

**CITY COUNCIL
OF THE
CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE**

August 6, 2007

FLOOR AMENDMENT NO. _____ TO _____ R-07-185

AMENDMENT SPONSORED BY COUNCILLOR _____

The Nob Hill Highland Sector Development Plan attached to R-07-185 is amended as follows:

1. Delete the "Plan Components / Movement Systems" section on pages 28 through 44; insert in lieu thereof the text and figures attached herewith; and also reinsert the photos and their descriptions on pages 28 through 44 in the appropriate places within the new material.

Renumber subsequent Figures in the Sector Development Plan.

Description.

This amendment includes new material as replacements to the "Movement Systems" portion of the draft Nob Hill Sector Development Plan. Primarily this new material contains more detailed regulations for the design of the streetscape, i.e. the area from façade to façade along Central Avenue, within the stretch of Central from Girard to San Mateo.

X:\share\nob hill\far-07-185Streetscape(1)

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.

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 bulb-outs 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 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 ¼-mile apart. This uniform spacing allows for synchronization of traffic signals to minimize delay to automobile traffic while retaining a consistent 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 find alternate routes.

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.

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 non-profit groups to establish community gardens or other community spaces in alleyways.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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 storm-water 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.

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 ¼-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 ¼ 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 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.

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 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.

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.

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. 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.

Appendix D

Figure D1 – Typical Boulevard Cross Section

Figure D2 – Typical Boulevard Cross Section at Crosswalk

Figure D3 – Typical Boulevard Cross Section at Bulbout

Figure D4 – Typical Café District Cross Section

Figure D5 – Typical Boulevard Cross Section at Streetcar Station

Figure D6 – Intersection Turn Movements

Figure D7 – Intersection Turn Movements (Cont.)

Figure D8 – Prototypical Signalized Intersection

Figure D9 – Prototypical Unsignalized Intersection

Figure D10 – Prototypical Unsignalized Intersection With Median Extension and Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing

Figure D11 – Typical Bus Stop Layout