



ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 2007



# NOB HILL HIGHLAND SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN



PREPARED BY:  
SITES SOUTHWEST  
in association with  
Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.





**CITY of ALBUQUERQUE  
SEVENTEENTH COUNCIL**

COUNCIL BILL NO. R-07-185 ENACTMENT NO. 96-2007

SPONSORED BY: Martin Heinrich

**RESOLUTION**

REPEAL OF THE NOB HILL SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND ADOPTION OF THE NOB HILL HIGHLAND SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NHHSDP) AND CHANGE OF ZONING FOR CERTAIN PROPERTIES WITHIN THE NHHSDP BOUNDARY AREA AS SPECIFIED IN EXHIBIT 3. THE AREA IS BOUNDED BY GIRARD BOULEVARD TO THE WEST, LOMAS BOULEVARD TO THE NORTH, SAN MATEO TO THE EAST AND ZUNI BOULEVARD/GARFIELD STREET TO THE SOUTH AND CONTAINING APPROXIMATELY 770 ACRES.

WHEREAS, the City of Albuquerque adopted the Nob Hill Sector Development Plan in 1988 through Council Resolution R-362, Enactment Number 12-1988, the boundaries of which are depicted on Exhibit 1 attached hereto; and

WHEREAS, the Council has the authority to not only adopt but amend and/or repeal such a sector development plan; and

WHEREAS, on December 14, 2006, the Environmental Planning Commission, in its advisory role on land use and planning matters, recommended approval to the City Council the repeal of the Nob Hill Sector Development Plan and the approval of the Nob Hill Highland Sector Development Plan and to change the zoning designation as identified on Exhibit 3; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Planning Commission found the approval of the Sector Development Plan to be consistent with applicable Comprehensive Plan, Growth Plan Strategy and R-270-1980 policies.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE:

Section 1. REPEAL OF THE NOB HILL SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN, Council Resolution R-362, Enactment Number 12-1988, and the corresponding amendments, listed below, are hereby repealed:

1. 76-1992
2. 79-1992
3. R-2005-08-18
4. R-06-050

Section 2. ADOPTION OF THE NOB HILL HIGHLAND SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN. The Nob Hill Highland Sector Development Plan is hereby adopted. The zone categories of the various sites within the identified plan boundaries have been changed as identified in Exhibit 3 based on the findings and subject to the condition of approval contained in the Environmental Planning Commission's Official Notice of Decision dated December 18, 2006.

Section 3. FINDINGS ADOPTED. The following findings from the EPC for the adoption of the Nob Hill Highland Sector Development Plan and the repeal of the Nob Hill Sector Development Plan are hereby adopted by the City Council:

1. This is a request for a recommendation of approval from the Environmental Planning Commission to the City Council for an amendment to the Nob Hill Sector Development Plan. The September 2006 draft Nob Hill/Highland Sector Development Plan (NHHSDP) is proposed to replace the existing Nob Hill Plan. Upon Council adoption of the NHHSDP, the existing Nob Hill Plan is to be rescinded.
2. The boundaries of the NHHSDP are Girard Boulevard (west), Lomas Boulevard (north), San Mateo Boulevard (east), and Zuni and Garfield Streets (south) as depicted on Exhibit 2 attached hereto.
3. The Highland/Central Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan was adopted by the City Council in May 2003 (R-02-72). The Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan was later amended in November 2005 (R-05-377) to change its title and to establish a Tax-Increment Financing (TIF) district in the area. The MRA Plan recommends actions for changes in zoning, design guidelines, historic preservation,



community centers, social services linkages, housing, and funding sources for redevelopment projects.

4. Resolution R-04-189, adopted by the City Council in February 2005, authorized the update of the current Nob Hill Plan for the purpose of establishing consistency in planning between the Nob Hill area and the Highland area and the Central/Highland/Upper Nob Hill Metropolitan Redevelopment Area. The current boundaries of the Nob Hill Plan and the MRA Plan were merged and became the new planning area for the Nob Hill Plan update.

5. Other Legislation adopted by the City Council established a building moratorium on CCR-zoned properties in the Central Avenue corridor (R-05-277), established and extended time periods for interim design guidelines for CCR-zoned properties, and formally included the Highland neighborhood into the Plan scope (R-05-277, R-05-7, R-06-80) in conjunction with the development of the draft NHHSDP.

6. The public planning process for the NHHSDP included a total of 10 public meetings, a citizen's steering committee, and citizen working committees (Residential Character, Character of Commercial and Transitional Areas, Public Safety, and Pedestrian Circulation committees) working in conjunction with staff, and Sites Southwest LLC as contractor on the project. All committees were represented by members of the Nob Hill Neighborhood Association (NHNA), Nob Hill Business Association (NHBA), the Nob Hill/Highland Renaissance Corporation (NHHRC), and the Highland Business and Neighborhood Association (HBANA).

7. Following legislative approval of the expansion of the boundaries of the NHHSDP to include the Highland neighborhood in the Lomas/San Mateo area (R-06-80), staff met with an additional committee formed by representatives of the Pueblo Alto, Fair Heights, and Fair West neighborhood associations to discuss zoning and design regulation proposals for properties along the south side of Lomas Boulevard between San Mateo Boulevard and Monroe Street. A special meeting

was held on Monday, June 12, 2006 to discuss planning issues pertaining to this area.

8. The NHHSDP is generally in compliance with the Established Urban goal and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed CCR (Community Commercial Residential) and OR (Office Residential) zones in the NHHSDP will support the increase of residential density in the Plan area, and will have an effect on density city-wide (Policy a). Building height transitions built into the proposed CCR and OR zones are designed to create an interface with existing residential areas that border proposed CCR and OR locations (Policy d). The pattern of the CCR zones proposed in the NHHSDP mirrors that of the existing CCR zone in the current Nob Hill Plan, and supports and reinforces the mixed-use zoning currently in place (Policy h). The proposed CCR and OR zones minimize harmful effects of traffic on residential areas by being located on or near Central Avenue where traffic has direct or adjacent access to Central (Policy k). Building heights proposed in the CCR and OR zones vary from a maximum of 39 feet in the Route 66 Historic Core District, to a maximum of 67 feet in the Emerging Nob Hill and Highland Districts (except for properties on the south side of Lomas Boulevard between San Mateo and Monroe, proposed for 39 feet maximum). Proposed design standards for these zones are intended to promote a quality environment for these areas by the placement of new buildings adjacent to the streets and incorporating design elements that encourage a pedestrian environment (Policy l). The Route 66 Historic Core District notes the scenic views to the Sandia Mountains. The proposed maximum 39 feet will have some impact on the ability to see the Sandia Mountains (Policy m).

9. The draft NHHSDP is generally in compliance with the Activity Centers section of the Centers and Corridors Component of the Comprehensive Plan. Building heights recommended in the Central/Highland/Upper Nob Hill Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan range from 54 feet along Central Avenue to 26 feet in areas to the north and south of the Central Corridor. The MRA Plan area borders



the existing Community Activity Center in the Nob Hill area, and contains the Community Activity Center in the Highland area. The MRA Plan, and the proposed NHHSDP, constitute further studies for Activity Center locations that identify design elements, appropriate uses, transportation service, and other issues (Policy a, Table 10 Policy a), and reflect citizen perspectives on new development in these areas. These Activity Center locations, therefore, shall develop in accordance with more area-specific sub-area planning efforts, and guide more intense development away from existing residential areas (Policies f, g).

10. The NHHSPD is generally in compliance with the Transportation and Transit section of the Centers and Corridors Component of the Comprehensive Plan. Central Avenue is designated as a Major Transit Corridor in the Centers and Corridors policies of the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan. The NHHSDP proposes zoning along and adjacent to Central Avenue (CCR and OR zones) which allows mixed use development that includes higher density residential uses. This will place more residents on or near the Central corridor, and provide for opportunities for increased transit ridership (Policy c). The NHHSDP includes a section on Pedestrian Circulation (NHHSDP p. 28-34) that addresses improvements to pedestrian facilities, and has a section for Transit (NHHSDP, p. 39-40) that reflects plans for modern streetcar transit service, and reflects current regular and rapid ride bus transit service. These elements, collectively, address the promotion and integration of pedestrian opportunities, the creation of a bicycle circulation network for the area, and current and future transit investments that benefit overall mobility needs (Policies g, h, q).

11. Appendix A of the NHHSDP contains the document "A Vision For The Future of The Hiland Theatre and Highland Neighborhood" from Bernalillo County regarding the redevelopment of the Hiland Theatre (owned by the County) and its surroundings for Transit Oriented Development (TOD). In this vision statement, the Hiland Theatre

serves as a hub for performing arts that would draw a variety of higher density residential and commercial services to adjacent areas. As it is located within the designated Hiland Community Activity Center, the County's Vision Statement is also a further study of this area, and represents a significant level of planning cooperation between the City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County. The Vision Statement is an important contribution to the Activity Center development concepts of the NHHSDP (Policies f, g).

12. The NHHSDP is generally in compliance with the Historic Resources goal and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. The NHHSDP serves to inform the public regarding historic resources in the plan area and preservation of these resources (Policy c). Policies for Historic Preservation in the NHHSDP are outlined on pages 50-51 of the Plan, and include actions to support historic preservation of signs, buildings, and historic neighborhoods. The NHHSDP also proposes the creation of zone districts with design regulations intended to preserve characteristics of historic neighborhoods (MRHD, RTHD, SFHD, p. 96). The NHHSDP Implementation/Projects and Programs section of the Plan, recommended actions, includes a survey of the University Heights and Granada Heights neighborhoods for historic eligibility status, and development and distribution of a handbook on the historic character of Central Albuquerque (p. 73-74). The NHHSDP serves to encourage preservation of historic resources in the area through these policies and actions (Policy a).

13. The NHHSDP is generally in compliance with the Cultural Traditions and the Arts goal and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. The NHHSDP encourages the redevelopment and enhancement of alley ways in the Plan area as pedestrian paths and as places for display of public art, and encourages community involvement in building the area's identity (NHHSDP, p. 32). Public art is also included in the Plan Implementation/Projects and Programs section as an element for a proposed Streetscape Schematic Design Plan for Central Avenue (NHHSDP, p. 70), for alleys that may serve as community gardens



(NHHSDP, p. 71), and as an element for all capital improvements in the area (NHHSDP, p. 72). These proposals involve coordination with the City Planning Department, other City agencies, and community organizations (Policy c).

14. The NHHSDP is generally in compliance with the Community Identity and Urban Design goal and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. The NHHSDP, which incorporates the development recommendations of the Central/ Highland/Upper Nob Hill Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan, and "A Vision For The Future of The Hiland Theatre and Highland Neighborhood" from Bernalillo County, together delineate further improvements for the Nob Hill/Highland areas that establish a unique identity for this area. Urban design elements in the NHHSDP figure prominently in the area's proposed identity. Proposed CCR and OR zones emphasize a pedestrian-oriented shop front design with high percentages of fenestration, and building façade articulation elements that include awnings, arcades, and balconies. Proposed MRHD, RTHD, and SFHD zones for historic residential districts include design regulations that prohibit car ports in the front yard setback area, reduce wall heights, and limit building height to preserve solar access to adjacent properties, as an approach to preserve the historic character of these areas (Policies c, e).

15. The NHHSDP is generally in compliance with the Housing goal and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Housing is addressed in the Community Form section of the Plan, under Residential Districts (NHHSDP, p. 56-57). Policies in this section promote housing affordability, a mix of housing types and prices, housing along commercial corridors, building additions, residential infill, new historic district designations in residential areas, and the protection of solar access on residential properties (Policy a).

16. The NHHSDP is generally in compliance with the Economic Development goal and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Economic development is addressed in the Economic Vitality section of the Plan (NHHSDP, p. 66-67). Policies to support this goal address working

with neighborhood and business organizations to improve economic conditions, promote redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties, utilization of MRA financing tools, and working with Bernalillo County to develop County-owned land. Actions that accompany these policies address support of renovation of historic buildings for commercial use, a mix of uses along commercial corridors, a business improvement district (BID), financial support for capital projects, provision of information about small businesses in the area, and MRA-related financial tools to support catalytic projects for the area, such as the renovation of the De Anza Motor Lodge on Central Avenue. The Plan supports creating an environment that supports the development and retention of local business (Policy b).

17. The proposed CCR-1 (Community Commercial Residential), CCR-2, CCR-3, OR-1 (Office Residential), and OR-2 zones in the NHHSDP meet the requirements of R-270-1980. The basis of compliance of the NHHSDP with R-270-1980 is changed conditions (Section D.2.) regarding the adoption of the Centers and Corridors component of the Comprehensive Plan (Activity Centers, Transit Corridors), and the adoption of the Central/Highland/Upper Nob Hill Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan.
18. The proposed MRHD (Mixed Residential Historic District), RTHD (Residential Townhouse Historic District), and SFHD (Single Family Historic District) zones in the NHHSDP meet the requirements of R-270-1980. The basis of compliance of the NHHSDP with R-270-1980 is changed conditions (Section D.2.) regarding the designation of the Monte Vista Addition and College View Addition subdivisions under the State Cultural Properties Register in 1998 and the National Register of Historic Places in 2001.
19. The proposed R-1 (Single Family Residential) and MR (Mixed Residential) zones in the NHHSDP meet the requirements of R-270-1980. The basis of compliance of the NHHSDP with R-270-1980 is changed conditions (Section D.2.) regarding changes of zoning in the Highland Reservoir Addition subdivision from R-1 to R-3 to



1 accommodate the development of a major urban center in the Central  
2 Avenue/San Mateo Boulevard area. The development of this major  
3 urban center did not occur. The predominance of single family  
4 residential land uses in this neighborhood and the lack of a major  
5 urban center development in the area justifies a re-establishment of  
6 lower intensity residential zoning in this neighborhood.

7 20. In meeting the requirements of R-270-1980 regarding zone changes as  
8 proposed in the NHHSDP regarding changed conditions (Section D.2.),  
9 and in establishing compliance with the policies of the Comprehensive  
10 Plan and the recommendations of the Central/Highland/Upper Nob Hill  
11 Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan, the proposed NHHSDP is  
12 found to be more advantageous to the community as articulated in  
13 these plans and policies (Section D.3.).

14 21. Letters have been sent to the EPC regarding a variety of concerns  
15 related to the content of the NHHSDP. These letters are attached to  
16 the staff report. Many of the concerns being sent to staff address  
17 proposed building height, architectural design standards for the  
18 Historic Core commercial district, sale of alcohol for off-premise uses,  
19 pedestrian safety issues pertaining to Lead/Coal Streets, and  
20 proposed zone changes in the Highland neighborhood from R-3 to R-1  
21 and MR.

22 22. Public hearings were held on October 26, 2006 and December 14, 2006  
23 at the EPC to discuss the proposed plan.

24 Section 4. REMOVAL OF CPTED ROADWAY BARRIERS. The City shall  
25 remove the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)  
26 roadway barriers and diverters in the Emerging Nob Hill Commercial Area  
27 south of Central in the Plan due to the success of the program in reducing  
28 crime and the need to increase roadway connectivity.

29 Section 5. NEIGHBORHOOD PERMIT PARKING. The neighborhoods  
30 adjoining the Route 66 Historic Core, Emerging Nob Hill, and Highland  
31 Commercial Districts within the Plan may initiate a petition and establish a  
32 Neighborhood Permit Parking system without regard to the percentage of

1 on-street parking spaces used by persons who are not residents of the  
2 neighborhood.

3 Section 6. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT, TAX INCREMENT  
4 FINANCING, AND TAX INCREMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT. The  
5 City encourages the establishment of a Tax Increment for Development  
6 District (TIDD), Tax Increment Financing (TIF) zone or a Business  
7 Improvement District (BID) within the boundaries of the Nob Hill Highland  
8 Sector Development Plan Area. The funds raised through these  
9 mechanisms shall be used, according to a plan to be adopted by the City  
10 Council, for the following purposes: acquire sites and develop public civic  
11 space, shared public parking structures, public transit system  
12 improvements, streetscape enhancements, personnel costs to enforce the  
13 Neighborhood Permit Parking system if implemented, and other purposes  
14 as needed.


15 Section 7. EFFECTIVE DATE AND PUBLICATION. This legislation shall  
16 take effect five days after publication by title and general summary.

17 Section 8. SEVERABILITY CLAUSE. If any section, paragraph, sentence,  
18 clause, word or phrase of this resolution is for any reason held to be invalid  
19 or unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall  
20 not affect the validity of the remaining provisions of this resolution. The  
21 Council hereby declares that it would have passed this resolution and each  
22 section, paragraph, sentence, clause, word or phrase thereof irrespective of  
23 any provisions being declared unconstitutional or otherwise invalid.


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[ - Bracketed/Strikethrough Material - ] - Deletion

1 PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 20th DAY OF August, 2007  
2 BY A VOTE OF: 9 FOR 0 AGAINST.

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8   
9 Debbie O'Malley, President  
10 City Council

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12  
13 APPROVED THIS 07 DAY OF September, 2007

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16 Bill No. R-07-185  
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20 Martin J. Chavez, Mayor  
21 City of Albuquerque

22  
23  
24  
25 ATTEST:   
26  
27  
28 City Clerk



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## **Mayor**

Martin J. Chávez

## **City Council**

Debbie O'Malley- District 2, President  
Sally Mayer- District 7, Vice President  
Ken Sanchez- District 1  
Isaac Benton- District 3  
Brad Winter- District 4  
Michael J. Cadigan- District 5  
Martin Heinrich, District 6  
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Don Harris, District 9

## **Environmental Planning Commission**

Jeffrey Jesionowski, Chair- Council District 8  
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Ishmael Valenzuela- Council District 1  
Jonathan Siegel- Council District 2  
Klarissa Pena- Council District 3  
Larry Chavez- Council District 4  
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## **City of Albuquerque**

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## **Steering Committee**

David Kammer- Nob Hill Neighborhood Association  
(NHNA)  
Page Coleman- Nob Hill Business Association  
(NHBA)  
Will Gleason- Nob Hill Highland Renaissance  
Corporation (NHHRC)  
Gary Mulryan- NHHRC  
Claude Lewis- Highland Business and Neighborhood  
Association (HBANA)  
Lee West- HBANA  
Signe Rich- NHNA  
Hal Rooks- NHNA

## **Working Committee**

Susan Rooks- Public Safety Working Committee  
Gary Eyster- Residential Character Working  
Committee  
Alan Pope –Circulation and Traffic Working  
Committee  
Kevin Wilson- Commercial Character Working  
Committee

## **At-Large Representatives**

David Albright- Bernalillo County  
Nicolette Dennis-APS  
Alfredo Barrenechea- NM Historic Community  
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Shelly Homer, Graphic and Layout Designer

## **Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.**

Jim Daisa, Principal



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS





## Contents

<b>I. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>III. NOB HILL HIGHLAND TODAY.....</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>V. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION .....</b>	<b>77</b>
A. Planning for Albuquerque .....	2	A. Land Use and Current Zoning .....	14	A. Projects and Programs.....	78
B. What is a Sector Development Plan?...2		B. Streetscape, Character, and Scale.....	14	B. Regulations.....	84
C. Boundaries.....	3	C. Transportation Systems.....	14		
D. Why the Nob Hill Highland Area? .....	3	D. Public Facilities .....	14	<b>VI. APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>109</b>
E. Guiding Principles .....	3	E. Housing Characteristics.....	17	APPENDIX A. A Vision For The Future	
F. Comprehensive Plan Precedence .....	4	F. Population Characteristics .....	19	Of The Hiland Theatre And Highland	
G. The Planning Process and Public		G. Crime.....	22	Neighborhood .....	110
Participation.....	5	H. Utilities.....	23	Appendix B. Excerpts from Revitalization	
		I. Economic Vitality.....	26	through Design Guidelines for Nob Hill	
				Business District .....	113
<b>II. HISTORIC CONTEXT AND THE BUILT</b>		<b>IV. PLAN COMPONENTS .....</b>	<b>27</b>	Appendix C. Funds Appropriated for Nob	
<b>ENVIRONMENT.....</b>	<b>7</b>	A. Movement Systems.....	28	Hill.....	127
A. Pre World War II.....	8	B. Community Form .....	54	Appendix D. Prototypical Intersection	
B. World War II and Beyond .....	8	C. Infrastructure.....	72	Drawings and Pedestrian Crossing	
C. The Recent Past .....	9	D. Economic Vitality.....	74	Recommended in the Conceptual	
D. Historic Preservation.....	10			Streetscape Design.....	129



## Figures

Figure 1: Centers & Corridors .....	2
Figure 2: Plan Area Boundaries .....	3
Figure 3: Buildings and Districts of Historic Recognition or Interest.....	11
Figure 4: Existing Land Use .....	15
Figure 5: Existing Zoning .....	16
Figure 6: Housing Ownership Information.....	18
Figure 7: Race and Ethnicity Demographics 19	
Figure 8: Age and Sex Demographics .....	20
Figure 9: Income and Education Demographics .....	21
Figure 10: Crime rates.....	22
Figure 11: Water and Sewer Lines .....	24
Figure 12: Flood Zones .....	25
Figure 13: Pedestrian Circulation Recommendations .....	29
Figure 14: Conceptual Streetscape Design (Girard Blvd. to Wellesley Dr.).....	32
Figure 15: Conceptual Streetscape Design (Wellesley Dr. to Hermosa Dr.) .....	33
Figure 16: Conceptual Streetscape Design (Hermosa Dr. to Sierra Dr.).....	34
Figure 17: Conceptual Streetscape Design (Sierra Dr. to Madison St.) .....	35
Figure 18: Conceptual Streetscape Design (Madison St. to San Mateo Blvd.) .....	36

Figure 19: Bicycle Circulation Recommendations .....	43
Figure 20: Vehicular Circulation Recommendations .....	45
Figure 21: Proposed Transit Recommendations .....	49
Figure 22: Parking Recommendations .....	51
Figure 23: Existing On-Street Parking.....	53
Figure 24: Illustration of Desirable Height- to-Width Ratios.....	56
Figure 25: Typical Cross Section through Central Avenue Corridor .....	56
Figure 26: Commercial and Residential Districts.....	57
Figure 27: Historic Core District Map .....	58
Figure 28: Emerging Nob Hill District Map .....	60
Figure 29: Highland Commercial District Map .....	62
Figure 30: Commercial and Residential Districts.....	65
Figure 31: Streetscape and Parks .....	71
Figure 32: Flood Insurance Rates .....	73
Figure 33: Avenues, Boulevards, Streets, Drives and Roads .....	86
Figure 34: Comprehensive Zoning .....	87
Figure 35: Proposed Zoning Changes .....	88
Figure 36: Allowable Building Heights .....	89

## Appendix D Figures

Figure D1: Typical Boulevard Cross Section .....	130
Figure D2: Typical Boulevard Cross Section at Crosswalk.....	131
Figure D3: Typical Boulevard Cross Section at Bulbout .....	132
Figure D4: Typical Café District Cross Section .....	133
Figure D5: Typical Boulevard Cross Section at Streetcar Station.....	134
Figure D6: Intersection Turn Movements.....	135
Figure D7: Intersection Turn Movements (Cont.).....	136
Figure D8: Prototypical Signalized Intersection.....	137
Figure D9: Prototypical Unsignalized Intersection.....	138
Figure D10: Prototypical Unsignalized Intersection With Median Extension and Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing .....	139
Figure D11: Typical Bus Stop Layout.....	140



# I. INTRODUCTION

The Nob Hill Highland Sector Development Plan, initiated by the Albuquerque City Council in 2004, is intended to guide the physical development of the Nob Hill and Highland neighborhoods of Albuquerque. These neighborhoods are located in the near heights immediately east of the University of New Mexico. The plan specifies standards for future development of these neighborhoods, including land use, zoning and capital improvements recommendations. As a detailed plan for two neighborhoods, the document is consistent with long-range plans for the County as a whole and area wide plans for streets and other infrastructure.

## A.Planning for Albuquerque

In 2002 the City of Albuquerque updated the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, which describes goals and policies for metropolitan development emphasizing the importance of Communities, Centers and Corridors in the successful functioning of the greater Albuquerque metropolitan area. The Comprehensive plan is a *Rank I* Plan. Contained within the jurisdiction of the Rank I plan are two plan types dealing with smaller geographic areas in greater detail. *Rank II* plans with large sections of the city like the Southwest Mesa and *Rank III* plans are the most specific dealing with particular sectors or neighborhoods such as the Nob Hill/Highland neighborhoods. All plans are intended to work together to support a desired direction for growth, as well as natural and cultural resource protection.

The Nob Hill Highland Sector Development Plan Area falls within the Near Heights Community Area as designated by the Comprehensive Plan and contains two Community Activity Centers (the Nob Hill, and Highland Centers), one Enhanced Transit Corridor (Lomas Boulevard) and one Major Transit Corridor (Central Avenue).

## B.What is a Sector Development Plan?

The Nob Hill Highland Sector Development Plan is a Rank III plan designed to benefit and enhance the livability of its neighborhoods. The Sector Development Plan describes existing conditions in the area, identifies things that the community wants

to protect or improve and lists recommendations for actions by the city and the community to implement the plan. Sector Plan objectives include attaining stakeholder agreement through the planning process, enhancing the livability of the community as well as reinforcing its identity relative to the Centers and Corridors policies of the Comprehensive Plan. The plan also aims to develop capital improvement projects and any zoning or code changes that might be necessary to respond to the particular needs for improvement of the built environment within that sector. Design standards and guidelines are also included in Sector Development Plans.

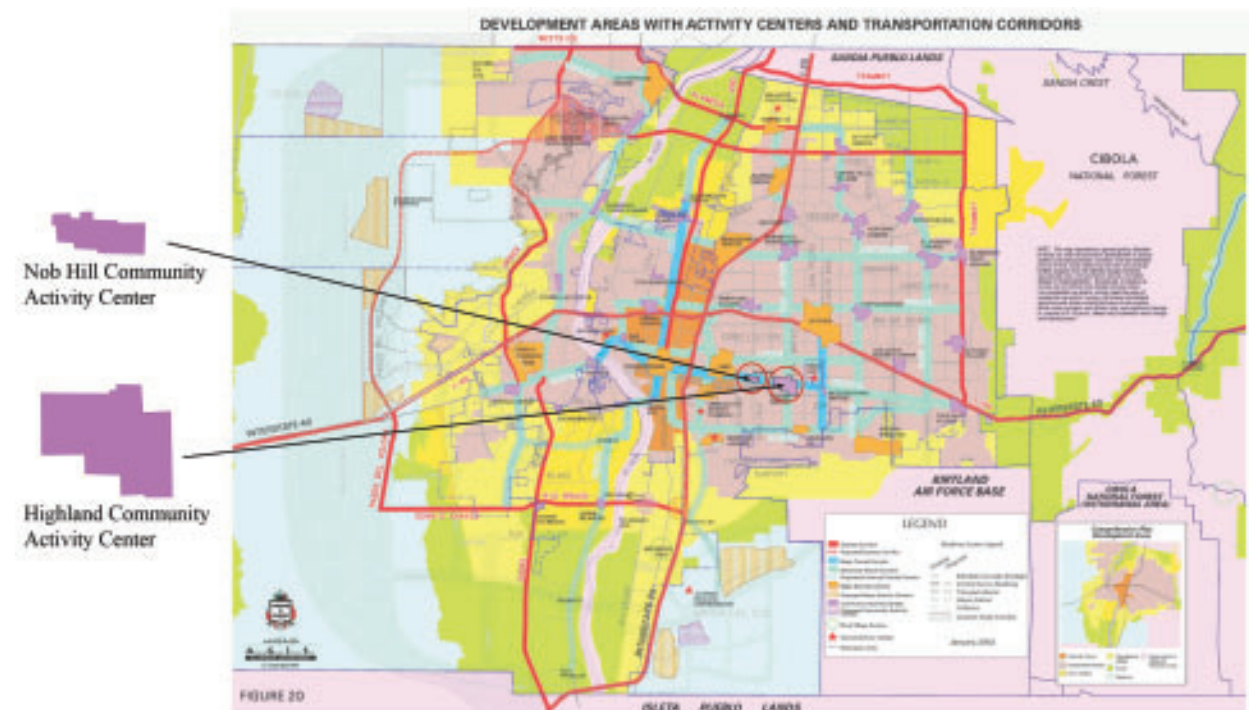


Figure 1: Centers & Corridors

## C. Boundaries

The boundaries of the Nob Hill Highland Sector Development Plan are Girard to the west, Lomas Boulevard to the north and San Mateo to the east. The southern boundary includes Zuni until it intersects with Morningside where the boundary jogs south along Morningside until it reaches Garfield Ave. which then becomes the southern most edge of the Nob Hill Highland Sector Development Plan.

## D. Why the Nob Hill Highland Area?

The goal of this plan, articulated in Council Bill R-04-189, is to update the 1987 Nob Hill Sector Development Plan and extend its boundaries to include the Central Highland and Upper Nob Hill area east of Washington. In the nearly twenty years since the 1987 plan was adopted, the Nob Hill Highland area has experienced many changes necessitating an updated plan to meet today's needs. In addition to concerns raised by the community, goals of the plan are to protect the established character of the neighborhood, its walkability, its successful business community and its historic structures. Another important reason for the plan update is the need to integrate the recommendations of the recently completed Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan for the Highland area. The Sector Plan will also act as a guide to manage future residential density levels as enhanced transit service along Central Avenue becomes a growing reality.

## E. Guiding Principles

Listed below are some of the Guiding Principles that have emerged from the community in the development of this Nob Hill Highland Sector Development Plan. A more detailed discussion of issues and recommendations pertaining to these principles and their desired outcomes is provided in the Plan Components section.

- Improve the pedestrian environment
- Identify and preserve the existing character of residential and commercial areas
- Encourage a mixture of compatible uses
- Preserve and enhance streetscapes
- Calm traffic
- Enhance public safety
- Stimulate commercial revitalization

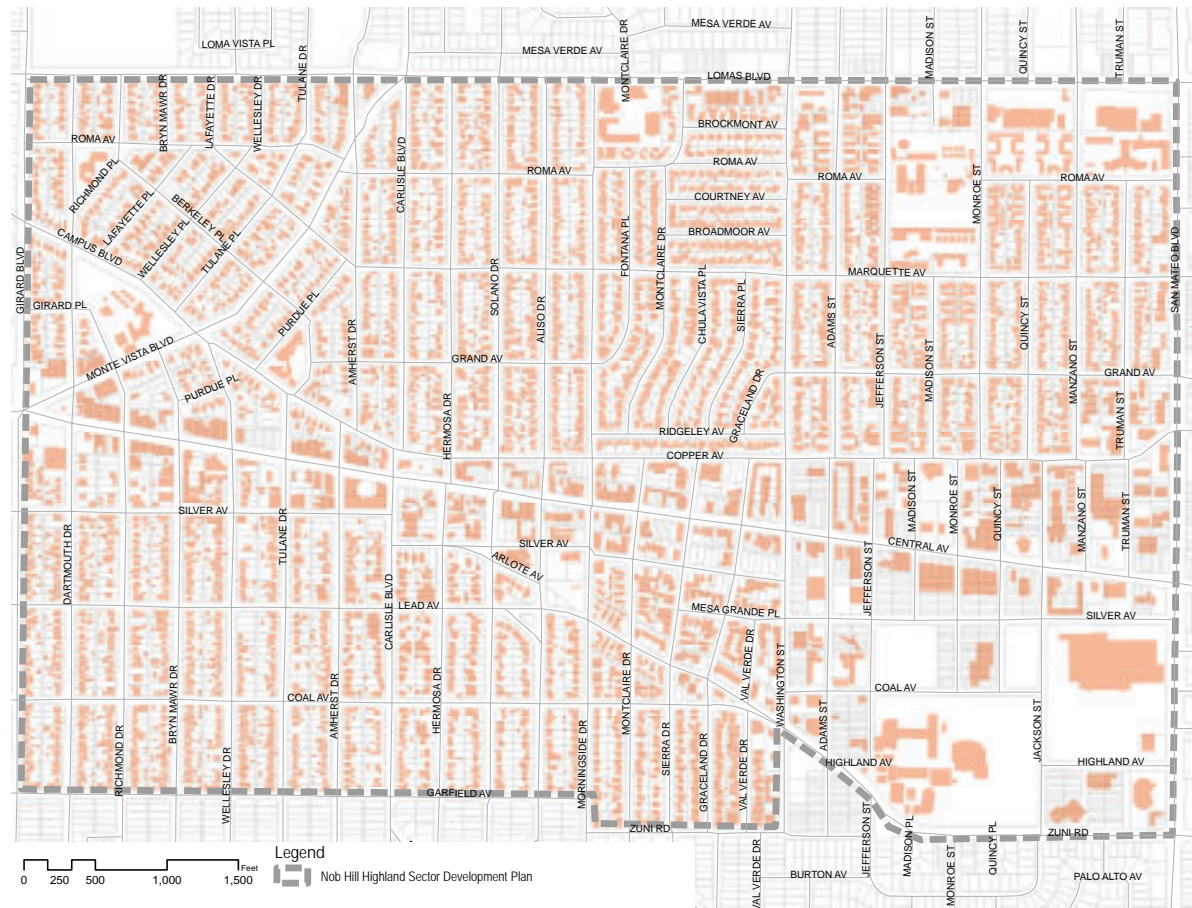


Figure 2: Plan Area Boundaries



- Improve conditions to emphasize multiple modes of transportation (pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular and transit)
- Stimulate economic development
- Encourage diverse housing types
- Establish regulations and guidelines for historic preservation
- Enhance human services
- Establish zoning regulations appropriate to areas of distinctive character and which address smooth transitions between commercial and residential areas
- Establish design guidelines to encourage development that is in keeping with areas of notable architectural character

## F. Comprehensive Plan Precedence

The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan articulates numerous policies that provide the basis for the Nob Hill Highland Sector Plan recommendations. The Nob Hill Highland Sector Plan recommendations, in turn, are intended to address the goals of the neighborhood. This Sector Development Plan also incorporates the work of many other existing plans and studies including the Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan for the Highland Area in 2005, the 1987 Nob Hill Sector Plan, the 2005 Nob Hill Highland Area Parking Inventory and Survey, the 1991 Downtown/City Center Transportation Study, and the 1997 Lead Coal Corridor Study, among others. Listed below are the 2002 Comprehensive Plan policies which have provided a framework for the Nob Hill Highland planning process:

### 1. *Developing and Established Urban Areas*

- Policy a - The Developing Urban and Established Urban Areas as shown by the Plan map shall allow a full range of urban land uses, resulting in an overall gross density up to 5 dwelling units per acre.
- Policy d - The location, intensity, and design of new development shall respect existing neighborhood values, natural environmental conditions and carrying capacities, scenic resources, and resources of other social, cultural, recreational concern.
- Policy h - Higher density housing is most appropriate in the following situations:
  - In designated Activity Centers.
  - In areas with excellent access to the major street network.
  - In areas where a mixed density pattern is already established by zoning or use, where it is compatible with existing area land uses and where adequate infrastructure is or will be available.
  - In areas now predominantly zoned single-family only where it comprises a complete block face and faces onto similar or higher density development; up to 10 dwelling units per net acre.
  - In areas where a transition is needed between single-family homes and much more intensive development: densities will vary up to 30 dwelling units per net acre according to the intensity of development in adjacent areas.
- Policy k - Land adjacent to arterial streets shall be planned to minimize harmful effects of traffic; livability and safety of established residential neighborhoods shall be protected in transportation planning and operation.
- Policy m - Urban and site design which maintains and enhances unique vistas and

improves the quality of the visual environment shall be encouraged.

- Policy o - Redevelopment and rehabilitation of older neighborhoods in the Established Urban Area shall be continued and strengthened.

### 2. *Activity Centers*

- Policy f - The most intense uses in Activity Centers shall be located away from nearby low-density residential development and shall be buffered from those residential uses by a transition area of less intensive development.
- Policy g - Activity Center locations shown on a Comprehensive Plan map, and their predominate uses in accordance with their unique roles and expected needs of the community, shall be developed in accordance with more specific sub-area planning efforts.

### 3. *Historic Resources*

- Policy a - Efforts to provide incentives for the protection of significant districts and buildings shall be continued and expanded.
- Policy c - Increase public and inter-agency awareness of historic resources and preservation concerns.

### 4. *Cultural Traditions and the Arts*

- Policy c - Coordination and promotion of the arts in the metropolitan area shall be supported.

### 5. *Community Identity and Urban Design*

- Policy c - The identity and cohesiveness of each community shall be strengthened through identification and enhancement of community Activity Centers that have a scale, mix of uses, design character, and location appropriate to the unique character of the community.

# INTRODUCTION

- **Policy e** - Roadway corridors (collectors, arterials, Enhanced Transit and Major Transit) within each community and that connect the community's Activity Centers shall be designed and developed to reinforce the community's unique identity; streetscape improvements to these roadways shall be designed to:
  - minimize water use
  - screen parking areas
  - create useful and attractive signage and building facades
  - facilitate walking safety and convenience

## 6. Transportation and Transit

- **Policy c** - In order to add to transit ridership, and where it will not destabilize adjacent neighborhoods, additional dwelling units are encouraged close to Major Transit and Enhanced Transit streets.
- **Policy g** - Pedestrian opportunities shall be promoted and integrated into development to create safe and pleasant non-motorized travel conditions.
- **Policy h** - A metropolitan area-wide recreational and commuter bicycle and trail network which emphasizes connections among Activity Centers shall be constructed and promoted.
- **Policy q** - Transportation investments should emphasize overall mobility needs and choice among modes in the regional and intra-city movement of people and goals.

## 7. Housing

- **Policy a** - The supply of affordable housing, shall be preserved and increased and the opportunity to obtain standard housing for a reasonable proportion of income assured.

- **Policy c** - The displacement of low income households, shall be ameliorated and the objectives of historic preservation and conservation of affordable housing balanced.
- **Policy d** - Availability of a wide distribution of decent housing for all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, or handicapped status shall be assured.

## 8. Economic Development

- **Policy b** - Development of local business enterprises as well as the recruitment of outside firms shall be emphasized.

## G. The Planning Process and Public Participation

The issues, goals and recommendations of the plan were developed through a public participation process of stakeholder groups that included the establishment of a steering committee comprised of stakeholders from community interest groups (residents, property owners, and business people). Members of this steering committee came from four major organizations in the Plan Area: The Nob Hill Neighborhood Association (NHNA), The Nob Hill Business Association (NHBA), The Highland Business and Neighborhood Association (HBNA), and the Nob Hill Highland Renaissance Corporation (NHHRC) a nonprofit, community-based development corporation. Institutional stakeholders provided additional input and technical assistance. These stakeholders included the City of Albuquerque Planning Department, Bernalillo County, the University of New Mexico and the Albuquerque Public Schools. In addition

to the steering committee, working groups made up of other community members were created to concentrate on specific areas of concern: Residential Character, Pedestrian Circulation, Public Safety and Character of Commercial and Transition Areas. Community participation and plan elaboration were facilitated by Sites Southwest, LLC in collaboration with the Albuquerque Planning Department.

All new or updated Sector Development Plans must be reviewed by the Environmental Planning Commission. Upon the EPC's review and recommendation, the plan goes to the Albuquerque City Council for adoption. Once the plan is adopted, the zoning map, language, design standards and other recommendations of the plan become legal land use regulation for the plan area.







## II. HISTORIC CONTEXT AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Traveling up Central Avenue from Old Town, to New Town (Downtown) and then further up the East Mesa, Central Avenue becomes a time line through history. Architectural style and vernacular mix with national or global events to create unique, discernible neighborhoods that grow younger the further east one travels along Central Avenue.

## A. Pre World War II

Central Avenue and its surrounding areas between Girard and Carlisle developed in the late 1920s and 1930s, pre-dating Route 66 and post World War II growth in auto oriented travel and development. In that era development catered to a much more integrated interaction between the area's commercial activity and its residential environments. Though the Nob Hill Business Center was, in the late 1940s, considered to be state of the art auto oriented development, a focus on the pedestrian was still central to the development. That its commercial space was designed to interact with its surroundings on all sides of the building belies its Route 66-era conception. The free-flowing pedestrian entry to the shops and restaurants along Central and in the Business Center encouraged walkability and was dependant upon people who still came and went by foot or streetcar. This sense of continuity between the commercial and residential areas in many ways defines Nob Hill and is responsible for much of its success today.

The Nob Hill subdivisions platted through the 1920s and 30s reflect the evolution of subdivision development through that time period. The Monte Vista (1926) and University Heights (1916)

Additions, located between Girard and Carlisle have narrow, deep lots with alley access to rear yards. Monte Vista Addition is notable for platting that diverged from the typical grid, recognizing drainage patterns, and dedicated land for a school site. Further east, College View Addition (1926), Granada Heights Addition (1925) and Mesa Grande Addition (1931) follow the grid and have narrow, deep lots, but do not have alleys. Residents purchased lots and hired builders or contractors acquired a small number of lots to attract buyers, which created a mix of housing types and styles. Construction on these lots spanned from the 1920 through the 1950s



Broadmoor (1945) began the change to the post World War II pattern of tract housing and a break with the grid platting pattern, with a limited number of streets connecting to the arterials.

Commercial development along Central Avenue served two markets, the residential neighborhoods on either side and travelers through Albuquerque.

The late 1930s saw the realignment of U.S. 66 from its north/south orientation through Albuquerque to an east/west alignment along Central Avenue. By the 1940s and the early 1950s Route 66 had begun

to shape the surrounding landscape. Architectural styles of Route 66 were born of this modern age. Typical development along Route 66 that reflects its function as America's "mother road" can be found in its many gas stations, motor courts, neon signs, and roadside restaurants. Most were designed to attract the attention of people moving through the landscape at speeds only recently experienced with the wide popularity of the automobile.

## B. World War II and Beyond

With the entrance of the United States into World War II, Albuquerque assumed a pivotal role in early national defense efforts which later formed the nucleus of the present-day military-industrial complex of Kirtland Air Force Base and Sandia National Laboratory. The location of these facilities south of the Nob Hill Highland neighborhoods helped contribute to the area's desirability.

The area between Morningside and Washington developed in the post war boom of the late 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. The built environment has some qualities of both the pre- and post-war eras. Some blocks have small scale shop frontages close to the street while other buildings step back allowing for a shallow parking lot, while still others swim in vast seas of parking forsaking the pedestrian almost completely. Residential development also changed. Lots became wider and shallower as the orientation of houses began to change. The garage that was detached and accessed from the alley or a long driveway moved forward and became integrated into the house, accessed by a driveway from the front. Ranch style houses and modernist architecture began to appear interspersed within the established architectural vernacular. Development also began to occur in large sections with contractors building the same or similar houses on one or more blocks.

The Highland area from Washington to San Mateo also developed during the late 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. However, zoning codes favored single use buildings and a separation of these uses from the surrounding residential areas. R-1 (single family residential zoning) gave way to R-3 (highest density residential zoning) in a bid to help alleviate housing shortages. Duplexes and courtyard style apartments gave way to larger buildings with more parking lots and as a result are less integrated into their surroundings. Dwellings in this area were assumed to be served by shops and amenities that would be reached by car. Central Avenue widened; buildings receded behind expansive parking lots separating commercial and residential districts. The later the development the more automobile oriented it became with little or no consideration for the pedestrian environment. East of the Hiland Theater the commercial areas are dominated by much larger stores surrounded by equally large parking lots. Central Avenue widens to six lanes and on-street parking has been eliminated in most blocks. Where buildings are set back with parking in front, the development pattern discourages walkability, street activity and neighborhood integration.



The Nob Hill commercial strip began a long period of decline in the early 1960s. Development of the Winrock and Coronado shopping malls along with construction of the interstate highway network

altered growth and transportation patterns citywide and shifted commercial focus away from Route 66. The community turned to the new malls to meet many of their shopping needs, while the Interstate diverted much of the traffic that once flowed on East Central. As a result, the prestige of the Nob Hill business district diminished, and the area lost its former luster. Buildings deteriorated, and uses changed.

## C. The Recent Past

By 1987, at the behest of Nob Hill's neighborhood and business associations, a sector development plan was drafted and adopted by the city of Albuquerque. Part of the 1987 plan included a Nob Hill Study, that looked at housing stock, neighborhood character, areas of concern and attitudes of local residents. One result of the study was the placing of many homes and buildings on the Historic Registry as many were reaching approximately fifty years in age or older. With this renewed interest and perspective on Nob Hill's place in history, property values began to rise attracting economic activity as well as working professionals and their families. By the mid 1990s Nob Hill area was carving out a unique and livable place in the city.

The Highland area was not included in the 1987 plan. Highland was also greatly affected by the construction of the new malls as it was previously Albuquerque's new uptown area. Standing in relative isolation, the Bank of the West building is indicative of this halted economic development in the Highland area. While Nob Hill was experiencing relief from the disinvestment of the 1980s due in part to its maturation as a historical neighborhood in Albuquerque, Highland experienced some development of chain stores and retailers, but largely lagged behind Nob Hill.

Highland, however, seems to be on the same path that Nob Hill was on a few years before. Many of the homes and buildings are now reaching 50 years old, with the potential to be recognized as historic based on their age, contribution to the chronicle of Albuquerque's past, and presence of original design and materials. In 2005 the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) plan saw the Hiland Theater as one of the neighborhood's assets and looked to it to help anchor redevelopment. Though Highland does not have the built foundation that Nob Hill has of its mix of pedestrian friendly shops and housing, it is finally coming into its own and many see its more open form as an exciting place from which to start again and create a highly livable, viable and successful urban landscape.



Today, the Nob Hill Highland Area plays host to a range of businesses, restaurants and activities. Transit opportunities have increased with RapidRide bus service and the University's presence adds to local vibrancy. However, concerns about traffic flow, pedestrian safety, crime, economic activity and the built environment persist. It is in this context that this plan aims to pick up where the 1987 plan left off. By building on the strengths of previous plans and the energy of community stakeholders, this plan will be an effective blueprint for the future.



## D. Historic Preservation

Today in the Nob Hill Highland area, the issue of maintaining its historic feel and character is as important as ever. Historic preservation is a primary goal of the plan.

As the Plan area furthers the creation of its identity as a walkable, urban area in Albuquerque, there is a desire by area residents to protect, preserve and enhance historic sites along the commercial corridors as well as in the residential neighborhoods. These places are a large part of what makes the Nob Hill Highland area special, contributing greatly to its character. The phenomenon of tearing down or extensively remodeling houses that have contributed to the historic character of the neighborhood is also a serious threat as it can change building massing on the lot, solar access, streetscape and architectural style. Residents believe that it is important to preserve the historic quality of their neighborhood, maintaining sympathetic architectural forms, building massing and streetscape. Furthermore, the State and National Historic Register designation are important resources for documenting and maintaining the area's historical fabric as well as educating the public at large about the history and significance of structures and building styles in the area.

An inventory of historic buildings conducted in 1995 by the City of Albuquerque and volunteer researchers surveyed as many buildings in Nob Hill as possible to complete basic historic research to lay the groundwork for identifying potential historic districts. Inventory forms were completed for approximately 615 residential and commercial

structures. An additional 415 previously surveyed buildings were field checked for major, subsequent modification, and basic dating research was completed for all 1,030 survey forms. The inventory information included a preliminary assessment of the contributing/non-contributing status of each building for potential future historic district and building registrations.

The building survey and research noted that residential areas north of Central had significant concentrations of buildings that would likely be contributing in an historic district, and the Monte Vista and College View Historic District was placed on the State Cultural Properties register in 1998 and the National Register of Historic Places in 2001.

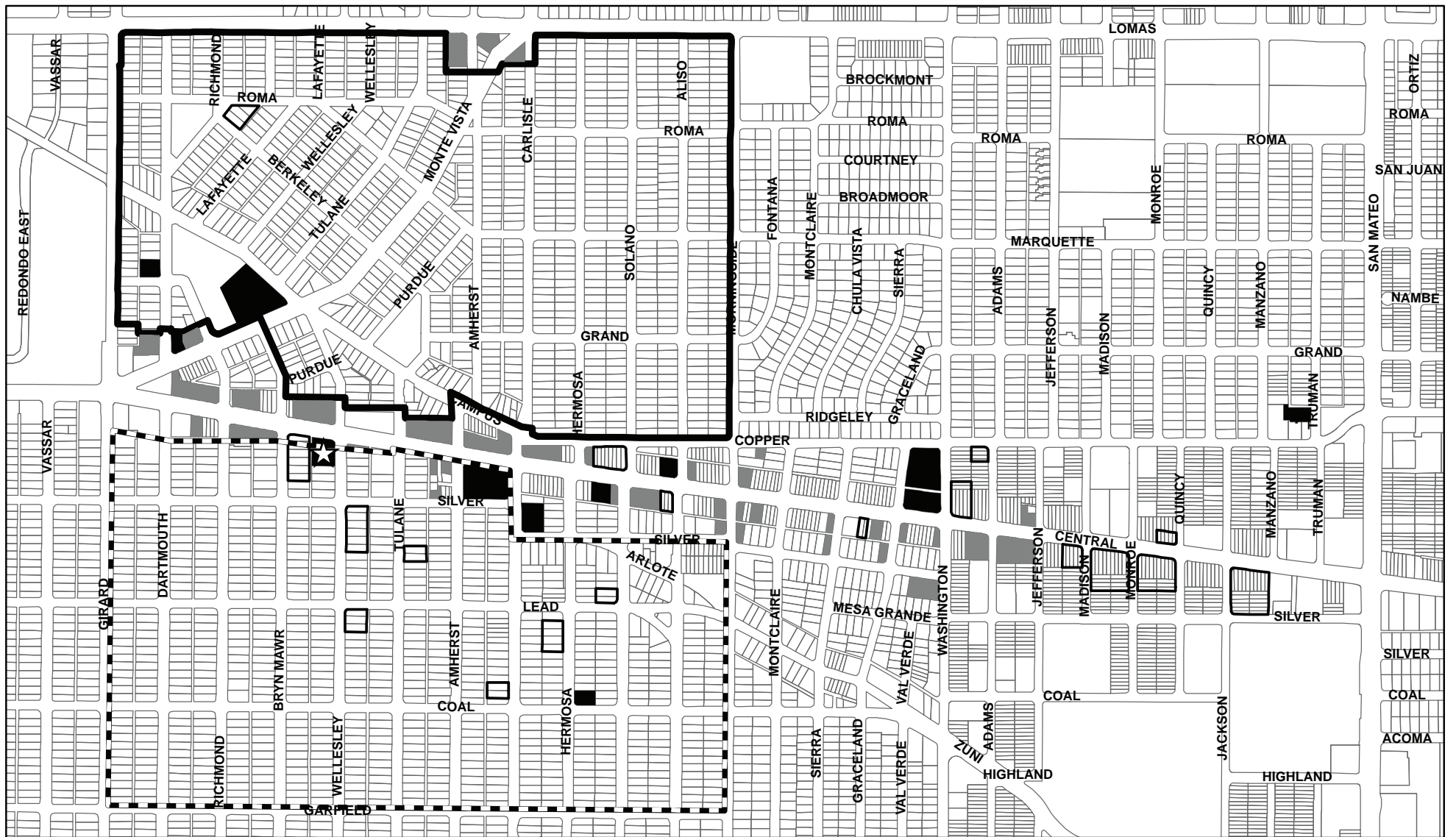
Residential areas south of Central were also identified as having registration potential, and the inventory final report concluded that a survey of the University Heights neighborhood and portions of Granada Heights should be completed.

The report identified individually-listed commercial, institutional and residential buildings on the State and National Registers and identified additional buildings for nomination. The report identified notable buildings constructed from 1942 to 1952 and recommended that these commercial areas be reassessed after 2002 for potential listing on the State and National Registers.

Further historical research was completed for the City of Albuquerque by Parsons Brinckerhoff in March of 2005 in the form of a Cultural Resource Survey of the properties bordering Central Avenue. This cultural resource investigation was conducted under New Mexico State Archaeological Survey Permit No. 04-079 and 05-079 and was consistent with the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended through 1992.

A map of the Plan area shows State and National Register Historic buildings in dark blue, State and National Register Historic Districts in yellow, buildings of potential historic interest in light blue and areas of potential historic interest in light red (see Figure 3). Other historic neighborhoods and structures remain to be surveyed in greater detail and evaluated for inclusion on the State and National Register.

Other recommendations of the 1995 building inventory were that the City consider Historic or Urban Conservation Overlay Zones for registered districts. The report also noted the importance of public education and recommended brochures and walking tours and workshops to encourage preservation-sensitive remodeling and a greater appreciation of the historic quality of commercial structures built through 1955. The intent of such measures would be to encourage renovations that are sympathetic and respectful of the historic character of these neighborhoods.



NOB HILL HIGHLAND SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN

0 250 500 1,000 2,000 Feet



Recommended for Further Study

Buildings/Places of Historic Interest

Buildings on National and/or State Register

Characteristic Buildings

Monte Vista & College View Historic District

City Landmark - Jones Motor Co., 3222 Central SE

## HISTORIC BUILDINGS/DISTRICTS

### Route 66 Neon Signs on State Register

- Aztec Motel, 3821 Central NE
- Nob Hill Motel, 3712 Central SE
- Premier Motel (3 signs) 3822 Central NE

Figure 3: Buildings and Districts of Historic Recognition or Interest







### III. NOB HILL HIGHLAND TODAY

Land use in Nob Hill is predominantly retail and office along the blocks bracketing major streets, with neighborhoods of single family homes and small apartments in the interiors. Scattered within the neighborhoods are churches and Monte Vista Elementary School. Zoning in Nob Hill is a combination of the R-1 zoning that was established when zoning was adopted in Albuquerque in 1959 and special neighborhood office and commercial zoning that was put in place with the adoption of the 1987 Nob Hill Sector Development Plan.

## A. Land Use and Current Zoning

The Highland neighborhood has several large apartment complexes and a mix of single family homes, small apartment buildings and townhomes within the interior of the neighborhood. Second units on the same lot as a single family detached home are common in some blocks. Highland High School and Zia Elementary School are significant institutions in the neighborhood. Retail and office uses extend along major streets, and the area surrounding Highland High School is a mix of retail, office and multifamily uses. Zoning in the Highland area dates from 1959, with O-1, C-1 and C-2 zoning along major streets and south of Central Avenue to Zuni. Residential zoning in the Highland neighborhood is R-3.

In both neighborhoods churches are zoned SU-1/ Special Use and some surface parking lots are zoned PR/Parking Reserve.

## B. Streetscape, Character, and Scale

Scale and increment are especially important to the character of the streets in the plan area. Much of the commercial façade in the western side (i.e. Girard to Jefferson) of this sector has a regularity of increment and a distinct scale which is particular to mid-20th Century development, and is recognized as an asset to the streetscapes of this sector and to the City at large. Because this existing façade is an important asset to the City, the continuity, maintenance and retention of its component or contributing pieces shall be preserved or restored.

## C. Transportation Systems

Today, Albuquerque is a city that is dominated by automotive travel typically comprised of single occupancy vehicles traversing the well established road network. According to a 1996 Parsons Brinckerhoff transportation study entitled Albuquerque Transportation Evaluation Study, 20% to 30% of Albuquerque's total area is comprised of streets and their rights of way. By any measure this is a major type of land use and shapes the way the built environment is used and consumed.

The Nob Hill Highland area is no exception. Though the area is well-served by transit, bicycle and pedestrian routes relative to the City at large, transportation in the Plan area remains dominated by the car. Since its inception, Central Avenue has shaped commercial and residential development along its borders and today remains a major community form determinant in the Plan area. San Mateo, Zuni, Lead, Coal, and Lomas are also vital links to and for the rest of the city and typically carry heavy volumes of traffic at peak travel times. Transit service in the form of bus and RapidRide service is paving the way for a modern streetcar project on

Central Avenue, which will be developed in the near future. In addition, there are many marked and/or dedicated bike lanes throughout the plan area that are part of the Albuquerque Bicycle Master Plan.

However, as the number of "vehicle miles traveled" and "vehicle hours traveled" continue to increase, there is a renewed effort to create truly walkable, pedestrian-oriented environments and development. The Plan looks to address this current situation and also point the way forward to viable communities free from auto-only dependency.

## D. Public Facilities

The Nob Hill Highland area is generally well-served by its parks and public facilities. Monte Vista and Zia Elementary Schools and Highland High School are natural community centers. Both the Monte Vista and Zia Elementary schools' playgrounds offer basketball courts and other play equipment for the community at large. Morningside Park, at Morningside and Lead, also offers play equipment for children. Highland High School with its track, football, baseball, soccer fields, tennis courts and pool facilities offer surrounding residents opportunities to exercise and participate in community sports leagues. The Wellesley Tennis Courts, at Lead and Wellesley, offer more community tennis courts.

The Triangle Community Park at the intersection of Girard, Monte Vista, and Central, offers some open space and houses a Police Community Substation. Yet, Central Avenue, as it makes its way through the Nob Hill Highland Area, lacks any major public place for gathering for festivals, concerts or other special events. These spaces are sorely needed as special events are forced to take place either in parking lots or in other parts of the City.

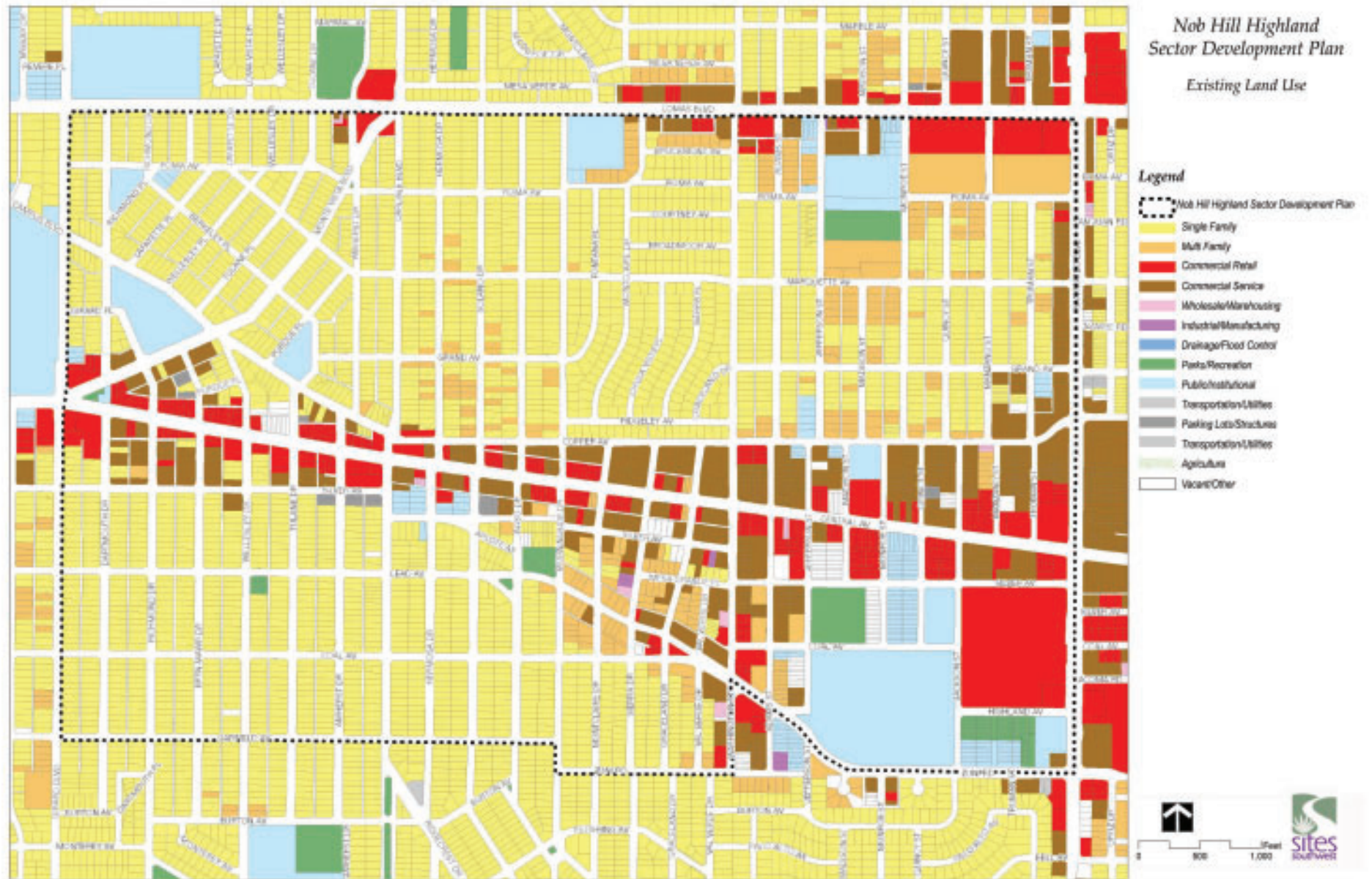


Figure 4: Existing Land Use



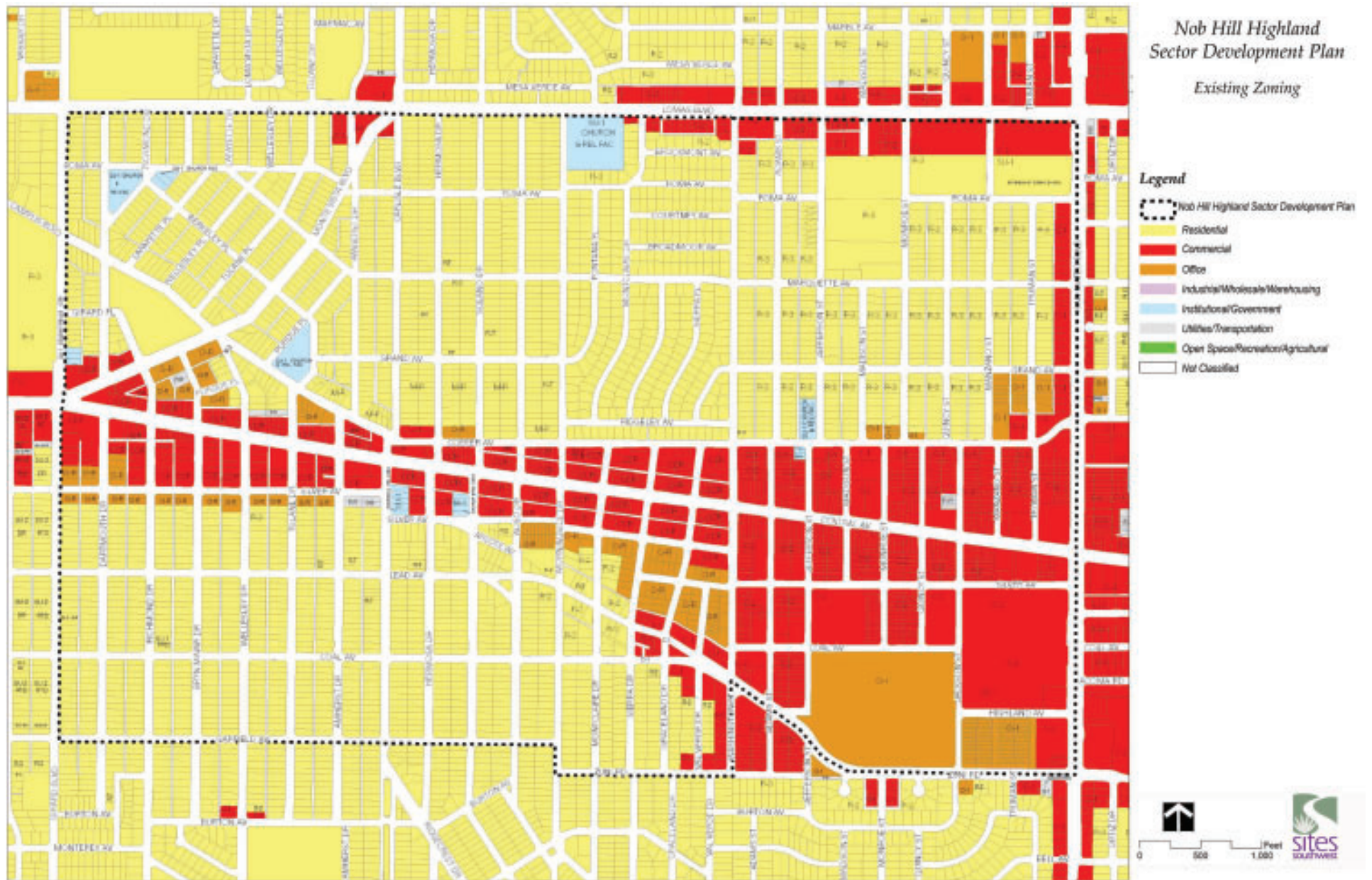


Figure 5: Existing Zoning



## E. Housing Characteristics

Housing in the Nob Hill Highland area in general is characterized by a greater propensity towards rental properties, which form 51% of the whole, versus 37% of the whole for Albuquerque at large (U.S. Census Bureau). Figure 6 shows the distribution of properties by ownership, based on 2005 Bernalillo County Assessor Records. Properties where the owner address and site address are the same are assumed to be owner-occupied. A majority (58%) homes are detached single family dwelling units. Of the multi-family dwelling units, the majority are duplexes and three or four-plexes. There are no mobile home parks and only (5%) of all dwelling units are in housing structures that have 50 or more dwelling units. The approximate median value of homes in the Nob Hill area was \$131,400 and in the Highland area was \$108,600 in 2000. However, the median home price in Albuquerque in 2000 was \$127,600 and then jumped up to \$169,200 in 2005, a 32% increase, according to the National Association of Realtors. Nob Hill Highland housing prices have likely followed or even exceeded this upward trend.

### 1. Age of Housing

Housing in the Nob Hill Highland Area tends to be older than the city-wide average. The median age of houses in Albuquerque is approximately 1975 while the median age of homes in the Nob Hill Highland area is 1952 creating a market of older housing stock. In the Nob Hill area, 69.7% of homes were mainly built prior to 1960 and almost a third of those were built prior to 1940. Only 18% of the housing units in Nob Hill were built from 1960 to 1980, and 11.4% were built after 1980.

### 2. Building Conditions

A 1985 survey, the most recent study, indicated that residential building conditions are generally good in the Nob Hill area, reflecting a pattern of regular maintenance. According to a May 22, 2006 interview with area historian David Kammer, since this survey was completed, the majority of building conditions and housing stock has improved. Reinvestment in Nob Hill, combined with the inclusion of more houses listed on the Historic Registry may have contributed to these improvements.

However, residents throughout the Nob Hill Highland area have voiced concern at the proliferation of investment properties. They claim that with real estate markets across the Southwest being superheated, many out-of-state investors are buying up property as a safe investment. These properties become vacant or rental units and are not kept up as well as owner-occupied properties, which creates a sense of disinvestment in the area.

Also, old Route 66 motels in the Highland area, such as the De Anza, present a unique opportunity for redevelopment. Though these motels currently act as affordable housing for some, area residents and neighbors complain of criminal activities as well as their physical condition. These buildings no longer function as potential community resources, but rather as blights on the landscape.

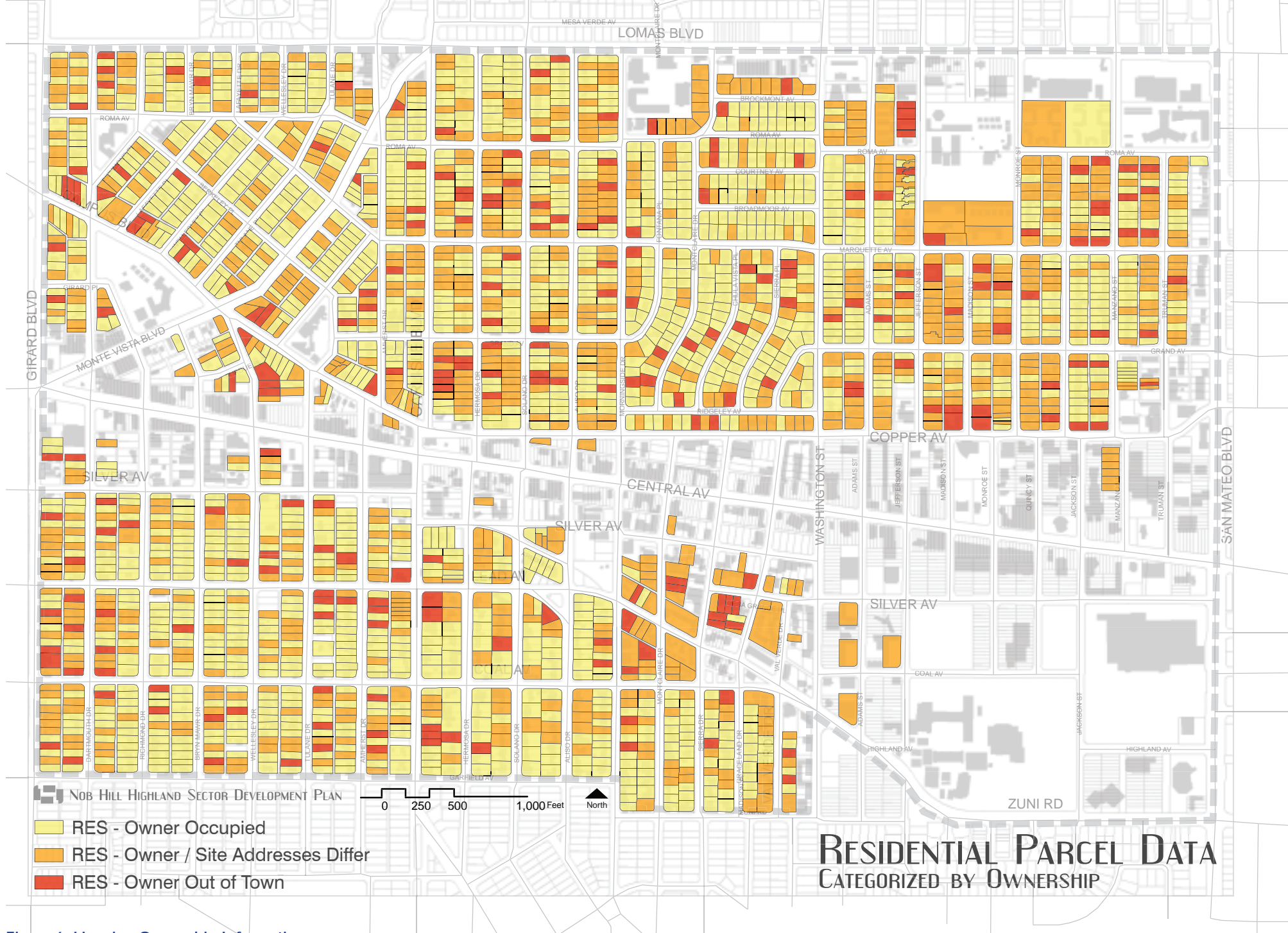


Figure 6: Housing Ownership Information

## F. Population Characteristics

The total population for the Nob Hill Highland area in 1990 was 7,281 and in 2000 was 7,222. If this trend continues the population will remain steady. However, as infill becomes more predominant in Albuquerque, it is likely that the population of areas like Nob Hill Highland will increase as the neighborhoods become more urban.

The racial and ethnic make-up of Nob Hill Highland is predominately White and Non-Hispanic. 79% of people in Nob Hill Highland identified themselves as White only verses 71% for the city at large. Ethnically, 23% of people in Nob Hill Highland identified as themselves as Hispanic or Latino while 40% identified themselves as such City-wide.

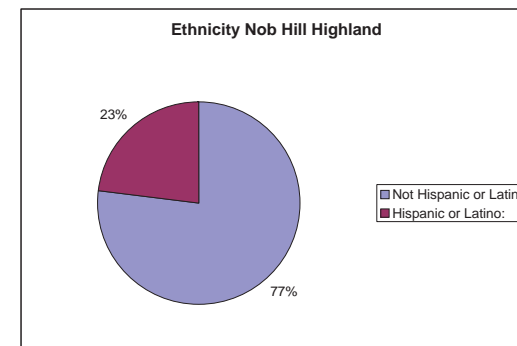
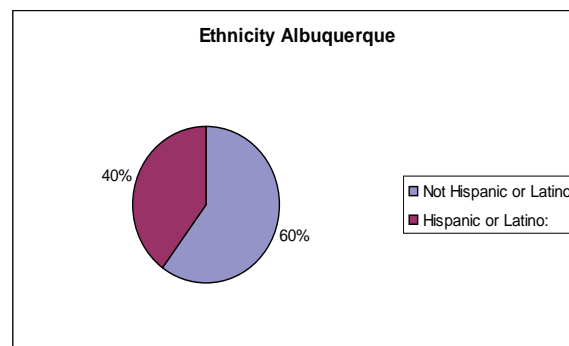
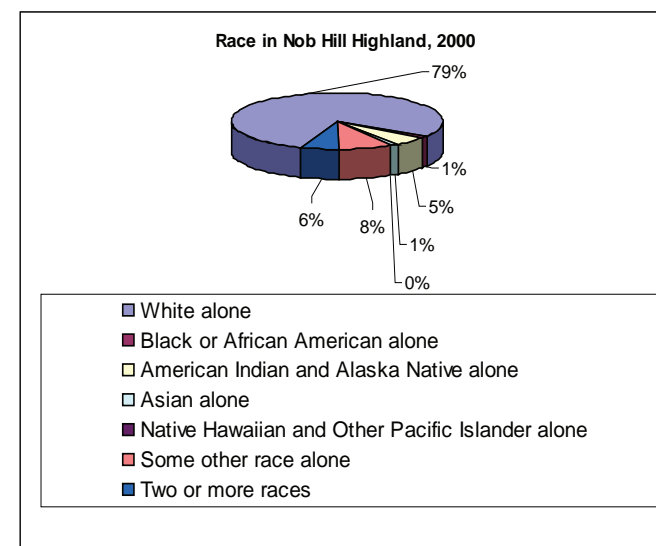
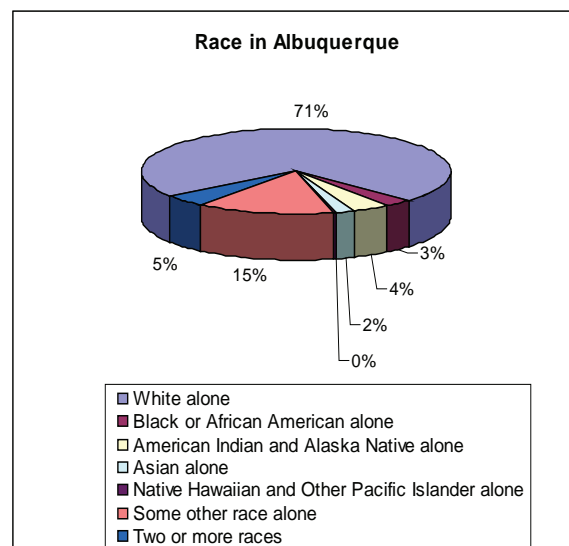


Figure 7: Race and Ethnicity Demographics

The Nob Hill Highland area population is characterized by a larger percentage of younger people who tend to have fewer children when compared to the City overall. This creates a propensity for relatively large numbers of one-person households. The neighborhood also has a larger 50-59 year old population than the rest of the City. The Plan area's largest population groups by age are the 20-29 and the 30-39 categories like that of Albuquerque's. However, these categories in the Plan area make up a higher percentage of its total population that Albuquerque's do. These young people have fewer children as compared to the rest of the City as Nob Hill Highland is underrepresented in the 0-9 and 10-19 year old age groups, and there is a smaller percentage of school-aged children.

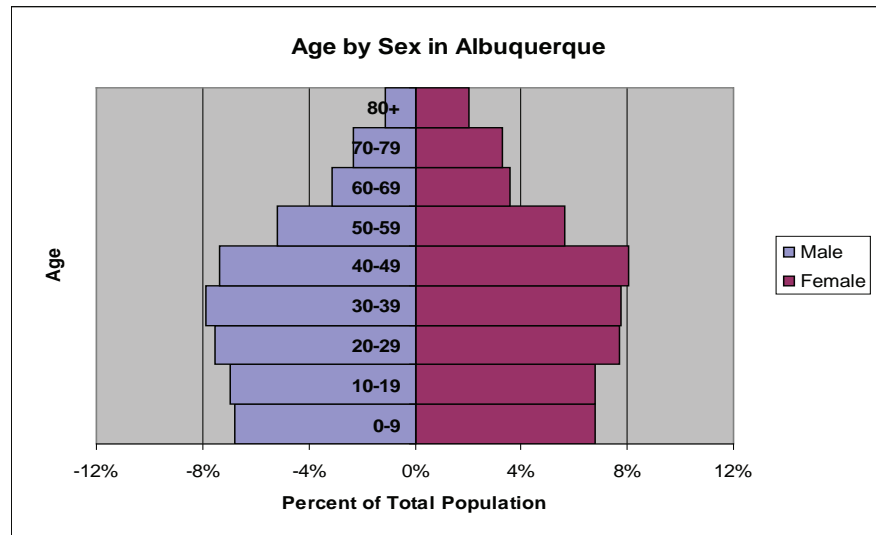
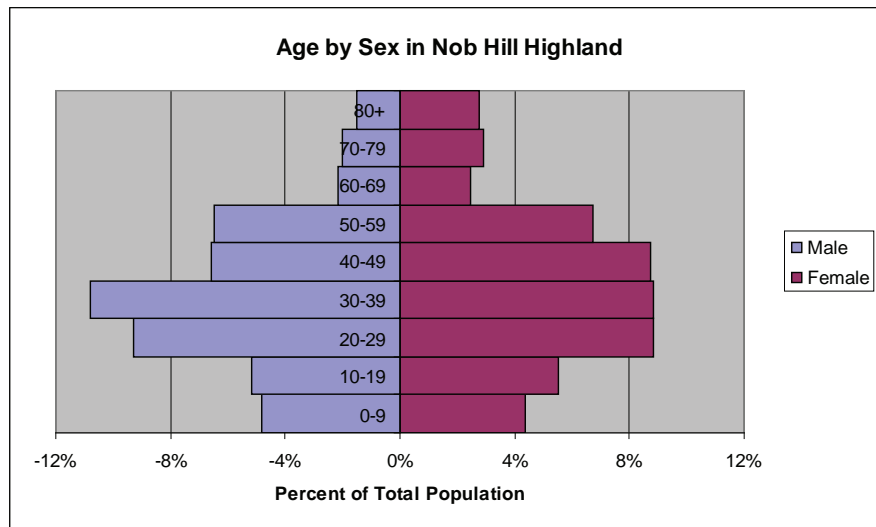
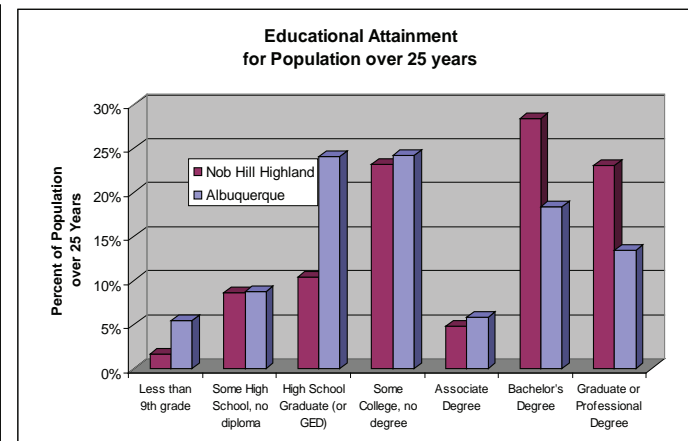
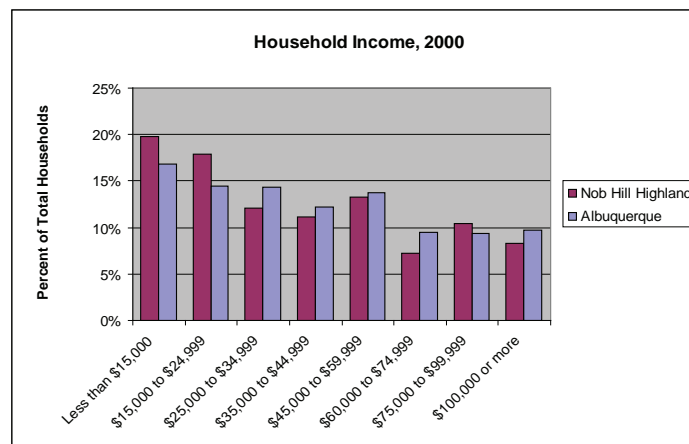


Figure 8: Age and Sex Demographics



Per capita income for the Nob Hill Highland Area is \$23,898 which is slightly higher than Albuquerque's per capita income of \$20,884. Household income across the earning spectrum does not deviate greatly from that of Albuquerque's, however, educational attainment does. Nob Hill Highland tends to be a well-educated part of the City. The percentage of people in the plan area who have their Bachelor's Degree is 28% versus 15.4% for Albuquerque at large. Those who have graduate or professional Degrees are 23% of the population in the Nob Hill Highland area versus Albuquerque's 6%. Furthermore, 89% of Nob Hill Highland residents are high school graduates versus 85.9% in all of Albuquerque.



2000 Population Age 25+ by Educational Attainment*	Nob Hill Highland		Albuquerque	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
	4,785	100%	291,485	100%
Less than 9th grade	78	2%	15,695	5.4%
Some High School, no diploma	409	9%	25,346	8.7%
High School Graduate (or GED)	498	10%	70,221	24.1%
Some College, no degree	1107	23%	70,518	24.2%
Associate Degree	231	5%	17,070	5.9%
Bachelor's Degree	1360	28%	53,562	18.4%
Graduate or Professional Degree	1102	23%	39,073	13.4%

2000 Population Age 25+	Nob Hill Highland	Albuquerque
Percent without high school diploma	10.2%	14.1%
Percent high school graduate or higher	89.8%	85.9%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	51.5%	31.8%

Figure 9: Income and education demographics

## G. Crime

The Nob Hill Highland area crime rates for 2004 were higher than that of Albuquerque in all categories except assault. The instances of assault fell by nearly half in the Nob Hill Highland area from 2000 to 2004, from 45 to 22.6 reported cases per 1000 people. Also, drug arrests fell by more than half from 22.4 to 10.3 incidents per 1000 people. The category with the highest crime rate in the Nob Hill Highland Area was that of theft crimes (larceny and burglary) at 78 instances per 1000 people. This is up dramatically since 2000 when theft crimes were just 44.3 incidents per 1000 people. The largest discrepancy between the Nob Hill Highland area and Albuquerque's crime rates in 2004 was in the vandalism/disorderly conduct category. Here Nob Hill Highland had a rate of 44.1 instances per 1000 people, 54.7% higher than that of Albuquerque's at 28.5 instances per 1000 people. The increase in theft crimes and vandalism supports residents concerns about the escalation in property crime.

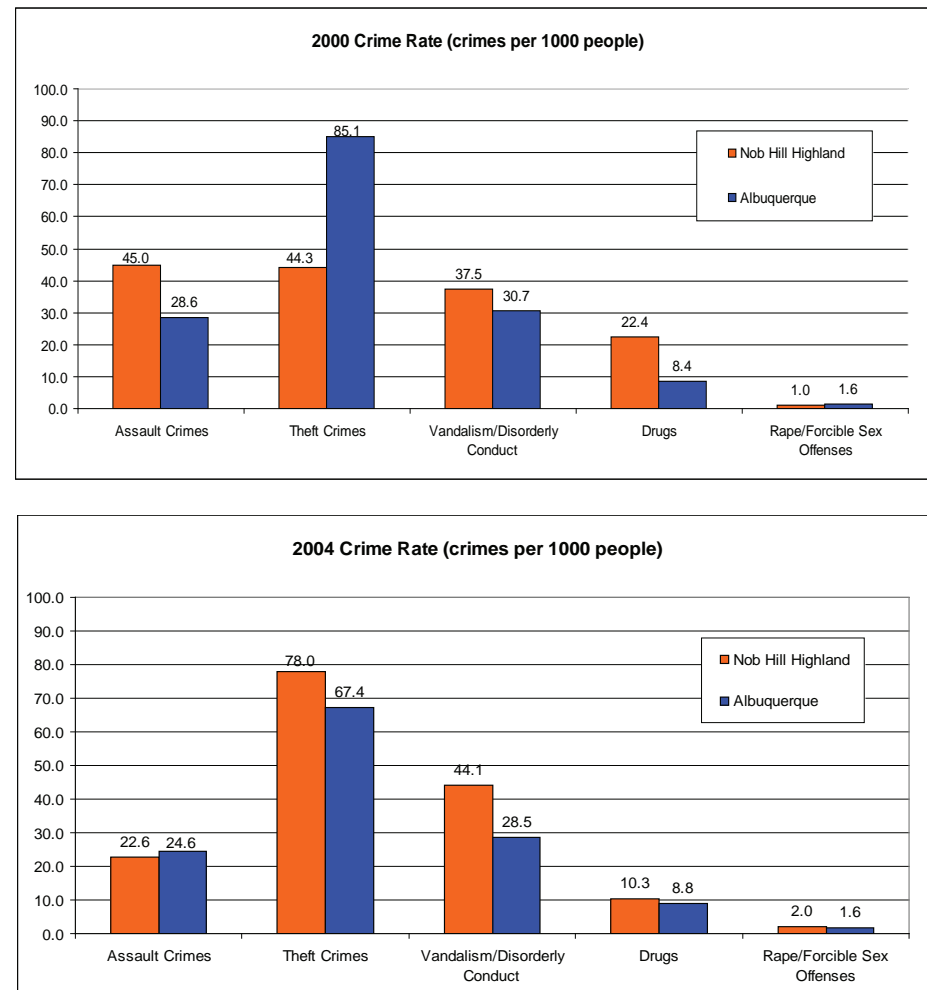


Figure 10: Crime rates

## H. Utilities

### 1. *Water and Sewer*

Water and sewer lines currently provide adequate service in the Nob Hill Highland area (see Figure 11). However, due to the age of the neighborhood's water and sewer lines, many will need to be replaced in the coming years. Since there is no major replacement project slated for the Plan area, improvement will occur in response to normal system and/or future redevelopment projects.

### 2. *Drainage*

Addressing the storm water runoff and drainage problem in the Nob Hill Highland Area is critical. A 100-year-flood zone extends from Girard to Washington and generally follows Campus/Copper, Central and Zuni (see Figure 12). These important transportation and commercial corridors function as storm water collection channels in lieu of the natural drainage systems they replaced. Existing drainage is approximately at the capacity of the streets which are subject to flooding when surface water flows are anything more than one foot at the curb (ASCG study). Proposed pedestrian and streetscape improvements, such as bulb-outs at corners, would reduce drainage and surface flow capabilities and greatly increase the instances of surface flooding. As a result, many of the proposed street improvements are predicated on the resolution of this problem.

One solution to this problem, as proposed by a 2006 ASCG Inc. study, was to increase the capacity of the Highland Detention Basin. However, this option is not desirable to local stakeholders and a new request for proposals (RFP) has been issued by the City to study the situation further and recommend alternatives. .

### 3. *Gas, Electric, and Communications*

The Nob Hill Highland area is a fully served area of the city regarding gas and electric utilities as well modern communications technologies. The scope of any infrastructure upgrades will be dictated by normal maintenance, or by future development evaluated on a project by project basis.

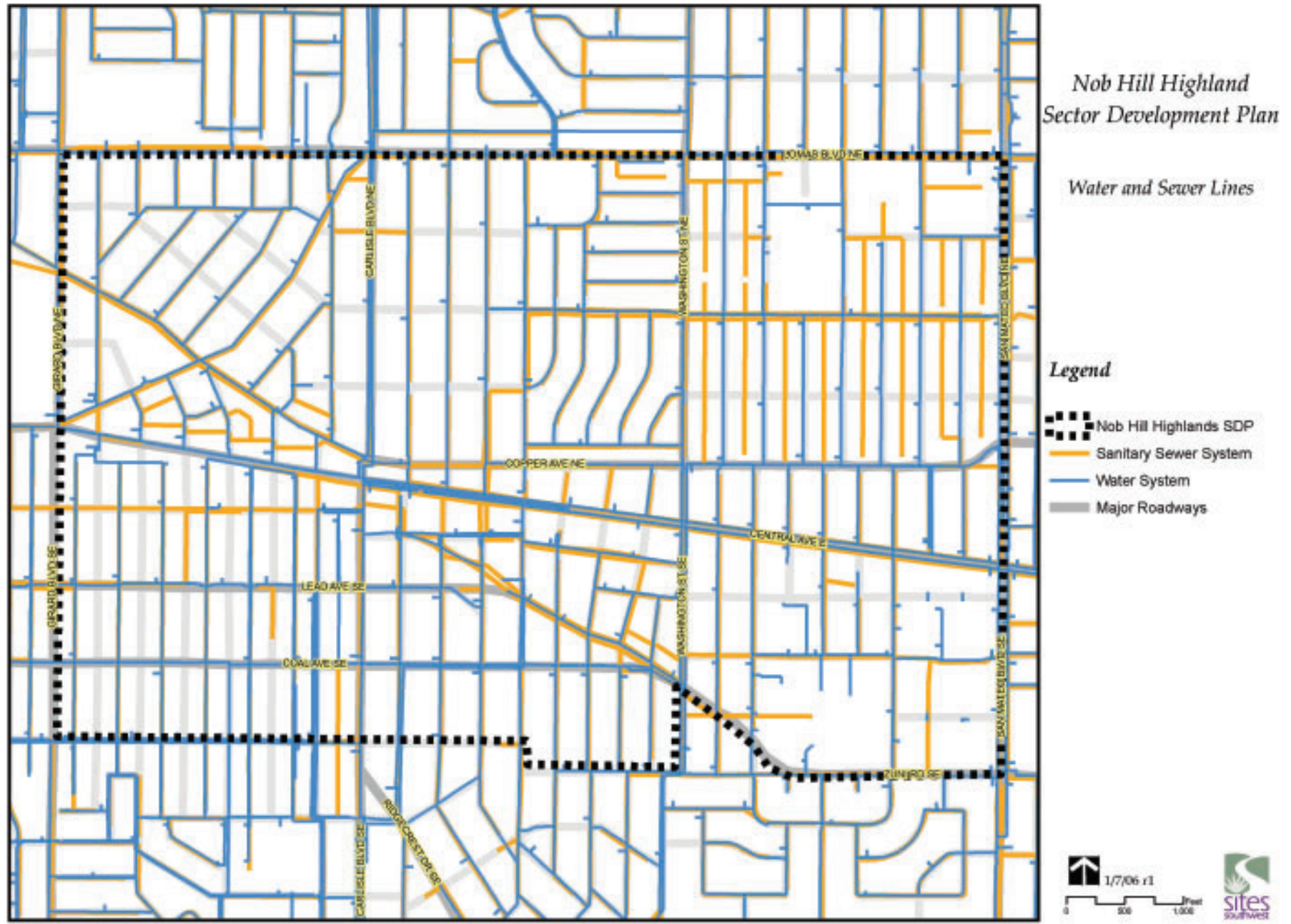


Figure 11: Water and Sewer Lines



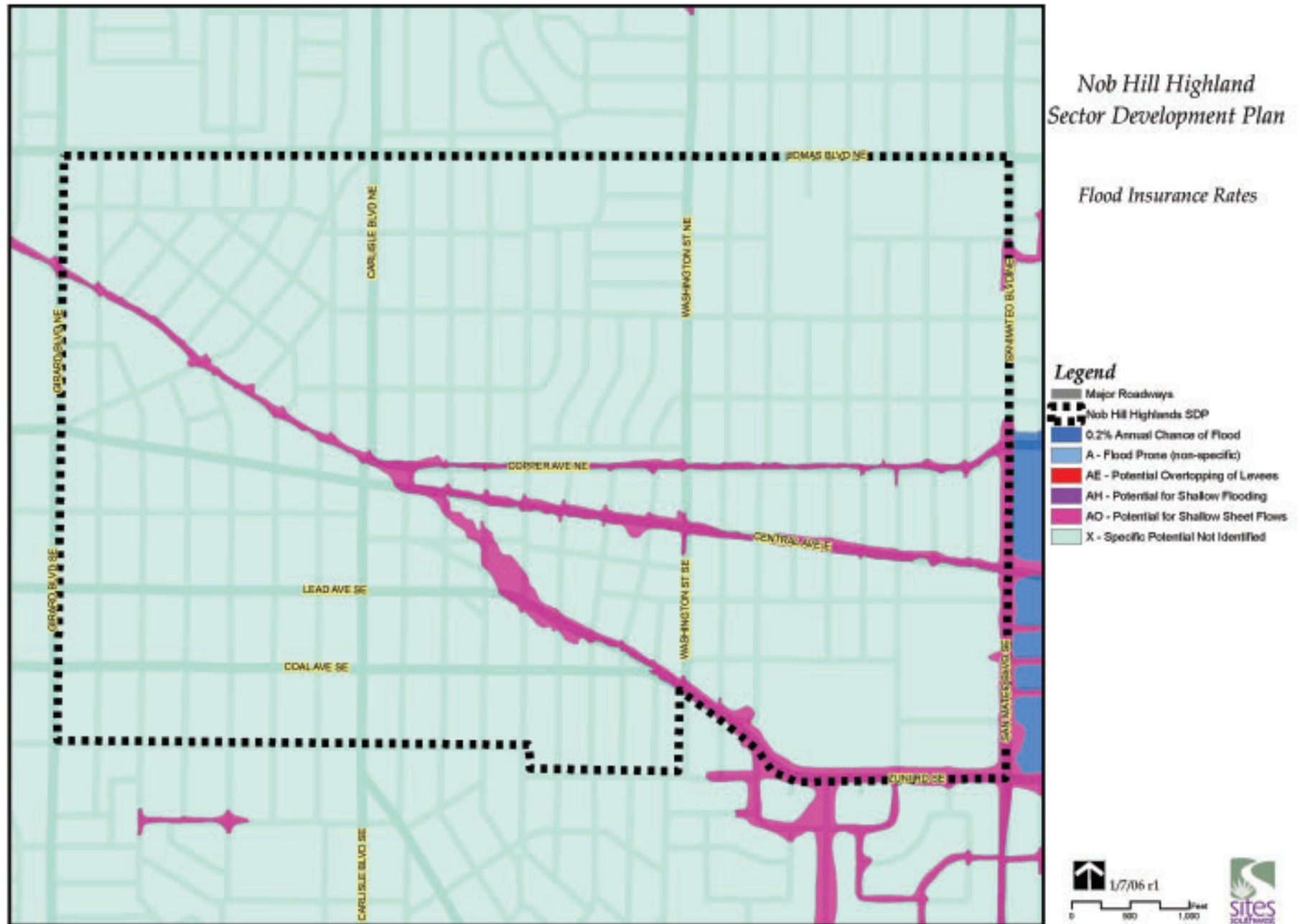


Figure 12: Flood Zones

## I. Economic Vitality

The Nob Hill Highland area is one of Albuquerque's most vibrant economic centers. Economic activity is concentrated along Central Avenue, the area's "Main Street", and falls into three distinct commercial districts. As the Nob Hill Highland Renaissance Corporation outlines, the first is the Route 66 Historic Core from Girard to Carlisle; the second is Emerging Nob Hill from Carlisle to Washington, and the third is the Highland commercial district from Washington to San Mateo. To varying degrees, each commercial center is populated by a diverse array of shops, boutiques, cafés, restaurants and services. The Nob Hill Highland area also has a good balance of other establishments including grocery stores, bars, antique shops, automotive service centers and big box retailers like Wal-mart. Beyond Central Avenue, commercial activity along Lomas and San Mateo also provide local residents with basic services as well as additional services including, pet stores, pharmacies and child care.

Organizations charged with promoting the economic health of the plan area include the Nob Hill Business Association, the Highland Business and Neighborhood Association, and the Nob Hill Highland Renaissance Corporation. All are non-profit, community based organizations designed to foster reinvestment, protect historic resources, and create a safe environment in the area that translates into economic vitality.

Much of the concern of residents and business owners alike is how to improve on the area's existing economic strengths while retaining its character of small-scale, locally owned businesses. However, the Nob Hill Highland area also has more immediate concerns as well. The area along Central from Girard to Carlisle is the heart of Nob Hill. Yet, even along this corridor there is much available space for lease. Additionally, business tenure is a problem. With the exception of key anchor establishments that have been in business for more than ten years in the same spot (Master Cleaners, Red Wing Shoes, and the Flying Star to list a few), many businesses have a high turnover rate creating instability and, in turn, high vacancy. The point is not to list all vacant frontages, but rather to demonstrate that even in the heart of one of the City's most vibrant economic areas vacancies and high turnover rates are real concerns that need to be addressed.

The Highland area has similar problems with vacancy and turnover rates among its area businesses east of Carlisle to San Mateo. This district used to have a predominance of Route 66 road-side motels which in recent years served as havens for criminal activity, or simply stood vacant. Currently, only the Desert Sands remains, as others have been torn down. This leaves a gap in the physical and economic landscape, but also provides a prospect for redevelopment. The Highland Theater has struggled economically in the recent past, but also presents an important opportunity to be an anchor for economic redevelopment in the area.

Other problems as expressed by business owner's are common to both Nob Hill and Highland. Litter removal, a large homeless population and safety are just a few of the recurring problems experienced in the plan area. The Nob Hill Highland area is in need of continued attention and reinvestment if it is to maintain and improve its economic vitality.



## IV. PLAN COMPONENTS

The Nob Hill Highland Sector Development Plan aims to establish a truly multimodal transportation area that emphasizes and supports movement by foot, bicycle, automobile and transit. Many of these elements are already in place. Bus service is extensive (with RapidRide express service in place and the Modern Streetcar coming soon), portions of the Bikeways Master Plan have been implemented (meaning bike lanes and routes are identified), vehicular traffic circulation functions well (although resident concerns regarding Lead and Coal Avenues are considerable), and the Nob Hill Shopping District is considered one of the more pedestrian-friendly areas of the city. Residential areas are, generally speaking, well-lit, have sidewalks with comfortable buffer zones and block sizes that promote walking.

## A. Movement Systems

The goal of this plan with regard to movement systems is to identify areas for improvement and enhancement, establishing the area as exemplary with regards to transportation – a place of truly great streets. Pedestrian circulation issues are of particular importance in this and other sections of the document as the eastern portion of the Plan area continues to develop along the Central Avenue corridor. Emphasizing a pedestrian-oriented approach to design and development will allow the area to extend many of the desired pedestrian-scaled features of Nob Hill eastward. Additionally, attention is paid to enhancing the functionality of the Route 66 Historic Core area, particularly in improving the ease and safety with which pedestrians can cross Central Avenue.

### 1. Pedestrian Circulation

**Goal: Create an environment that facilitates a high-quality, pedestrian-oriented experience.**

Pedestrian mobility has emerged as a major concern for residents and business owners in the Nob Hill/Highland area. The Historic Nob Hill commercial area in particular is often seen as the heart of the city's most pedestrian-friendly district, yet residents have concerns regarding the ease and safety with which they can cross major streets. Additionally, with the establishment of a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area along the Central Avenue Corridor between Carlisle and San Mateo, there is a desire to ensure that new development encourages and emphasizes pedestrian-friendly design. Creating the context for improved mobility within neighborhoods, commercial areas, and the transition zones in between is a major goal of this sector plan. In addition to the goals, guidelines and regulations listed in this section, pedestrian-friendliness permeates other sections of the plan in which elements such as pedestrian-scale design, increased density, and a "park once" approach serve to make the area more walkable.

### Policies

1. The City shall improve the ease and safety of pedestrian crossings at principal arterials (Central, Lead, Coal, and Zuni) and collector streets (Carlisle).
2. The City shall restrict heavy traffic flows on residential streets.
3. The City shall improve sidewalks and enhance pedestrian mobility.
4. The City shall develop alleys as pleasant and useful public spaces and amenities.
5. The City shall address aesthetics and amenities to improve streetscapes and create opportunities to relax, gather and socialize.



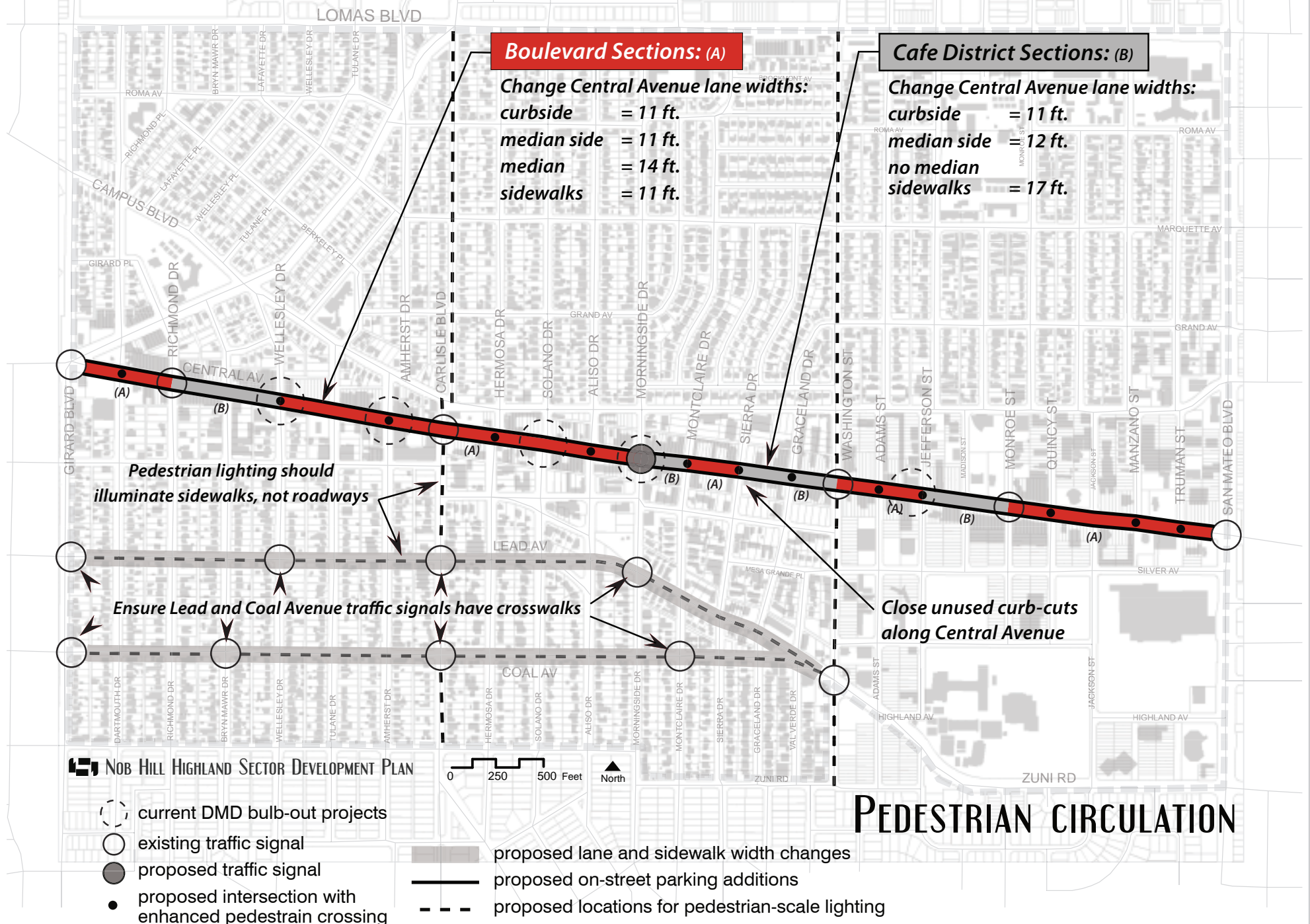


Figure 13: Pedestrian Circulation Recommendations



## Actions

### 1. Improve the ease and safety of pedestrian crossings at principal arterials (Central, Lead, Coal, and Zuni) and collector streets (Carlisle).

Major streets within the plan area that carry significant amounts of traffic are seen as significant impediments to pedestrian mobility and have a potentially negative impact on retail activity. These perceived dangers can result in increased car traffic and potentially isolate neighborhoods from one another in an environment that is otherwise scaled to promote walking. A number of actions are recommended to address this situation while ensuring that traffic volume along these important streets are not negatively impacted or result in unwanted secondary impacts.

Recommended capital projects (Figure 13 Pedestrian Circulation) emphasize changes and modifications to the physical environment that will create the conditions for increased pedestrian comfort and safety. This includes the development of safer and more visible crossing points with uniform spacing throughout the corridor, and the addition of bulbouts where on-street parking exists to reduce the distance pedestrians are required to cross, increase visibility between pedestrians and drivers, and to provide landscaping opportunities. All bulb-outs will include handicapped ramps.

Pedestrian safety crossing Central Avenue should be of paramount importance, but each intersection presents a unique situation including different types of traffic control, varying traffic and pedestrian demands, and different street cross-sections. The location of pedestrian crossing are illustrated in the conceptual streetscape diagram (Figures 14 through 18 Conceptual Streetscape Designs).

The pedestrian crossings in the conceptual streetscape are located based on a criteria to provide high-visibility pedestrian crossings at signalized and unsignalized intersections with a consistent spacing of 300-400 feet. In addition to improving crossing opportunities, the purpose of the uniform and consistent spacing of high-visibility crossings is to make drivers aware that they are traveling through a pedestrian-oriented area and to expect frequent



Wide Streets mean long pedestrian crossing times

pedestrians crossing the street. All crosswalks should provide high-visibility, ladder-style markings.

The conceptual streetscape design includes adding new signalized intersections with high visibility pedestrian crossings spaced so that traffic signals on Central Avenue are spaced approximately 1/4-mile apart. This uniform spacing allows for synchronization of traffic signals to minimize delay to automobile traffic while retaining a consistent



Signalized intersections that are spaced too far apart result in unprotected, mid-block crossings



Bulb-outs improve visibility for both pedestrians and cars



Wide sidewalks promote walkability and provide businesses with opportunities to create transition between inside and outside space.



30-35 mph speed throughout the corridor. All signalized intersections should include pedestrian pushbuttons and pedestrian countdown signal heads.

To further enhance pedestrian crossings and where restricting automobile movements would not cause considerable hardship, the conceptual streetscape recommends pedestrian refuges in the raised median at unsignalized intersection crossings. These refuges would allow pedestrians to concentrate on crossing only one direction of traffic at a time. They are created by extending the median through the intersection. This type of pedestrian refuge is best used where the side streets are offset from one another, a situation which exacerbates pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. Where streetcar stops are proposed in the median of Central Avenue, pedestrians are directed to crossings at the adjacent intersections and use walkways along the median to access the streetcar stop. Appendix D includes prototypical drawings of each type of intersection and pedestrian crossing recommended in the conceptual streetscape.

On Lead and Coal, pedestrian safety will be significantly improved by reducing vehicular traffic to two, one-way lanes; adding a protected, designated commuter bike lane and widening sidewalks to six feet or constructing sidewalks where none currently exist. Improvements should be coordinated with the results of the Wilson & Co. "Taming Lead and Coal" study for the City, in progress as of August 2006. City agencies should also intensify their regular program activities in certain key areas. These include: the enforcement of traffic violations (speeding and failure to stop, especially in areas around schools) enhancing signage to alert

drivers in areas of more intensive pedestrian activity (such as Central Avenue between Girard and Carlisle) and ensuring that designated crossings are maintained, visible and clearly marked.

Many individual projects have already been scoped and funded. See Appendix C for details.

## 2. Restrict heavy traffic flows on residential streets

With residential areas situated close to commercial centers, there is an increased potential that cut-through traffic can negatively impact neighborhoods that are otherwise located along quiet streets. Additionally, limited opportunities for north-south movement within the plan area mean that residential streets sometimes attract heavier than normal traffic flows during peak hours as drivers attempt to find alternate routes.

Recommended program enhancements emphasize the identification of specific problem areas where the intensification of existing City activities can help to reduce heavy traffic flows on residential side streets. These involve the enforcement of traffic laws in key areas (particularly around schools) and the implementation of "speed reducing" strategies (including road constrictions and diverters) to discourage excessive speeds and reduce traffic flows. Some such strategies have been implemented in the Highland area both north and south of Central and should be examined to determine their effectiveness. Identifying the specific areas that warrant changes to the physical environment should take place through a systematic study of the residential areas that takes into account local, area, and City-wide needs of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic. The existing diverters on Silver

Avenue were implemented at a time when the community wanted to keep undesirable traffic from neighborhoods and thus reduce crime. The diverters and police enforcement successfully accomplished their goals. Therefore this plan calls for removing the diverters at Sierra and Montclair Streets. Removal of these barriers supports the recommended pedestrian refuges by allowing vehicles prohibited from turning onto Central Avenue to use alternate routes.



Traffic choker near Zia Elementary helps to slow traffic

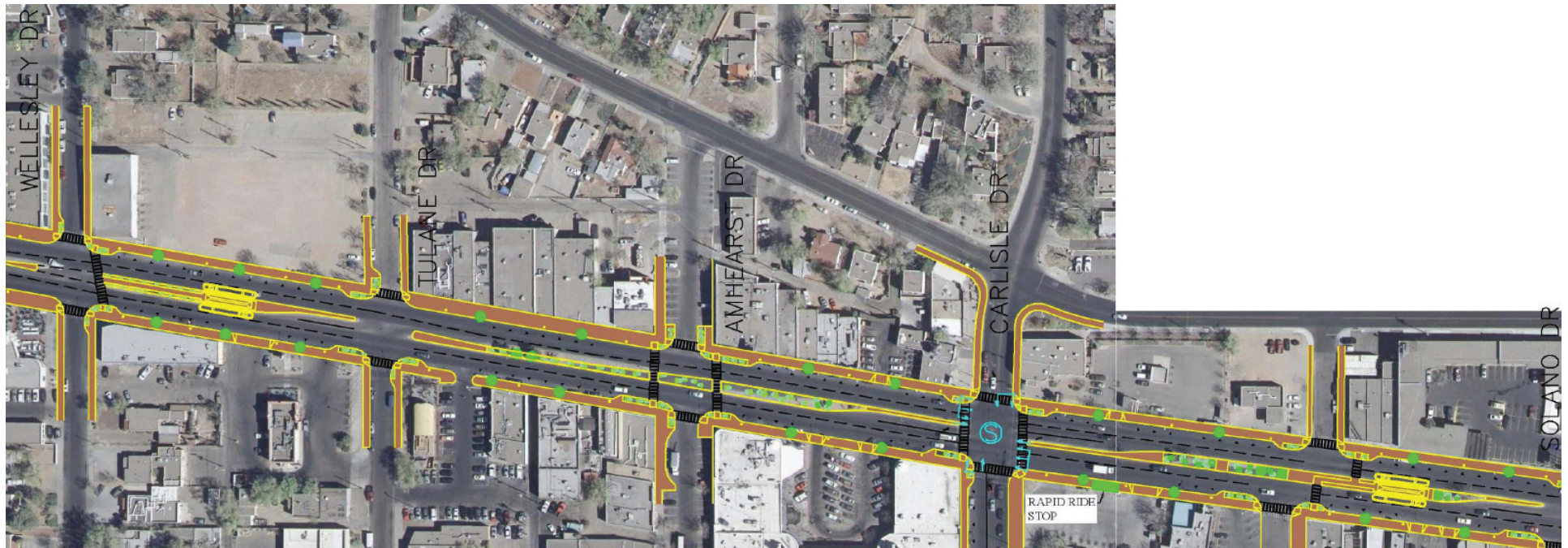


A diverter in the Highland area prevents through-traffic on heavily impacted residential streets

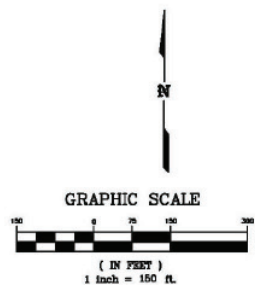


Figure 14: Conceptual Streetscape Design (Girard Blvd. to Wellesley Dr.)





CENTRAL AVENUE CONCEPTUAL STREETScape DESIGN  
(WELLESLEY DR TO HERMOSA DR)

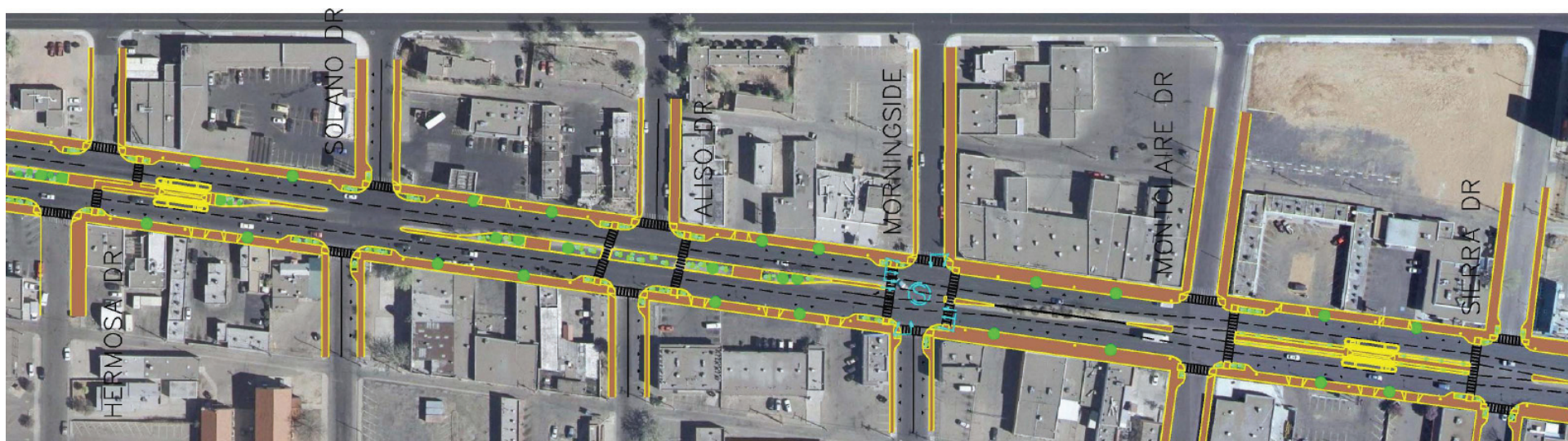


LEGEND

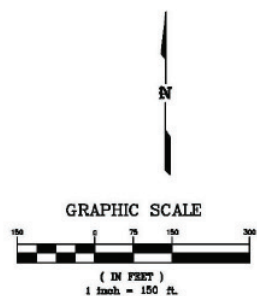
- STREET LIGHT
- STREET TREE IN 4X4' TREEWELL
- Ⓢ TRAFFIC SIGNAL

Figure 15: Conceptual Streetscape Design (Wellesley Dr. to Hermosa Dr.)





CENTRAL AVENUE CONCEPTUAL STREETSCAPE DESIGN  
(HERMOSA DR TO SIERRA DR)

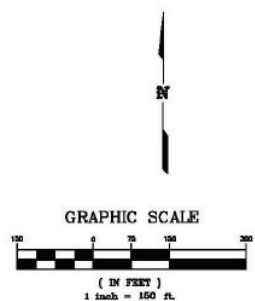
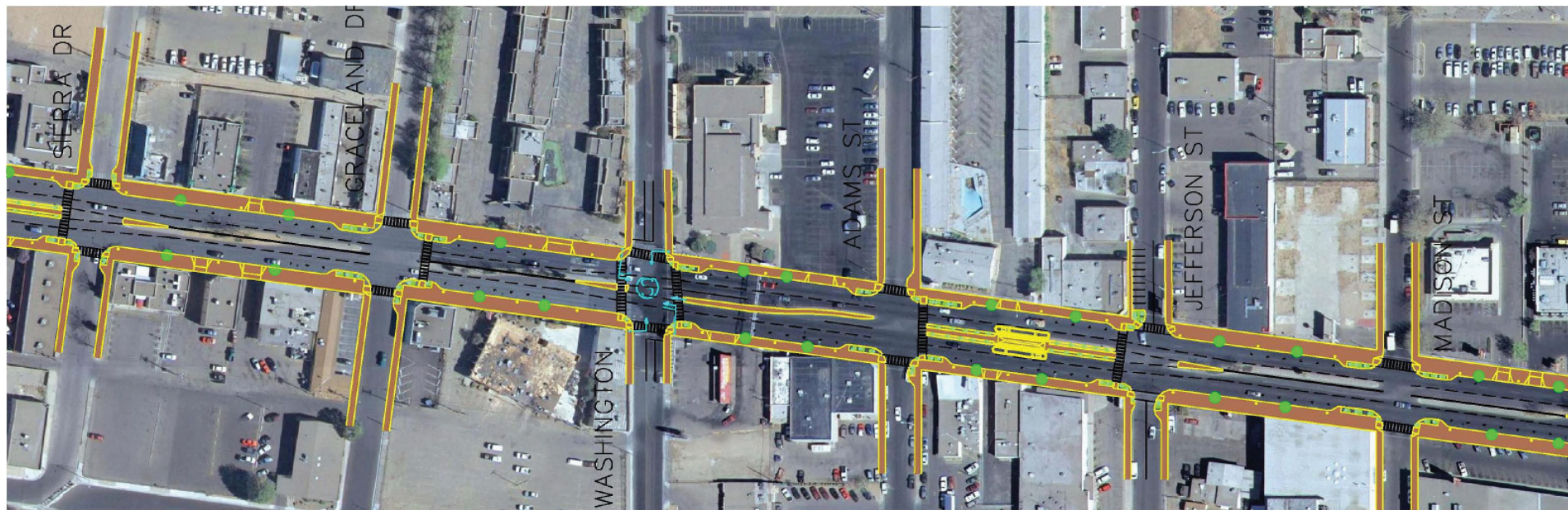


## LEGEND

- STREET LIGHT
- STREET TREE IN 4x4' TREEWELL
- S TRAFFIC SIGNAL

Figure 16: Conceptual Streetscape Design (Hermosa Dr. to Sierra Dr.)





CENTRAL AVENUE CONCEPTUAL STREETScape DESIGN  
(SIERRA DR TO MADISON ST.)

LEGEND

- STREET LIGHT
- STREET TREE IN 4x4' TREEWELL
- Ⓢ TRAFFIC SIGNAL

Figure 17: Conceptual Streetscape Design (Sierra Dr. to Madison St.)



CENTRAL AVENUE CONCEPTUAL STREETScape DESIGN  
(MADISON ST TO SAN MATEO BLVD)

LEGEND

- STREET LIGHT
- STREET TREE IN 4x4' TREEWELL
- Ⓢ TRAFFIC SIGNAL

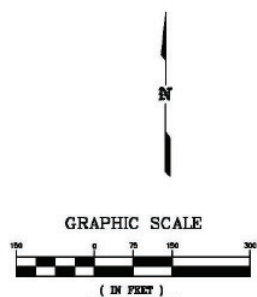


Figure 18: Conceptual Streetscape Design (Madison St. to San Mateo Blvd.)



## 3. Improve sidewalks and enhance pedestrian mobility

Sidewalks are generally too narrow in areas that see intensive pedestrian activity and do not always allow for a smooth, uninterrupted surface, making opportunities for easy movement difficult, particularly for those with mobility impairments. Sidewalks should be smooth, level and free of obstacles to encourage good pedestrian circulation throughout the area. Ensuring routes to and from schools are complete and that sidewalks comply with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act are of particular importance.

There are several recommended capital improvements projects that relate to this goal. First, repair of existing sidewalks, and the completion of contiguous sidewalks are necessary. In addition, sidewalks should be widened throughout the Plan area where possible: along Central Avenue (to a minimum 11 feet and as wide as 17 feet with café districts), along Coal and Lead Avenues (through a conversion of one-way traffic to two lanes), and along Carlisle Blvd. The use of sidewalks can be defined as a series of functional zones

as illustrated in the sidebar diagram (Sidewalk Zones). Social and economic activities such as outdoor seating, placement of public art, public spaces, and transit stops can occur within the furnishings zone.

Furthermore, unused curb-cuts on Central should be closed to create a continuous, level surface, and all curb heights should be the required 6 inches to provide for proper slopes at handicap-accessible curb-cuts. Finally, buffers such as planting strips and on-street parking should be established between pedestrian

ways and street traffic. The sidewalks on Central Avenue should provide canopy trees in treewells spaced about 30 feet apart. To ensure pedestrian safety, pedestrian-scale lighting (that is aimed at the sidewalk rather than the roadway) should be established throughout the Plan area, particularly along Central (placed in between the treewells), Coal, Lead, Carlisle, and Washington.

Some funds for lighting and sidewalks have already been appropriated. See Appendix C for details.



Opposite moving pedestrian traffic can get bottlenecked on narrow sidewalks in Nob Hill



Wide sidewalks allow for outdoor seating



Narrow sidewalks along the eastern portion of Central Avenue provide no buffer from vehicular traffic



Obstacles in sidewalks can make passage difficult, particularly for wheelchair users



Shade trees and awnings can greatly reduce the "heat island" effect

## 4. Develop alleys as pleasant and useful public spaces/amenities

Alleys are found throughout the plan area in both residential and commercial contexts. They provide access to backyards and serve as delivery and trash collection sites for retail areas. These spaces are often neglected, however, and are perceived as unsafe and unsightly. There is a public interest, then, in improving the appearance and enhancing the usefulness of these spaces.

Closing alleyways is generally discouraged as they serve as utility easements, provide vehicular access to a number of retail properties, serve as delivery corridors and provide direct access to the backs of residential properties. Instead, the Plan focuses on strategies to improve the conditions and usefulness of these spaces. Regulatory recommendations focus on requiring windows opening to the alley and allowing future development to face units onto the alleyway. Such an approach can provide an intimacy of scale consistent with smaller units such as flats or mother-in-law quarters while improving perceptions of safety by putting more “eyes” on the space.

As a program enhancement, identifying alleys in heavier-trafficked areas (especially retail areas) that are appropriate for public art can enhance the texture, intrigue and richness of the built environment for residents and visitors alike. They may also provide opportunities to include youth or other segments of the community in building the area’s identity. Other initiatives by resident groups and business associations to improve, enhance, and otherwise beautify alleyways are strongly encouraged as a way improve perceived safety and community pride.

Community members can assist in the maintenance of alleys by identifying problem areas through the City’s Streets Hotline complaint system. They can also work with nonprofit groups to establish community gardens or other community spaces in alleyways.



Residential alley in Highland



Residential alley murals lend vibrancy and indicate a level of care and ownership that can deter unwanted behaviors.



Commercial alley in Nob Hill



Mural on the side of Cowboys and Indians antique on Central Avenue

## 5. Address aesthetics and amenities to improve streetscapes and create opportunities to relax, gather, and socialize

Civic life is greatly enhanced through the creation of opportunities for people to gather and socialize within the public sphere. Creating the right conditions is key to achieving this goal. Recommendations include establishing social spaces in shaded areas and promoting activities that stimulate interaction.

Activities should focus on establishing comfortable and attractive settings at a variety of location types, particularly along the Central Avenue corridor. Existing retail establishments should be encouraged to establish outdoor seating and maximize views into storefronts from the sidewalk. New development should be strongly encouraged to incorporate such elements into their designs from the beginning, to create a mix of activities within and in front of businesses. Proposed zoning regulations will help to realize this goal.

There are several capital projects recommendations that support this goal. First, transit stops should include adequate shade and lighting to encourage use and improve a sense of safety and comfort. Shelters should be installed at locations that can accommodate the width of the shelter and ensure a clear pedestrian thoroughway that conforms to ADA requirements. Bus stops located at bulbouts provide additional width for these amenities. Appendix D provides a diagram of a prototypical bus stop layout. Shade tree plantings should be expanded along both retail and residential streets to create favorable conditions for the use of public spaces. The Plan also encourages the establishment of public plazas or dynamic spaces (such as multi-use, landscaped parking lots) that can easily be transformed into places for public events. The Hiland Theatre and De Anza Motor Lodge are the most likely sites for such development. Lastly, public art can provide identifiable landmarks and opportunities for strangers to engage with one another in a social way.



Retail in the eastern portion of the plan area generally lacks opportunities for stimulating interaction between outdoor and indoor activities

Adapting outdoor spaces in front of retail establishments (even where space is limited) can help intensify pedestrian activity and attract increased business.



Citizen and/or business groups can also identify potential and pursue the commission of artwork through the City's Public Art Program. There are other ways that private businesses, non-profits or ad hoc groups can establish amenities that can enhance the quality of the pedestrian experience, particularly in retail areas. Establishing outdoor seating and attached awnings to retail businesses, for example, can help activate building fronts and add to the excitement of the public sphere. This should be encouraged not only through modifications of existing development, but emphasized as a preferred component of new construction within the plan area.

Some funds for streetscape improvements, pedestrian amenities, and transit stop upgrades have been appropriated. See Appendix C for details.

## *Implementation*

The Plan Implementation section of this document, Section 5, presents a consolidated list of the above recommendations and delineates the City agencies and potential funding sources vital to their realization. Recommendations fall into one of the following categories: Capital Improvements Projects, Program Enhancements, or Community Initiatives; or, they are established through zoning regulations as elaborated in Section 5.B. In some cases, the proposals have been merged into one overarching recommendation (for example, the creation of a Streetscape Schematic Design Plan for Central Avenue, which will encompass many of the suggested pedestrian-related and traffic calming measures), while other recommendations stand alone.



Public art can enhance public life and serve as a catalyst for social interaction



Outdoor seating creates oases, activates storefronts and stimulates more pedestrian activity



## 2. Bicycle Circulation

**Goal: Create a safer, more efficient, network of bike routes, lanes and corridors making bicycling a more viable form of transportation.**

Movement by bicycle throughout the plan area can be thought of in two general ways: local trips for recreation or errands, and commuting to and from work sites. This plan attempts to address the needs of both users by integrating bike lanes, routes and amenities in a manner that elevates the visibility of bicycling as a viable transportation option in the Nob Hill Highland area.

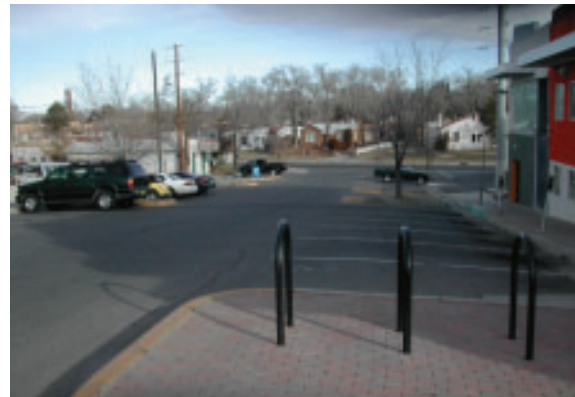
### Policies

1. The City shall improve bicycle accommodation in commercial areas.
2. The City shall provide alternative, clearly marked, safe east/west bike routes and lanes parallel to Central Avenue.
3. The City shall establish safe, fast, north/south bike routes and lanes that serve commuter and recreational riders.

### Actions

#### 1 Improve bicycle accommodation in commercial areas

To promote bicycling as a viable transportation alternative, commercial areas must accommodate bike traffic to, through and around their establishments. Bike racks (which must be secure, visible and safe) should be added to existing commercial areas in compliance with requirements of the zone code and new development should be encouraged to include bike racks as a prominent, visible and convenient feature. Businesses should be encouraged to promote bicycle commuting by their employees and provide longer-term (all day) bike storage that is safe from inclement weather.



Bike racks that are well situated, easy to access and highly visible on Amherst Drive in Nob Hill

#### 2 Provide alternative, clearly marked, safer bike routes parallel to Central Avenue

This plan recommends completing signage and street markings to complete all proposed sections of the bike routes and lanes identified in the Bikeways Master Plan. This includes the extension of bike routes on Silver and Copper, and the completion of proposed bike lanes on Lead, Coal, and Zuni, to provide safe, east-west movement parallel to Central Avenue. To enhance east-west bicycle commuting, this plan recommends modifying Lead and Coal Avenues to two, one-way vehicular lanes to accommodate a designated protected commuter bicycle lane on each street. This is consistent with Environmental Planning Commission findings in a 1997 report on alternatives analyses of a Lead and Coal corridor study and lane reduction demonstration project.



Example of local bike route

Improvements to Lead and Coal should be coordinated with the results of the Wilson & Co. "Taming Lead and Coal" study for the City, in progress as of August 2006.

Additionally, the Bikeways Master Plan should be amended to remove the designation of Central Avenue as a "Bikeways Corridor" as it is deemed unsafe by area residents due to on-street parking, no designated bike lane and high vehicular traffic volumes.

### 3 Establish safe, fast, north-south bike routes that serve commuters and recreational riders

The completion of designated bike lanes on Carlisle between Copper and Lomas as well as on Washington between Central and Zuni will enhance safe, north-south bicycle movement within the plan area. These lanes are designated in the Bikeways Master Plan and simply need to be completed.

### *Implementation*

The recommendations of this plan are shown in Figure 19 (Bicycle Circulation). The Plan Implementation section of this document, Section 5, presents a consolidated list of the above recommendations and delineates the City agencies and potential funding sources vital to their realization. Recommendations fall into one of the following categories: Capital Improvements Projects, Program Enhancements, or Community Initiatives; or, they are established through zoning regulations as elaborated in Section 5.B. In some cases, the proposals have been merged into one overarching recommendation (for example, the creation of a Streetscape Design Master Plan for Central Avenue, which will encompass some issues related to bicycle route signage), while other recommendations stand alone.

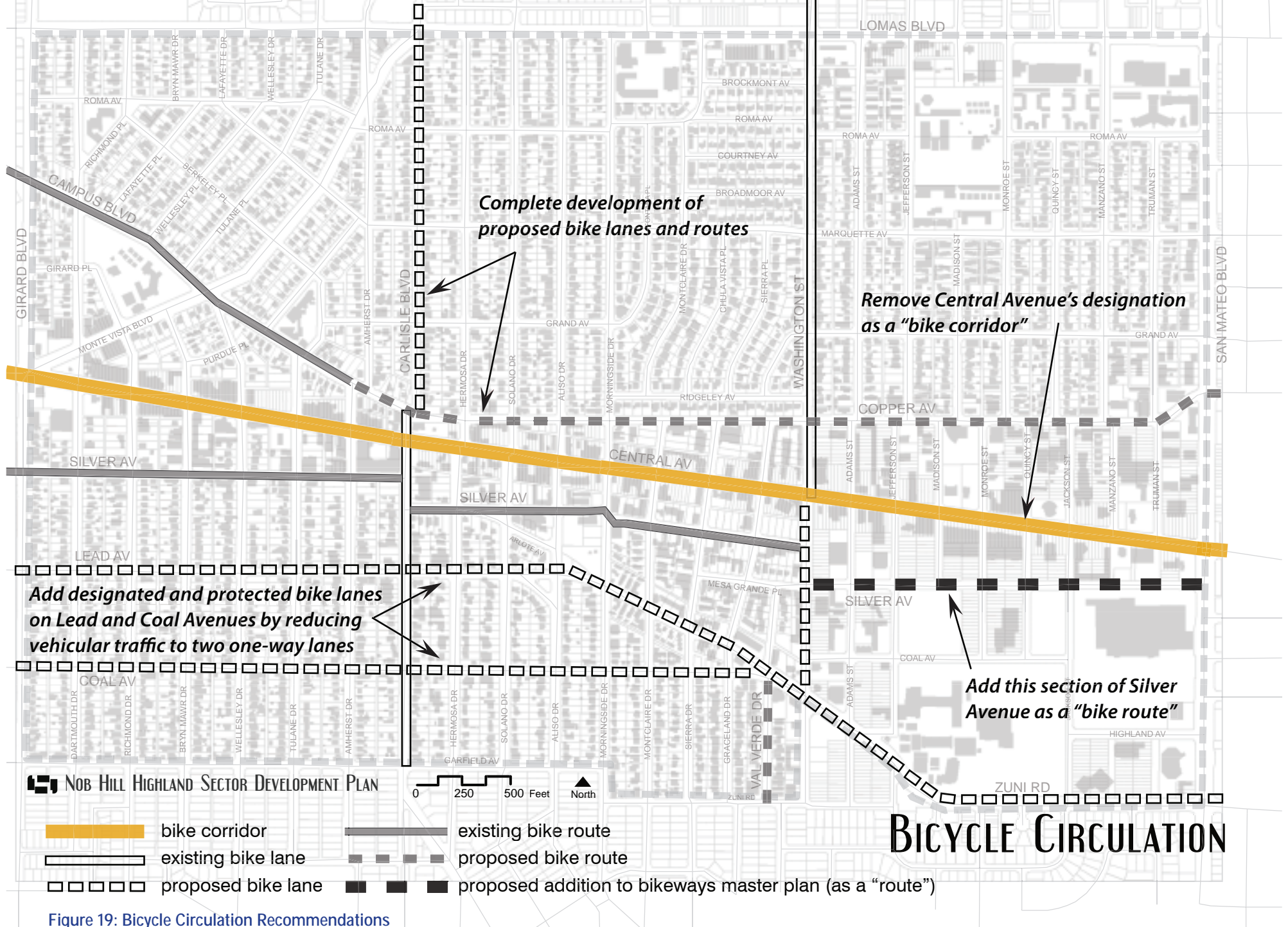


Figure 19: Bicycle Circulation Recommendations





## 3. Vehicular Circulation

**Goal:** Accommodate the flow of automobile traffic through the plan area while integrating it with a pedestrian-oriented, multi-modal, mixed-use, urban environment.

While pedestrian-orientation is a major emphasis of this plan, the importance of maintaining streets that accommodate significant flows of vehicular traffic is essential to the functioning of surrounding areas. This is most evident in the treatment of Central Avenue, which is both a principal arterial and the site of intense pedestrian activity. In addition, Lead and Coal Avenues—three lane, one-way principal arterials—continue to present great concerns to residents. High traffic flows, noise, difficulty in crossing, and a perception of danger have underscored a long process of evaluation by the City of Albuquerque concerning the future of Lead and Coal Avenues. Current modifications to these streets are still being debated and, as portions of them fall outside the Plan area, are not addressed in great detail here. Nevertheless, this Plan does recommend adding a protected commuter bike lane and widening and extending the sidewalks.

### Policies

1. The City shall accommodate the vehicular flow of the Plan area's principal arterials and collector streets while increasing the priority and safety of pedestrians.
2. The City shall reduce speed and volume and through-traffic on residential streets.

### Actions

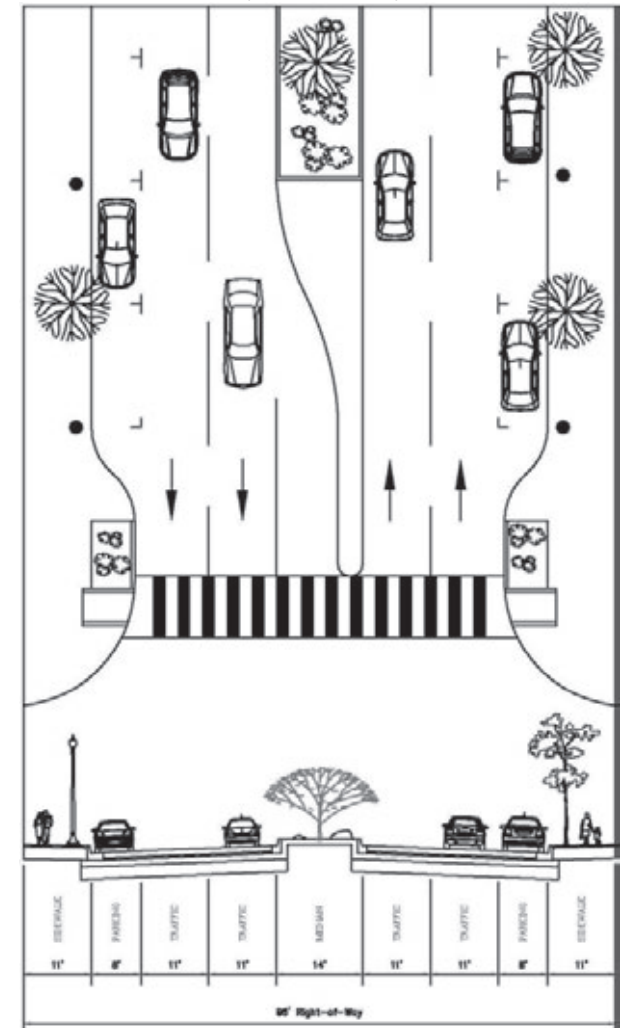
1. Accommodate vehicular flow of Central, Lead, Coal, Zuni and Carlisle Avenues while increasing the priority and safety of pedestrians.

Many of the recommendations that pertain to pedestrian safety also apply to vehicular traffic as they are two halves of the same whole – addressing the interaction between those in vehicles and those on foot. The Plan recommends a number of specific actions to tame traffic speeds and improve driver awareness of pedestrians, while also making physical changes to improve pedestrian safety, as shown in Figure 20 (Vehicular Circulation). It is vital for these improvements to be implemented through a single comprehensive streetscape schematic design project, with attention to coordinated design and implementation, rather than pursuing piecemeal small-scale improvements.

Chief among Plan recommendations are proposed change to the Central Avenue right-of-way. The plan includes two distinct cross-sections.

As indicated in the sidebar diagram (Central Avenue ROW Boulevard Section), the Boulevard section is comprised of a divided four lane street with a 14-foot wide raised landscaped median (providing left turn lanes at intersections or station platforms for future modern streetcar), 11-foot travel lanes, 8-foot parking lanes and 11-foot wide sidewalks. Left turn lanes within the raised median would be 10-foot wide. At streetcar stops, station facilities should be located within the median with high-visibility crossings and a pedestrian refuge access the station, as shown in the sidebar diagram (Central Avenue ROW Streetcar Stop).

Central Avenue Row  
(Boulevard Section)



The 11-foot wide travel lanes will accommodate buses and the proposed modern streetcar.



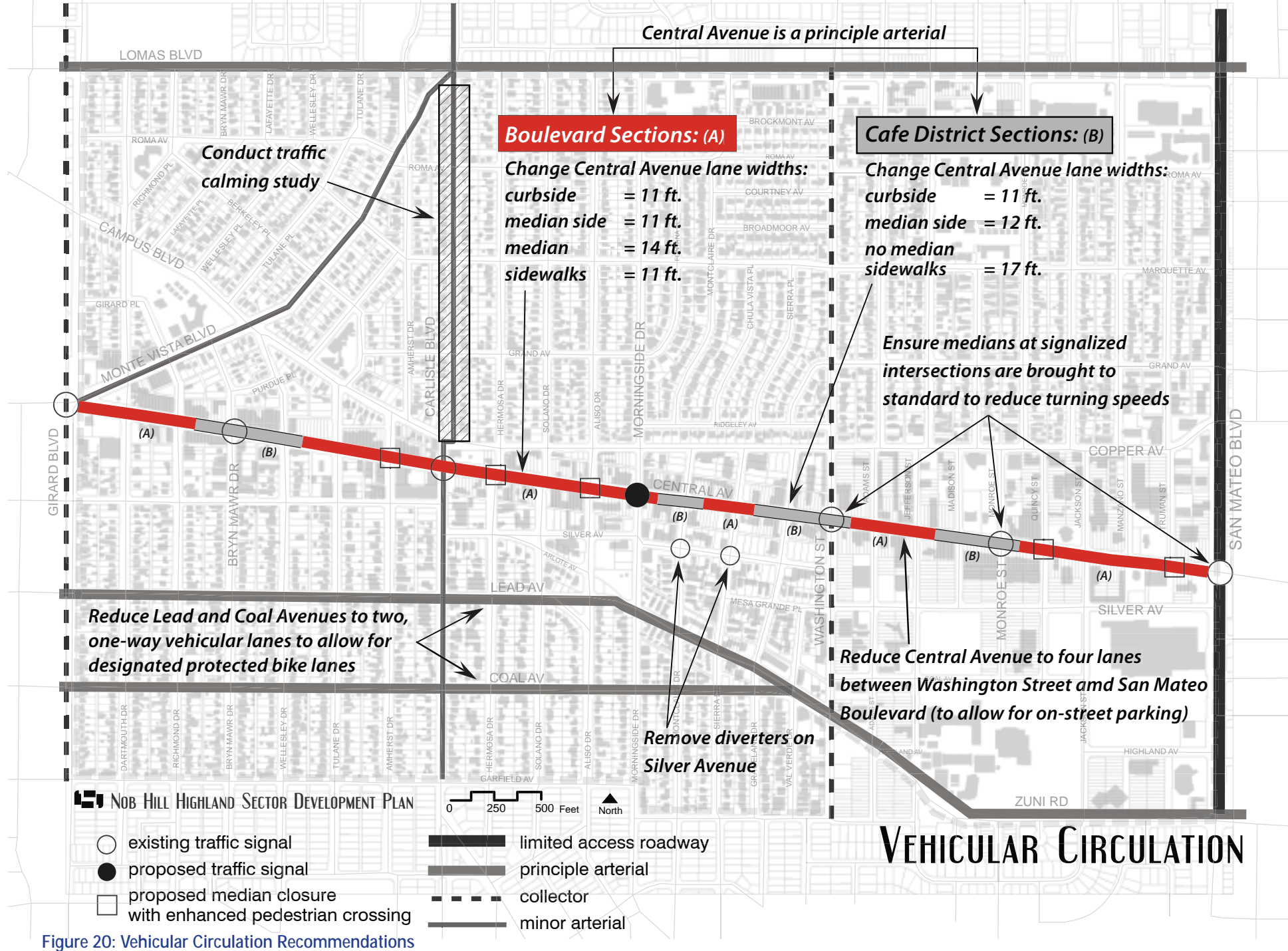


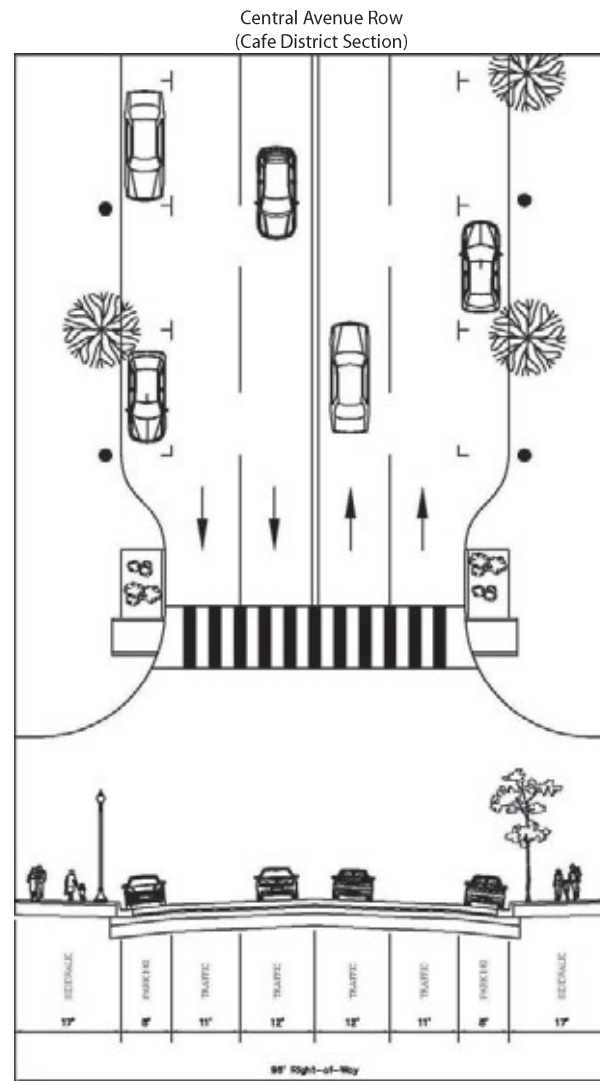
Figure 20: Vehicular Circulation Recommendations



The Café District section comprises an undivided four lane street with no median (and associated elimination of left turn lanes), four travel lanes (12-foot inside and 11-foot outside), 8-foot parking lanes, and 17-foot wide sidewalks, as shown in the sidebar diagram (Central Avenue ROW Café District Section). This cross-section provides wider sidewalks to accommodate more active retail/restaurant-oriented street frontages such as public spaces and outdoor seating. This section is applied to segments of Central Avenue with high concentrations of existing retail and restaurants or segments with high potential for mixed-use redevelopment. These sections are implemented with safe transitions for travel lanes from an undivided section to the divided Boulevard Section as shown in Figures 15 through 18.

Implementation of these sections will require reconstruction of Central Avenue to retain appropriate grades and to retain existing stormwater capacity. Appendix D contains diagrams showing how vehicular movements are accommodated at each intersection with implementation of the conceptual streetscape design.

Intersections represent one of the key locations at which careful attention to the interaction of pedestrians and vehicles should be paid. The Plan recommends ensuring that all intersections along Central have proper standards. Medians that do not extend far enough into the intersection encourage higher speed turning and put pedestrians and other vehicles at risk.



Signage that alerts drivers entering zones of intense pedestrian activity (such as in the Nob Hill Historic Core) and that emphasize the designated speed limit should be added or enhanced along Central Avenue. Additional landscaping, including shade trees, particularly within the median, can help to establish a more intimate space within the roadway and thereby reduce travel speeds.



Street trees and other plantings that create smaller “rooms” within the roadway can help slow traffic in congested areas

On Lead and Coal, reducing vehicular traffic to two, one-way lanes will facilitate steady traffic flow, while slowing traffic to allow for a dedicated, protected commuter bicycle lane and significantly improving pedestrian safety. This intervention should maximize traffic flow and safety benefits, while minimizing the impact on surrounding residential streets that may see increased overflow traffic with more dramatic changes to Lead and Coal.

Improvements to Lead and Coal should be coordinated with the results of the Wilson & Co. “Taming Lead and Coal” study for the City, in progress as of August 2006.

Lastly, the addition of on-street parking on Central between Washington and San Mateo will reduce traffic lanes from six to four and create a buffer between pedestrians and vehicular traffic. The third westbound lane west of San Mateo should be eliminated by converting it to a right-turn lane at Truman Street, and allowing RapidRide buses to stop within this lane. However, this lane reduction could result in increased use of both Silver and Copper, as there are few east-west options for through-traffic along this section of the Plan area. Therefore Silver and Copper Avenues between Washington and San Mateo should be enhanced to carry overflow traffic while maintaining sensitivity to neighboring residential areas.

## 2. Reduce speed and volume of through-traffic on residential streets

Some of the proposed changes to Central Avenue may result in increased traffic flow on residential streets, including (but not limited to) Copper and Silver east of Washington. Future development along the Central Avenue corridor, as it adds density to the area, is also likely to impact traffic volumes in residential areas. Currently, the speed and convenience of cut-through traffic is mitigated by the use of stop signs in the Nob Hill/Southeast Heights areas and by stop signs, diverters and traffic chokers in the Highland area. This plan recommends a thorough traffic assessment of traffic flows on streets in the Nob Hill and Southeast Heights neighborhoods to assess the need and appropriateness of traffic calming measures. Silver Avenue, as a parallel street to Central Avenue, should provide for local circulation and allow drivers to access signalized intersections on Central Avenue. Therefore, the plan calls for removal of the diverters at Sierra and Montclair Streets. In addition, a traffic calming study should be implemented for Carlisle Blvd. between Central and Lomas.

Note: The issue of traffic on Lead and Coal is of great concern to many area residents and has also been the subject of traffic studies and community input since 1987. The Transportation Planning Section of the Albuquerque Public Works Department considered 5 alternative scenarios for changes to Lead and Coal and, in 1997, made final recommendations for changes to the corridor. For the section that falls within the plan area (Girard to San Mateo), the Public Works Department recommends maintaining Lead and Coal as they are today while widening sidewalks to 6 feet (where they exist) and building sidewalks where none exist. However, discussions between residents and the City of Albuquerque are still ongoing.

## Implementation

The Plan Implementation section of this document, Section 5, presents a consolidated list of the above recommendations, and delineates the City agencies and funding sources vital to their realization. Recommendations fall into one of the following categories: Capital Improvements Projects, Program Enhancements, or Community Initiatives; or they are established through zoning regulations, as elaborated in Section 5.B.





## 4. Transit

**Goal: Promote and facilitate the further development of, and focus on, viable transit alternatives.**

With increasing energy prices and roadway congestion, Central Avenue is well positioned to develop as a multi-use corridor that emphasizes multi-modal transportation. The corridor already has extensive bus and RapidRide service, and will accommodate a modern streetcar line in the near future. The streetcars will be adaptable to run in the street with automobile traffic on Central Avenue between Girard and San Mateo as well as in a designated, separated lane in appropriate locations outside of this corridor. The initial phase of fixed rail on Central Avenue will begin in the Old Town/Downtown area and terminate at Carlisle Boulevard with future phased extensions planned. The plan encourages extension of the streetcar line to the proposed Highland Theater Transit Oriented District as soon as possible as part of the second phase. In addition to these two stops, to encourage the use of the streetcar for local as well as longer distance travel along Central Avenue, the plan recommends placing streetcar stops approximately every -mile. This density of streetcar stops may eventually reduce the need for the current number of regular local bus stops. However, in the interim, the regular bus system will continue to operate concurrently; hence, there is a need to establish and develop transit stops, improve existing bus stops and better integrate these various forms of public transit.

Other corridors in the area (Lomas, San Mateo, Washington and Garfield) are also part of the Albuquerque bus route system. With Nob Hill Highland's expanded emphasis on pedestrian design, bike routes, and transit use, the area could revive a Route 66-era vibrancy that declined with the

establishment of the interstate system and increased automobile usage. Therefore, the overall goal of this section is to establish a more developed, visible, and celebrated infrastructure for transit ridership within the plan area.

### Policies

1. The City shall make transit access easy, comfortable, convenient and timely for area residents and visitors.

### Actions

1. **Make transit access easy, comfortable, convenient and timely for area residents and visitors**

Central Avenue is part of the Long Range High Capacity Transit System for the Metropolitan Planning Area. Currently it serves numerous bus routes as well as the RapidRide articulated express bus system. Lastly, an electric streetcar is expected to reach the intersection of Carlisle and Central in its first phase. In order for this emphasis on transit to be successful, transit stops must be established as friendly, shaded, visible, well-lit spaces that convey a feeling of safety.

Therefore, this plan recommends the identification of enhanced transit stations along Central Avenue, as shown in Figure 21 (Transit). Chief among these should be the Nob Hill Historic Core (with the establishment of the electric streetcar stop) and the Hiland Theater which, as an entity of the County of Bernalillo, is eager to serve as the hub of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) (see "Vision for the Future" in Appendix A). TODs encourage a mix of land uses, such as residential, office, shopping, civic uses, and entertainment within easy walking distance from a transit station (typically a 1/4 mile radius around the subject area).

Enhanced transit stations could accommodate bus, rapid ride and modern streetcar lines at one location, concentrating pedestrian activity at on and off-loading sites and emphasizing transit ridership as a preferred alternative to motor vehicles.

Lastly, there are numerous bus stop locations throughout the plan area (on Central, Lead, Coal, Zuni, Lomas, Carlisle and San Mateo), but the majority lack any form of shade, seating or posted schedules. They occur at both mid-block and at street corners and in many cases are located as frequently as every other block. In order to provide basic amenities such as shade and seating, bus



Streetcar running in curb side vehicle lane



Visible, safe transit stop with shade and seating

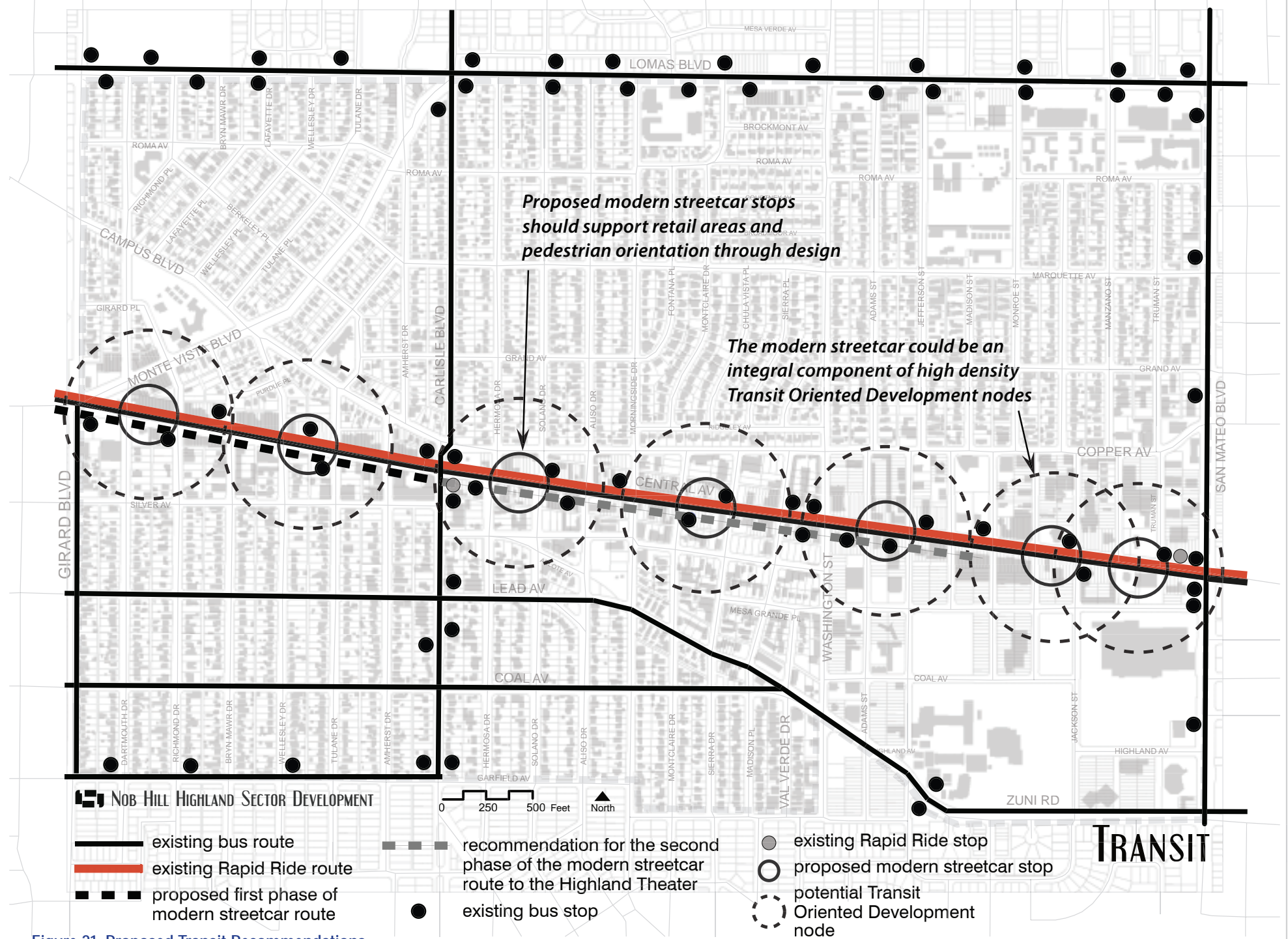


Figure 21: Proposed Transit Recommendations





stops should be consolidated into single stops accommodating more than one bus route, and the proper infrastructure should be established.

## Implementation

The Plan Implementation section of this document, Section 5, presents a consolidated list of the above recommendations and delineates the City agencies and funding sources vital to their realization. Recommendations fall into one of the following categories: Capital Improvements Projects, Program Enhancements, or Community Initiatives; or, they are established through zoning regulations, as elaborated in Section 5.B. In some cases, the proposals have been merged into one overarching recommendation (for example, the creation of a Streetscape Design Master Plan for Central Avenue, which will encompass many of the suggested pedestrian-related and traffic calming measures, as well as the design of transit stops), while other recommendations stand alone.

## 5. Parking

**Goal: Optimize parking choices and modes throughout the Plan Area to facilitate a “park once and walk” approach to parking.**

Providing sufficient parking in the Nob Hill Highland area is key to establishing desired densities and supporting lively commercial zones. The overall approach is to offer a variety of on-street, on-site, and shared parking strategies such that no one approach dominates, providing users with choice and mitigating the negative impacts of numerous large, paved, surface lots. A “park once and walk” approach is emphasized to further highlight and stimulate pedestrian activity and to make more efficient use of land within the plan area. This approach is consistent with the Central-Highland-Upper Nob Hill Master Plan as well as a 2001 parking survey and report focusing on Nob Hill.

Additional information regarding off-street parking as it relates to zoning regulations is addressed in the Implementation section of this plan. This section focuses on strategies to establish shared parking “courts” serving nearby businesses and with the potential for conversion to parking structures wrapped with commercial and/or residential buildings.

## Policies

1. The City shall emphasize and promote a “park once and walk” approach for business nodes using a variety of on-street, off-street, and shared parking strategies.
2. The City shall promote the eventual elimination of surface parking lots in front of businesses and residential developments.
3. The City shall control overflow parking in residential areas.

## Actions

1. Emphasize and promote a “park once” approach for business nodes using a variety of on-street and shared parking strategies.

Providing a variety of parking options helps to serve a wide range of users and further benefits the diverse needs of local businesses. On-street parking can also enhance the pedestrian environment by providing a buffer from busy street traffic. The “park once and walk” approach involves expanding on-street parking options as well as identifying and establishing a series of parking “courts” that are shared by a number of local businesses.



Parking street on Amherst uses perpendicular pull-in parking

On-street parking enhancement focuses on the addition of on-street parking along Central Avenue between Girard and San Mateo, utilizing the proposed intersection bulbouts to establish a consistent parking lane along both sides of the street. Driveways and bus stops will preclude on-street parking in some areas, but the conceptual streetscape design can maximize on-street parking opportunities by marking individual spaces. On-street parking will serve to provide direct access to existing and new development by providing front-door, short-term parking. The plan also calls for



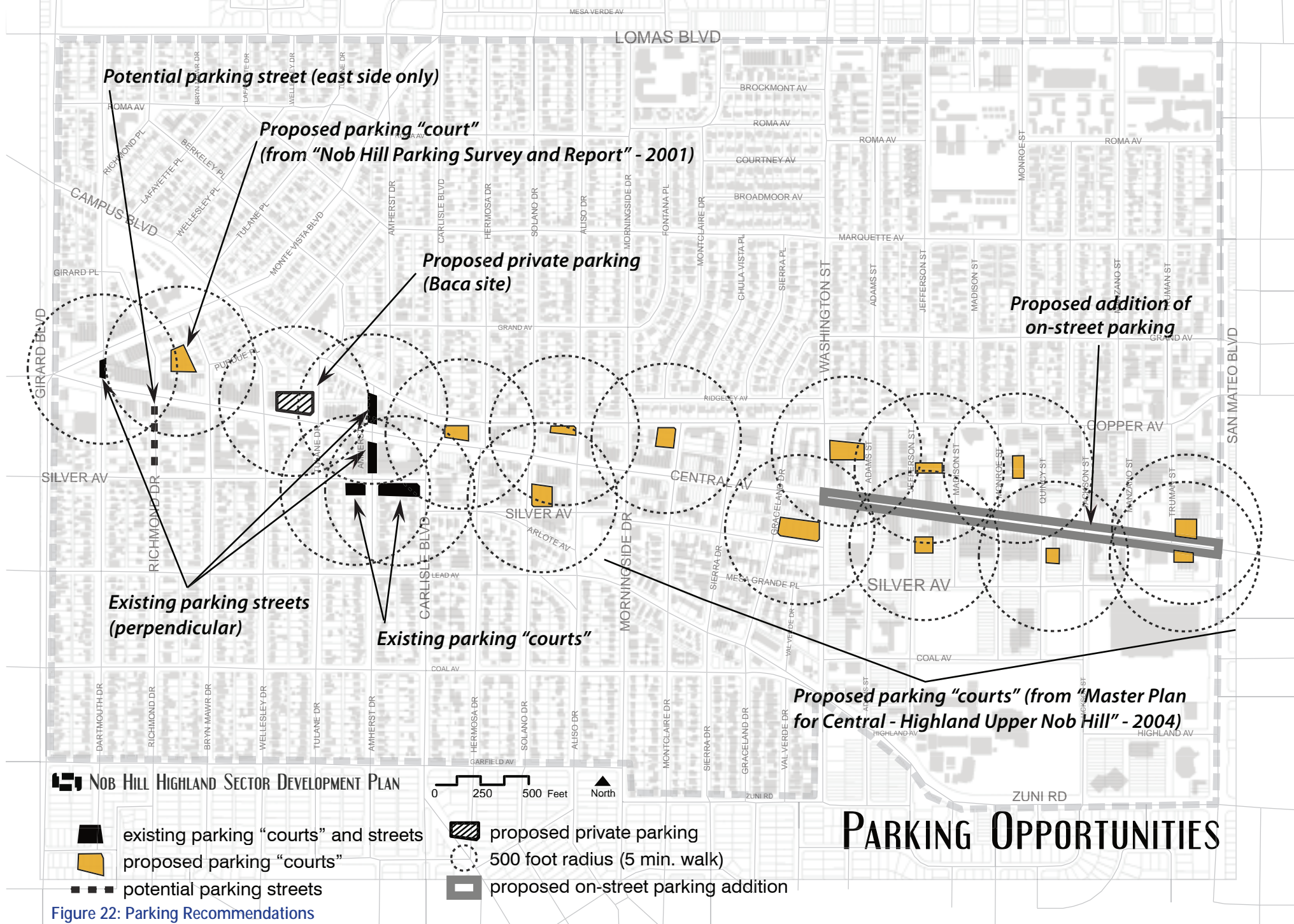


Figure 22: Parking Recommendations



the establishment of perpendicular or angled parking along selected streets within the Nob Hill area where street widths allow. This approach, called “parking streets,” follows on changes made to Amherst in the 100 blocks north and south of Central. In this example, perpendicular parking spaces were established on both sides of the street. In order to identify additional candidates for “parking streets” a right-of-way survey and curb cut inventory needs to be carried out.



No on-street parking on Central between Washington and San Mateo

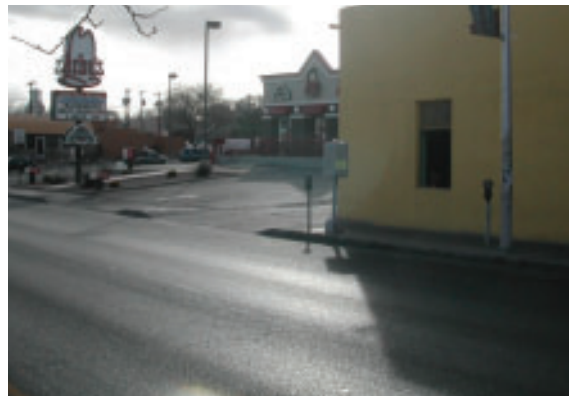
Shared parking courts should be identified and established throughout the area. As a general principle, courts will serve businesses located within a 500 foot radius (about a 2.5 minute walk) and so should be spaced to ensure all commercial areas can be served by such an approach. These unused lots would be located within the 100 blocks north and south of Central and could develop, through public-private partnerships, as parking structures (see Figure 22 Parking). These structures should then be wrapped with commercial and residential uses so as to better integrate with the surrounding built environment.



Shared parking lot behind Nob Hill shopping center

## 2. Eliminate surface parking lots in front of businesses.

The issue of surface parking lots located in front of businesses (especially those along Central Avenue where the establishment of a consistent street wall is a key element of the area’s image) is addressed in more detail within the Community Form section of this report. Generally speaking, large parking lots that face Central Avenue serve to negatively impact the built environment in several ways.



Parking lots in front of businesses disrupt the street wall, contribute to the “heat island” effect and are unsafe for pedestrians

They disrupt the establishment of a consistent street wall, in which all buildings are at or near the property line. They introduce an element of uncertainty for pedestrians as vehicles pull in and out through curb cuts along the sidewalk. They also contribute to the heat island effect by positioning largely unshaded black asphalt within the primary pedestrian zone.

## 3. Control overflow parking in residential areas.

With the establishment of expanded on-street parking along east Central, “parking streets” within the Nob Hill Historic Core and parking “courts” within the Central Avenue corridor, this plan does not currently anticipate overflow parking in residential areas as a significant problem. Should this situation change, parking in residential areas may be controlled through the establishment of permitted parking that allows general parking between 8 am and 5 pm and resident-only use outside of that time frame. Figure 23 (Existing On-Street Parking) provides an inventory of parking spaces within the Nob Hill Plan area.

## Implementation

The Plan Implementation section of this document, Section 5, presents a consolidated list of the above recommendations and delineates the City agencies and funding sources vital to their realization. Recommendations fall into one of the following categories: Capital Improvements Projects, Program Enhancements, or Community Initiatives; or they are established through zoning regulations, as elaborated in Section 5.B.



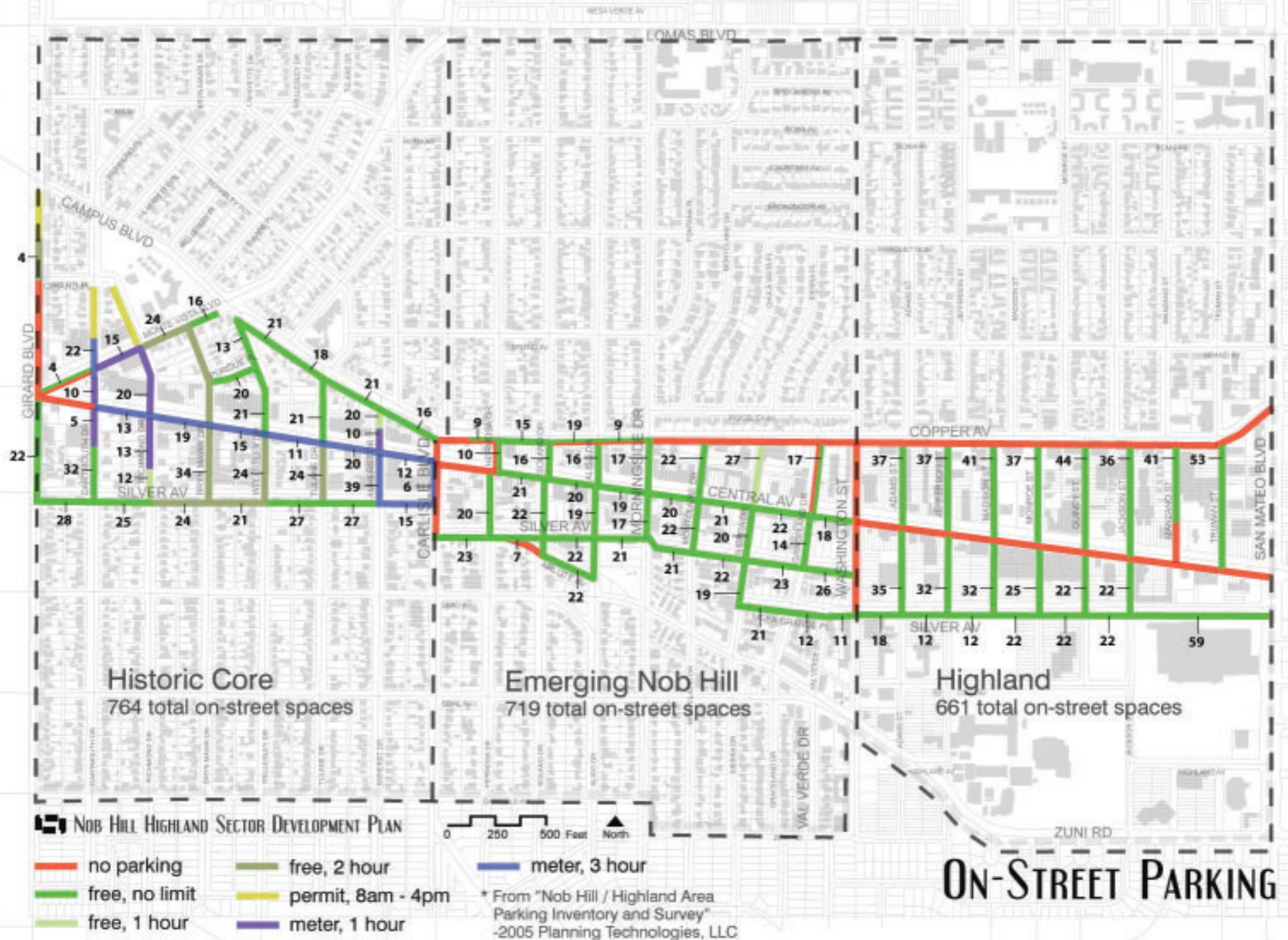


Figure 23: Existing On-Street Parking