

MetroABQ Real Estate Newsletter

Including Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Corrales, Placitas, and the East Mountains.

January 2016

**Neighborhood
Spotlight:**

**Welcome to West Campus...
The MetroABQ's Newest
(Micro) Neighborhood?**



Happy 2016! The MetroABQ has an amazing amount of untapped potential! Over the holiday I was excited to read about a possible new micro-neighborhood taking shape West of the UNM Campus, across from the Presbyterian Hospital Complex. In a Journal article by Richard Metcalf, the author describes that the available 12.5 acres sitting across five mostly empty blocks may be transformed into a new neighborhood, complete with "a mix of shops, restaurants, multi-family housing, and a hotel."

Titan Development, a local development company, is entering into a partnership with Presbyterian Health Services, which owns the property. Presbyterian has been acquiring the properties over the span of 25 years, it said. One of the five blocks, according to the article, still has 17 rental properties on it; those single-story buildings will most likely be razed to make way for more dense infill development.

"West Campus" is a name I have given the area, as it seems to fit. However, the area is already part of an established neighborhood: the diverse Sycamore Neighborhood, which starts on the north side of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, and stretches down to encompass part of Roosevelt park, a stunning 1930's-era WPA-created park. Within the Sycamore neighborhood are a bunch of micro-neighborhoods.

Read more on the next pages...



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What Would A New Neighborhood Look Like?

Imagining "West Campus"...

If you were planning a neighborhood, what would you include? As touched on in the Journal article, the neighborhood would have to have a lot of mixed-use infill development. As the city is densely populated along the Central Avenue Corridor, two-and-three story condos and apartments are important: a healthy area has a mix of renters and owners. Easy-to-access businesses may populate the first and second floors, drawing office workers, and retail shoppers. Necessities are important, so breakfast & lunch places, and a few dinner options allows for folks to utilize the neighborhood throughout the day. Large grocery stores are within a mile--Smiths on Coal/Yale, and the soon-to-open Silver Street Market Downtown--so no need for one of those; Additionally, gas stations are



located both east and west of the new micro-hood, so no need for them. How about a corner Bodega for basic needs? Open most of the day and into the night, Bodegas carry everyday household items and food, and would meet the needs of folks who depend on walking or public transportation.

Where is West Campus?

Imagine the corner of Central Avenue and Interstate 25...on the west side is the former Memorial Psychiatric Hospital, reborn as the boutique Hotel Parq Central (1.); on the east side of I-25 is the now iconic Crossroads Motel (3.), and the gigantic Presbyterian Hospital Complex (2.) sits across Central Ave/Route 66 on the south. If West Campus comes to pass, it will include the five blocks shaded in light grey below. To the east is the retro Route 66 Diner (4.), and further east starts the sprawling University of New Mexico (UNM) Campus (5.). The front photo and above are both from Spruce St. toward West Campus; in the front image you can see the Downtown Skyline.



Imagining "West Campus"...

Public transportation is key to an urban micro-hood. If the proposed ART bus-line is approved, places like West Campus are directly on the route. Even with the current bus system in the MetroABQ, one can jump on a bus from the neighborhood and be almost ANYWHERE in the city within a reasonable time. Notice the bus stop in the photo below, which is across Central Avenue.

A dedicated Greenspace/Park nearby is always a great addition, and necessary to allow for diversity-of-activity. Conveniently, West Campus would have Highland Park (1. on the map) on the other side of I-25 via Central Ave; Spruce Park is north a few blocks; and as mentioned, Roosevelt Park, a few blocks south, is "a sprawling, lush park in what was previously a sandy, garbage-strewn arroyo...remains one of the Southwest's best examples of New Deal landscaping." ~LivingNewDeal.org



To the left is an example of a nice infill building, coincidentally directly across from the West Campus blocks. Again, notice the important bus stop in front. The first floor of these mixed-use buildings is often commercial/retail/offices; the second floor can be the same, or residential apartments/condos. This building is entirely offices, however, the third floor is often entirely residential; notice the great stepped back third-floor balconies. Parking is important, too. The example building has parking in the alley in back, which is great for future buildings in West Campus.

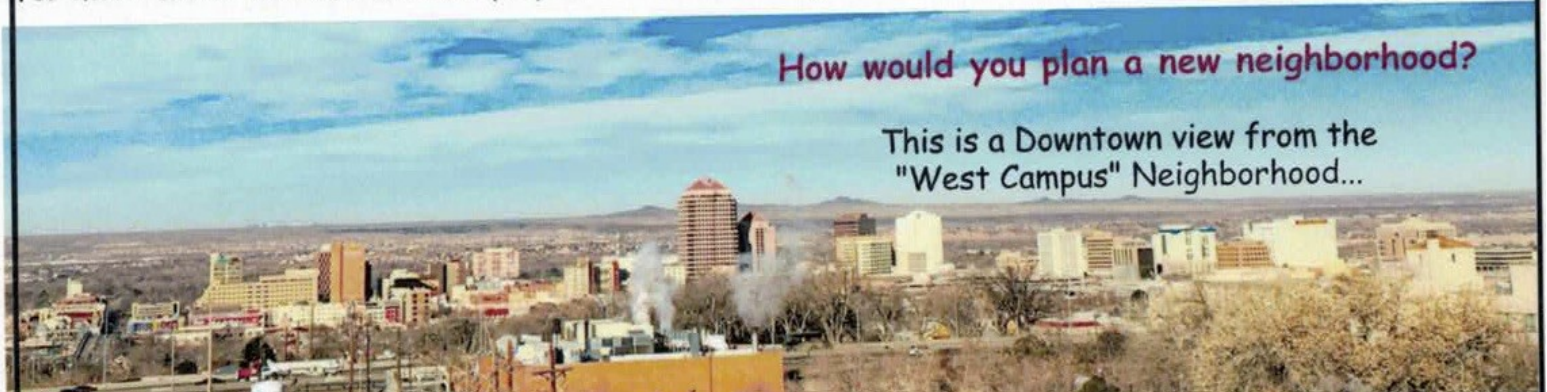
How about "niche treats"--things that greatly appeal to some, but maybe not all, like a farmer's market, a library, art galleries, clothing and shoe stores, a bikeshop, late evening bar/restaurant, barber shops and salons; an arthouse theatre is another cultural draw; food is important, so quick in-and-out comfort restaurants like pizza and sandwich shops are key along with coffee shops, and bakeries/sweetshops. Again, a Bodega would help satisfy some of the food needs.

Location is paramount, especially if walkability is important to you. From West Campus, you are a short bus ride/walk to a large movie theater (Downtown), dense commercial areas (Downtown), dense retail shops (Nob Hill, Uptown), higher education (CNM, UNM) and numerous employment opportunities--10,000's of employees work at Presbyterian and UNM Hospitals, 1000's work at Sandia Labs & Kirkland AFB, and retail and service industries span one end of the corridor to the other. Consider: all of the commercial/retail/service/local support businesses in West Campus also create jobs, which increases the desire to live in that area; a healthy neighborhood generates gross receipts tax for the city, which should add to the overall quality of life, with good sidewalks, streetlights and support like firefighters and community policing.

Residences: Albuquerque is full of fantastic neighborhoods of all shapes and sizes, in all corners of the city. In the more dense areas, infill/density is more important than somewhat more spread-out single-family "R-1" residential zoning. In West Campus, as per the city zoning guidelines, the five blocks should be two-to-three-story buildings. Optimizing this infill zoning pattern makes it possible for more folks to live, work and play in the UrbanABQ.

How would you plan a new neighborhood?

This is a Downtown view from the "West Campus" Neighborhood...





Testimonials