

# INNOVATION CENTRAL



## TIGER Grant Application

The City of Albuquerque has requested funding for the “Innovation Central” project through the US Department of Transportation’s TIGER grant program. The Rio Metro Regional Transit District (RMRTD), the New Mexico Department of Transportation and the University of New Mexico partnered with the City on the request. If approved, the capital project will improve multi-modal connections to the Alvarado Transportation Center in Downtown Albuquerque. The total cost of Innovation Central is \$20.6 million, of which the application requests \$15.2 million in TIGER funds. The remaining funds will be provided by the City and RMRTD.

Innovation Central will create and preserve jobs using initiatives such as the newly formed partnership between the City of Albuquerque and UNM aimed at establishing a high-tech research district called “Innovate ABQ” and Central New Mexico Community College’s plan to open a new Educational Center serving 2,000 students. These initiatives capitalize on the synergies of both districts. The project will improve the pedestrian connectivity of EDo (East Downtown) and Downtown, broaden the economic footprint for this area, increase the number of transportation options, integrate nearby affordable housing, and enhance the area’s overall quality of life.

Additionally, improvements to the Rail Runner tracks, signalization and communications systems, and the Downtown Albuquerque station will reduce the travel times of trains by five minutes, improve on-time performance, and provide additional rider amenities. Combined with the other elements of Innovation Central, the Rail Runner improvements will make Downtown’s destinations and services more accessible to populations along the Belen to Santa Fe corridor. The US DOT is expected to announce awards by the end of the year. If awarded, the City anticipates an 18 – 24 months of construction.

The TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant program provides a unique opportunity for the United States Department of Transportation to invest in critical transportation projects around the nation. While over \$600 million are available this year, the program is very competitive and projects are rated on a variety of factors, such as economic competitiveness, livability, and environmental sustainability.

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