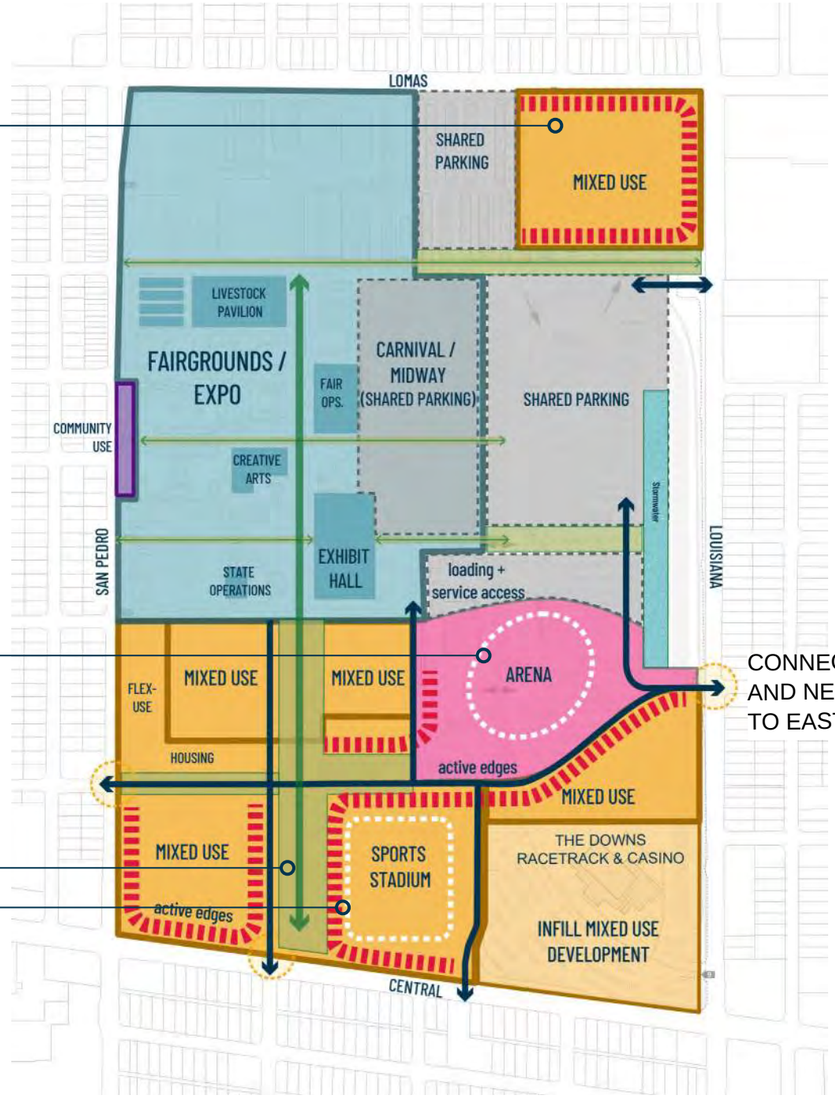
Decision point - Upon resolution of legislation changes with Gaming Commission, make a decision regarding relocation of Fair











1,600+ Units	Residential
750,000 SF	Commercial–Hotel, Office, Entertainment Venues, Retail
100,000 SF	Community Facilities - Arts / Culture, Youth Services
9 acres	Parks

Figure 51: Phase 2A Concept Plan Diagram

$832M	**Total Estimate** Redevelopment Cost (Includes Phase 1 Costs)
$8.3B	**Economic Impact** Albuquerque region and state-wide (30-year total)
$363M	**Fiscal Impact** GRT Revenues for State Fair District (30-year total)
$12M	**Fiscal Impact** Annual GRT Revenues
1,700	**Jobs Created**

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Phase 3A (Optional) - Relocate The Fair

Relocate & Re-Develop Fairgrounds

Relocate Fairgrounds to location in Albuquerque region

Downs Relocated, Arena & Mixed-Use Development Expanded

- Fairgrounds Main Street as mixed-use residential village and community campus
- Attract small innovation hub – training, offices, public/private
- Redevelopment at north end
- Additional park space
- Potential for 2,500+ housing units

Public Sector:

- Innovation Hub (P3)
- Large Park
- Major Stormwater Infrastructure
- Community Uses

Private Sector:

- Commercial, retail, office and more housing

Decision point - Make decision regarding relocation of the Fair, acquire property

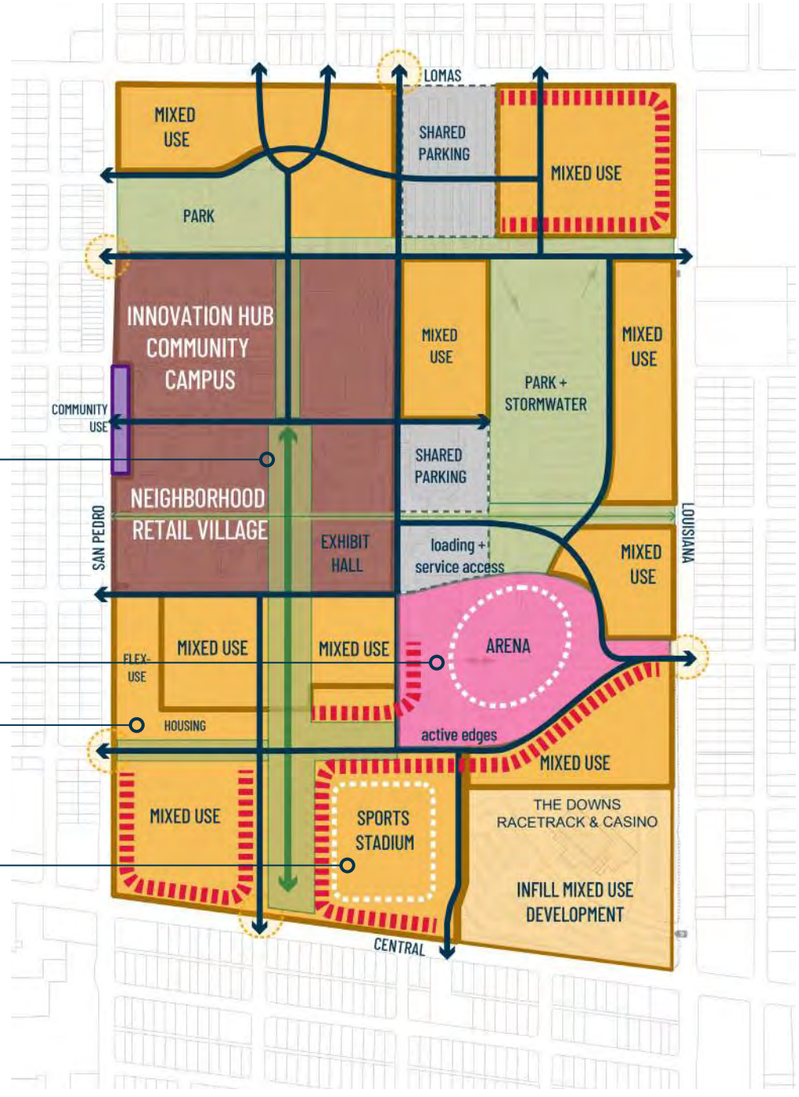
$1.1B	**Total Estimate** Redevelopment Cost (Includes Phase 1 Costs)
+$870M	+ New Relocated Fairgrounds Site specific issues not included
$10.8B	**Economic Impact** Albuquerque region and state-wide (30-year total)
$470M	**Fiscal Impact** GRT Revenues for State Fair District (30-year total)
$16M	**Fiscal Impact** Annual GRT Revenues
2,600	**Jobs Created**











2,500+ Units	Residential
1,000,000 SF	Commercial–Hotel, Office, Entertainment Venues, Retail
230,000 SF	Community Facilities - Arts / Culture, Youth Services
40 acres	Parks

Figure 52: Phase 3A Concept Plan Diagram

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Alternative Master Plan Pathway B - Relocate the Fair

Relocating the racetrack may not be feasible and will therefore restrict redevelopment to the South area and the current fairgrounds on the East side of the site. Following the implementation of Phase 1, two additional phases of development are anticipated. The fair is ultimately relocated to a site in the Albuquerque area and the campus is transformed by the addition of an arena, a residential village and pedestrian street, an innovation hub, and civic spaces.

The transformation of the area surrounding Main Street includes a walkable neighborhood with a portion of Main Street converted to a pedestrian street. The innovation hub is formed through the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, with employment potential inclusive of opportunities for entrepreneurs, service workers, professional services, research, STEM, and technology. A large park is created north of the innovation hub and the corner of Lomas and San Pedro is developed as a commercial center. The fairgrounds property fronting San Pedro is transformed to have an outward presence on the street, with a mix of uses, which may include commercial, residential, and/or civic.

With an expansive 22-acre park space, an entertainment district, education and workforce training space, and mixed housing. The redevelopment potential is 124 acres and offers a balance of land uses making the GRT potential high and the community benefits significant.

Decision Points

- Upon approvals, Phase 1 planning and design can begin late spring or early summer 2026.
- Decisions regarding moving forward with phase 2B follows resolution whether the racetrack can be relocated. This is anticipated by Spring 2027, following legislative session.
- A decision to relocate the fairgrounds to a new location could also be made as soon as resolution is found regarding the racetrack. This is anticipated as early as Spring 2027 but a decision could be made at any time once more is known regarding the racetrack.
- A decision regarding relocation of the fairgrounds may be precipitated by urgent needs for new or improved facilities.

Phasing

In Phase 2B, Tingley Coliseum is demolished and the midway is relocated to this site. Modernization and reprogramming of existing entertainment facilities can occur in phase 2B, including a new arena. Extend the utility of existing assets while aligning them with contemporary expectations for flexibility, technology, and comfort. In Phase 3B, the fair is relocated and the campus transformed.

Investment in the Fairgrounds

Prior to investing in modernization of the fair facilities, a decision regarding fair relocation is required.

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Pathway B - Summary

Phase 1 Early Wins

$240M Total Estimate Redevelopment Cost

$3.8B Economic Impact
Albuquerque region and state-wide (30-year total)

Phase 2B

$695M Total Estimate Redevelopment Cost

$5.8B Economic Impact
Albuquerque region and state-wide (30-year total)

Phase 3B (optional)

$652M Total Estimate Redevelopment Cost

+$870M Relocated Fairgrounds Estimate Cost

$6.6B Economic Impact
Albuquerque region and state-wide (30-year total)

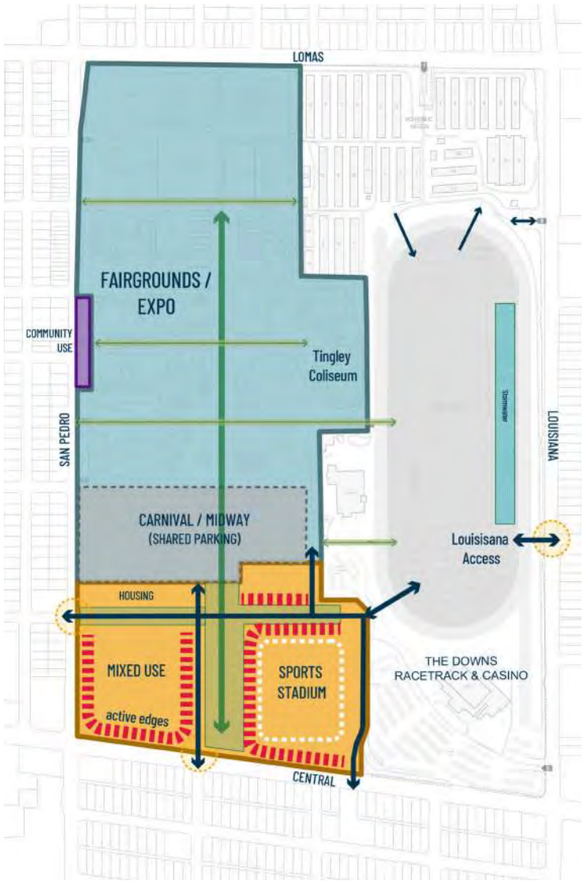


Figure 53: Phase 1 Concept Diagram

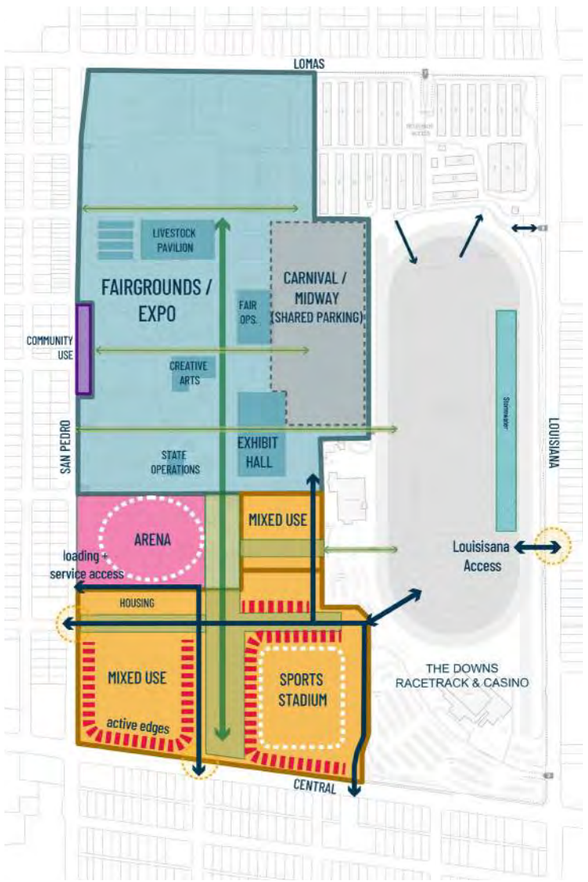


Figure 54: Phase 2B Concept Diagram

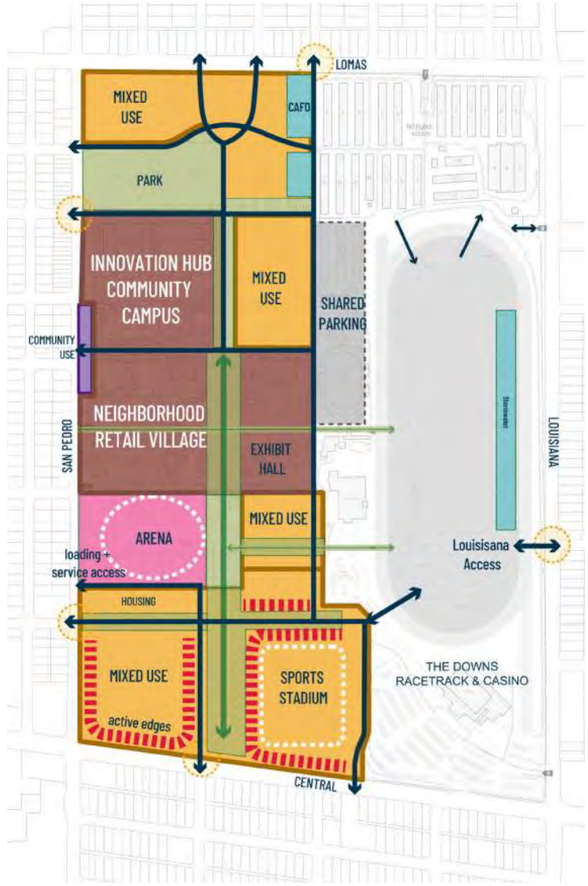


Figure 55: Phase 3B Concept Diagram

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Phase 2B - Arena

Fair Remains And Is Modernized

Fairgrounds/EXPO Improvements:

- Fairgrounds/EXPO Improvements (20-year lifespan)
- Carnival/Midway relocated
- Tingley demolished
- New facilities

Arena Added & Fairgrounds Consolidate Further

Public Sector:

- Park and plaza spaces, pedestrian safety improvements, development land preparation
- $200M+ indoor arena

Private Sector:

- Commercial, retail, office
- Housing (+220 additional units)

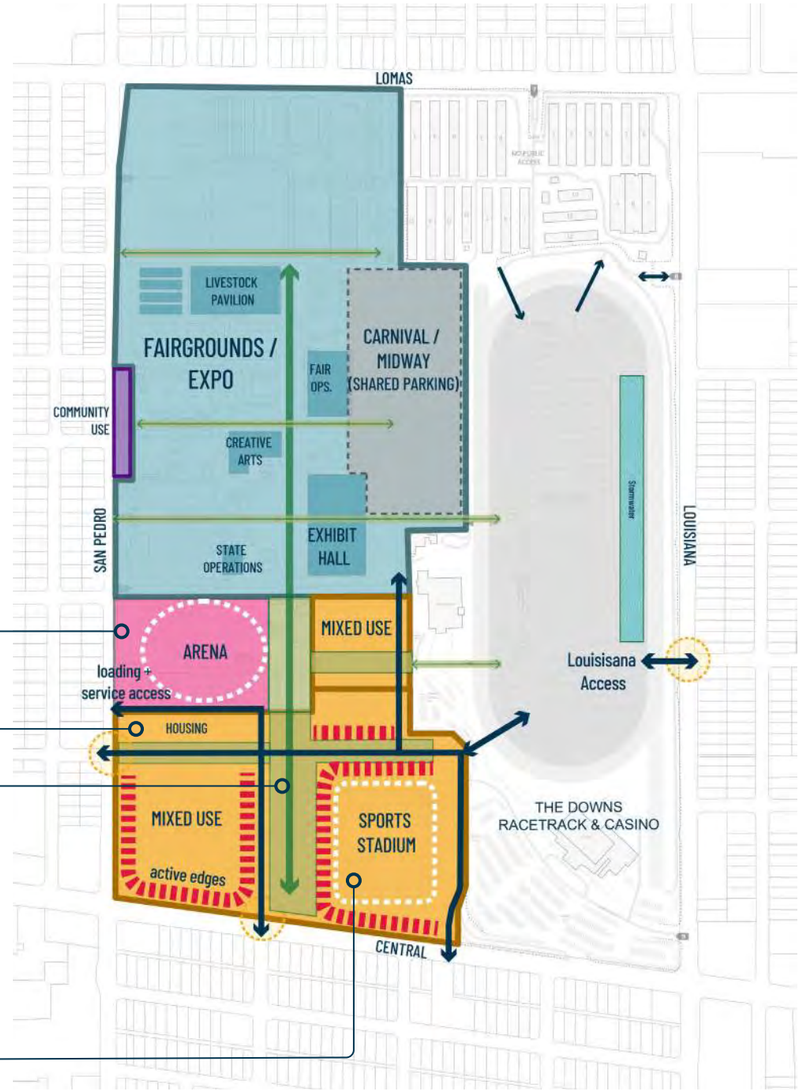
Decision point - Upon resolution of legislation changes with Gaming Commission, make a decision regarding relocation of Fair











650 Units	Residential
520,000 SF	Commercial–Hotel, Office, Entertainment Venues, Retail
50,000 SF	Community Facilities
9 acres	Parks

Figure 56: Phase 2B Concept Plan Diagram

$695M	**Total Estimate** Redevelopment Cost (Includes Phase 1 Costs)
$5.8B	**Economic Impact** Albuquerque region and state-wide (30-year total)
$257M	**Fiscal Impact** GRT Revenues for State Fair District (30-year total)
$8.6M	**Fiscal Impact** Annual GRT Revenues
1,240	**Jobs Created**

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Phase 3B (Optional) - Relocate The Fair

Relocate & Re-Develop Fairgrounds

Relocate Fairgrounds to location in Albuquerque region

Three Distinct Centers

1. Fairgrounds Main Street as Mixed-use residential village and community campus; Potential school site, other community facilities
2. Attract small innovation hub – training, offices, public/private
3. Redevelopment at north end – mixed-use development

Public Sector:

- Innovation Hub (P3)
- Large Park
- Community Users
- Additional park space

Private Sector:

- Commercial, retail, office
- Potential for 1,040+ housing units

Decision point - Make decision regarding relocation of the Fair, acquire property

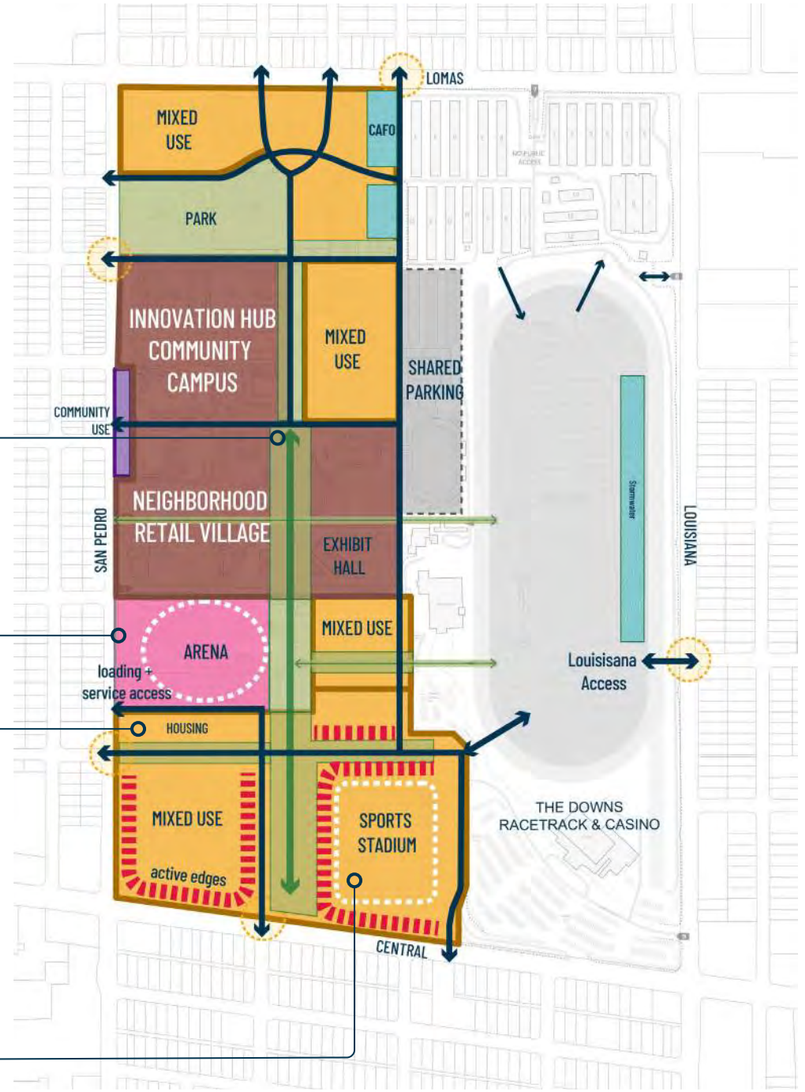
$652M +$870M	**Total Estimate** Redevelopment Cost (Includes Phase 1 Costs) + New Relocated Fairgrounds Site specific issues not included
$6.6B	**Economic Impact** Albuquerque region and state-wide (30-year total)
$288M	**Fiscal Impact** GRT Revenues for State Fair District (30-year total)
$9.6M	**Fiscal Impact** Annual GRT Revenues
1,820	**Jobs Created**











1,040+ Units	Residential
730,000 SF	Commercial–Hotel, Office, Entertainment Venues, Retail
230,000 SF	Community Facilities
22 acres	Parks

Figure 57: Phase 3B Concept Plan Diagram

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Multi-Phase Decision Based Timeline

The diagram to the right outlines the Phase 1 Early Wins plan followed by three major decision points (Figure 58). Throughout the process, the community is engaged in actively shaping future plans.

Decision Point #1–Legislation changes are sought to enable the removal of the racetrack from Casino operations. A decision is made on this change - either approval for denial - and planning proceed along one of two pathways. The preferred pathway is the Downs moves and Phase 2 of development takes place where the track once stood. The Fairgrounds remain.

Decision Point #2–Legislative changes are unsuccessful and the racetrack remains, requiring planning to follow an alternative pathway. The choice can be made at this time to relocate the Fairgrounds or for the Fairgrounds to remain.

Decision Point #3–Phase 2 is nearing completion. Once again there is an opportunity to consider relocating the Fairgrounds and making room for additional redevelopment.

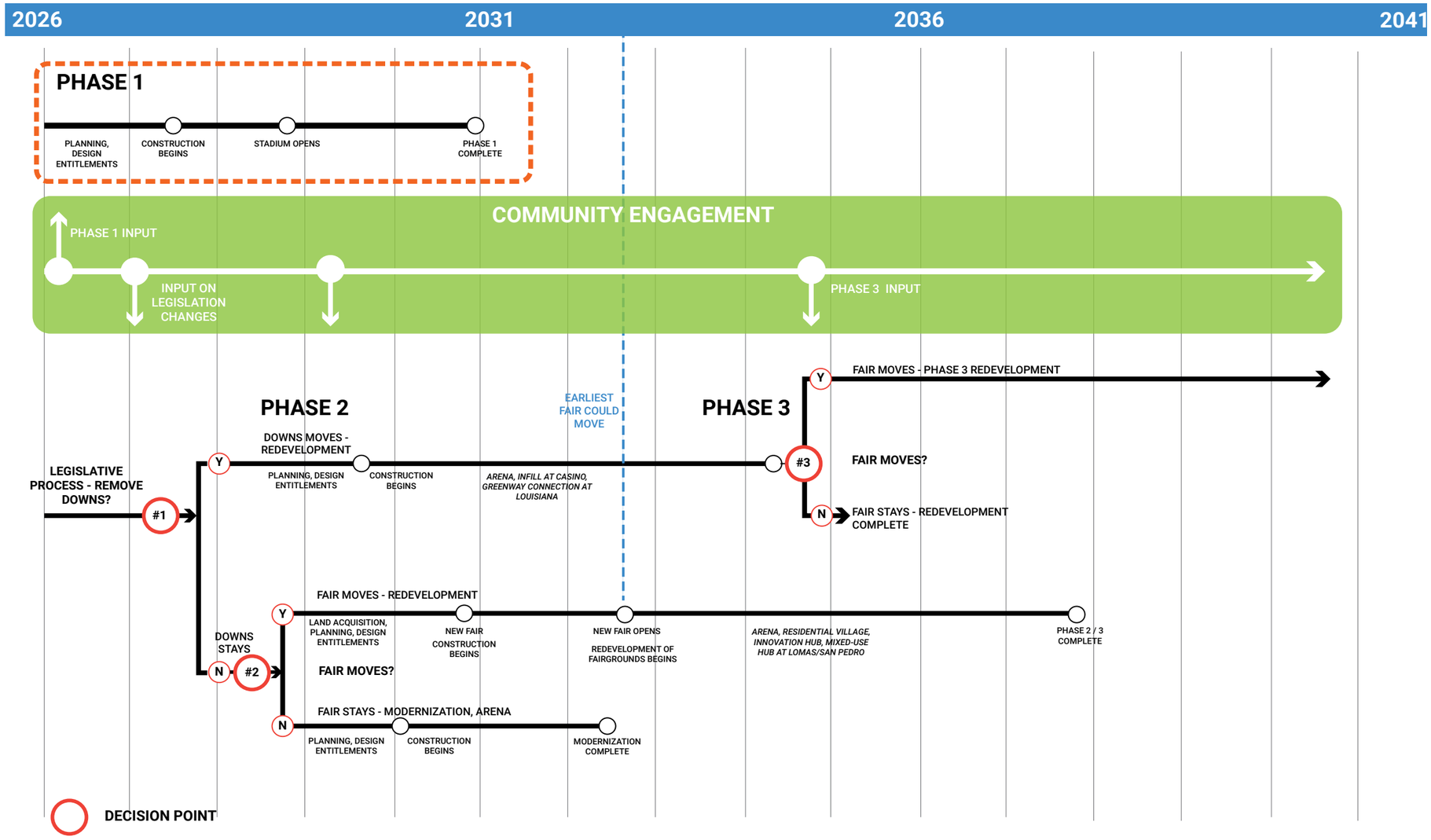


Figure 58: Decision Timeline Diagram

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Economic and Fiscal Impact Potential

Even in its current form, Expo NM contributes meaningfully to the local economy through event-related spending, employment, and tax revenues. But that impact is highly concentrated in a few weeks per year. Redevelopment and reinvestment 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 state-wide.

An economic analysis was performed for the existing condition and for each of the pathways – A and B – that emerged in the master planning process. The current state and regional economic impact of Expo NM is approximately $91 million (30-year average annual spending), a significant driver in the region's economy, but not attracting many out-of-state visitors and spending. As a state entity, the Fair does not generate a significant amount of GRT, with the exceptions being parking and gate attendance.

Table 4 demonstrates how redevelopment can contribute variable GRT revenues for the State Fair District, depending on scale of development. Leveraging the bonding capacity of the State Fair District means creating more enduring forms of GRT (commercial businesses, office, hospitality, entertainment venues, etc.) rather than short-term sources of GRT like housing, construction, and other items.

The Phase 1 Early Wins generates $5.5M in annual GRT revenue and up to $165M over 30-years. The GRT revenue allows for additional bonding capacity in the coming years and can fund much needed community benefits. The economic impact is substantial, with over $127M in annual spending and $3.8B over 30 years.

As future redevelopment takes place, economic impact and GRT revenues increase. If Pathway A (removing the Downs) were followed, $16M in annual GRT revenue is created, providing even more bonding capacity. If the Fair remains (Phase 3C was not implemented), over $12M GRT revenue is earned. If the Downs racetrack is removed, the scale of the property, accessibility to Louisiana Ave and overall redevelopment potential allows for truly transformational opportunities, without taking on the financial burden of relocating the Fair.

Pathway B (moving the Fair, Downs racetrack remains) creates significant economic impacts and GRT, but the constrained, narrow site realizes less revenue generation and economic impact. Exploration of how the Downs Racetrack could be moved and the timing of this should occur before determining the future location of the Fair.

Positioning for the Future

When viewed through the lens of regional economics, Expo New Mexico is not simply a fairground; it is a redevelopment district in waiting.

Few other public sites offer this combination:

- Central urban location with regional highway and transit access
- Iconic brand recognition and civic heritage
- Ample land for mixed-use integration
- Immediate proximity to established retail and hospitality nodes

This convergence of assets makes the Fairgrounds one of New Mexico's most strategic redevelopment opportunities that can generate both community value and measurable financial return.

	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 Albuquerque region and state-wide (30-year average annual revenue)	$ 127 Million	$277 Million	$360 Million	$ 193 Million	$ 220 Million
Economic Impact Albuquerque region and state-wide (30-year total)	$ 3.8 billion	$ 8.3 Billion	$ 10.8 Billion	$5.8 Billion	$6.6 Billion
Fiscal Impact **GRT Revenues for State Fair District** (30-year total)	$165 Million	$363 Million	$470 Million	$257 Million	$288 Million
Fiscal Impact **GRT Revenues for State Fair District** (30-year average annual revenue)	$5.5 Million	$12 Million	$16 Million	$8.6 Million	$9.6 Million
Employment Impact Fairgrounds/EXPO & New Development (Average annual jobs over 30 years)	940 Jobs	1,700 Jobs	2,620 Jobs	1,240 Jobs	1,820 Jobs
Employment Impact Fairgrounds/EXPO & New Development (Average New Earnings/Payroll over 30 years)	$ 63 Million	$104 Million	$178 Million	$79 Million	$136 Million

Table 4: Economic Impacts Comparison for Concept Phasing Options

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Conclusions & Final Community Feedback

TO BE COMPLETED - Public Meeting #3 Feedback

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