

E. Urban Design

Goals and Policies for Urban Design

- 1. Balance all types of traffic on and near North Fourth Street: pedestrian, bicycle and automotive for safety, circulation and aesthetics.**
 - a. Shift the existing predominance of corridor automotive traffic to a balance that enables and encourages pedestrian access to and along North Fourth Street.
 - b. Design alternative lane configurations, medians, turning lanes, and accommodation for public transit.
 - c. Design streetscapes that visually and functionally affect the appearance and safety of the street: narrow the driving lanes in order to encourage slower vehicular traffic and lower the field of view by using street trees to distract from the visual clutter of utility poles.

- 2. Improve pedestrian circulation, safety and accessibility**
 - a. Design streetscapes that incorporate strategies for safe pedestrian street crossings, bus stops and continuous, accessible sidewalks.
 - b. Install better and lower-scale lighting to make the street safer and more inviting to nighttime pedestrians.

- 3. Make the street beautiful and exciting to invite both area residents and visitors to shop and play**
 - a. Improve the physical appearance and vibrancy of North Fourth Street with urban design that incorporates sidewalk cafes, public art, sidewalk seating, and other amenities.
 - b. Design building renovations and new structures using setbacks and massing appropriate to desired uses and intensities.
 - c. Implement design standards to encourage quality and consistency of appearance in construction and redevelopment projects.
 - d. As specific projects are funded, develop easement options to expand areas for sidewalk amenities such as outdoor seating areas and public art pieces.
 - e. Address “visual clutter” with landscaping, design guidelines, and consolidation/organization of infrastructure.

- 4. Create a streetscape theme(s) for North Fourth Street**
 - a. To emphasize the uniqueness of North Fourth Street, create a streetscape theme that is consistent from south to north, but with elements or sub-themes specific to each character zone.

- 5. Create opportunities for “sequential shopping”**
 - a. Encourage parking and retail locations that enable shoppers to park once and visit several stores.

- 6. Build flexibility into urban design**
 - a. Develop streetscape designs that can be phased as capital funding becomes available.
 - b. Develop streetscape designs that can be adapted to the unique needs of each block.
 - c. Design streetscapes to address challenges of narrow rights-of-way, while ensuring walkability.

Urban Design Findings and Issues

Earlier sections of this study detail the functional, business and aesthetic conditions of North Fourth Street that hinder its ability to serve the community’s needs and wishes for an attractive and vibrant place to shop and visit. The street is currently dominated by automobile traffic, much of it “through” traffic. Few travelers actually stop and shop on North Fourth Street.

Walking is nearly impossible in some areas and unpleasant in many others. Existing sidewalks often lack continuity and in many cases do not meet current ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards.

Some stretches of North 4th Street offer little visual appeal and lack a cohesive theme/identity. Sidewalks are often cluttered with “objects”: signs, poles, hydrants, etc. Circulation difficulties, combined with a lack of “destinations” and “sequential shopping,” deter pedestrian activity. There is too little shade, which further deters walking.

Corridor-wide Urban Design Recommendations

Streetscape

- Construct landscaped medians as recommended by character zone descriptions.
- As right-of-way (R.O.W.) to be reconstructed is programmed, waterlines should be extended to sidewalk areas, land adjacent to highway ramps and existing medians to allow for eventual landscape irrigation.
- Install 12'-15' pedestrian lighting along the street to encourage pedestrian circulation and complement the overall design.
- Install benches, shade (trees and/or shelters) and trash receptacles at bus stops.
- Install bike racks at wide sidewalk areas wherever possible.
- R.O.W. seating, bus shelters, lamp fixtures and signs shall be uniform up and down the corridor, but may be specially configured within each character zone to better reflect its distinct qualities.
- Small public art that can be appreciated at close range by pedestrians may be incorporated at high profile locations (intersections, civic uses, shopping districts) where space is adequate.
- Reduction, relocation, or especially consolidation of telephone/power poles is highly recommended. In pedestrian-heavy zones, underground utility lines are encouraged where street reconstruction is underway.
- Coordinate with other streetscape and beautification projects that occur on east-west streets and highways that cross North Fourth Street in order to maximize aesthetic and functional impacts for the area.

Circulation

- Provide continuous sidewalks that are ADA-accessible throughout the redevelopment area.
- Improve the sidewalk character with pedestrian amenities. Amenities may include: shade trees, other soft and hard landscaping, benches, pedestrian scale lighting, trash receptacles and the like.
- Provide access along side streets to the trail system adjacent to Second Street.
- Where R.O.W. is adequate, new sidewalks should be set back a minimum of three to five feet from back of curb. This setback area — the parkway — should be landscaped.
- Consolidate curb cuts along the street and require cross access and parking agreements for lots shared by adjacent businesses.

Signage/Special Features

- Develop signage with a special theme for the entire corridor, with special elements unique to each character zone.

Urban Design Standards in Zoning

The Urban Design component of this study provided guidance needed to make zoning change recommendations for the corridor. Urban design elements covered by zoning are presented in section **4c. Zoning** of this document and include:

- street orientation
- setbacks - minimum to maximum
- building articulation
- fenestration
- signage: on- and off-premise
- landscaping
- building materials
- fencing materials.

Each zone described in this study has unique urban design standards with different requirements.

Other Recommended Regulations and Standards Governing Adjacent Private Development:

Landscape

- For all new development, landscape plant material and associated irrigation shall conform to the standards outlined in the Albuquerque Code of Ordinances. Applicable sections include (but are not limited to):

Chapter 6 – Article 1, Part 1: Water Conservation
Landscaping and Water Waste

Chapter 6 – Article 6: Trees, Vegetation and Landscaping

Chapter 9 – Article 12: Pollen Control

Chapter 14 – Article 16, Part 3, section 10 (14-16-3-10):
Landscaping Regulations

Parking

- Encourage parking on the side and rear of lots rather than in the front.
- Encourage adjacent businesses to jointly develop or redevelop parking lots
- Encourage parking lots sited to enable people to park once and visit several businesses.

Illustrations of Urban Design Policies and Standards

This section of the study contains annotated illustrations of urban design approaches that are applicable to the redevelopment of North Fourth Street.

This illustration is applicable to the two-laned portions of North Fourth Street.



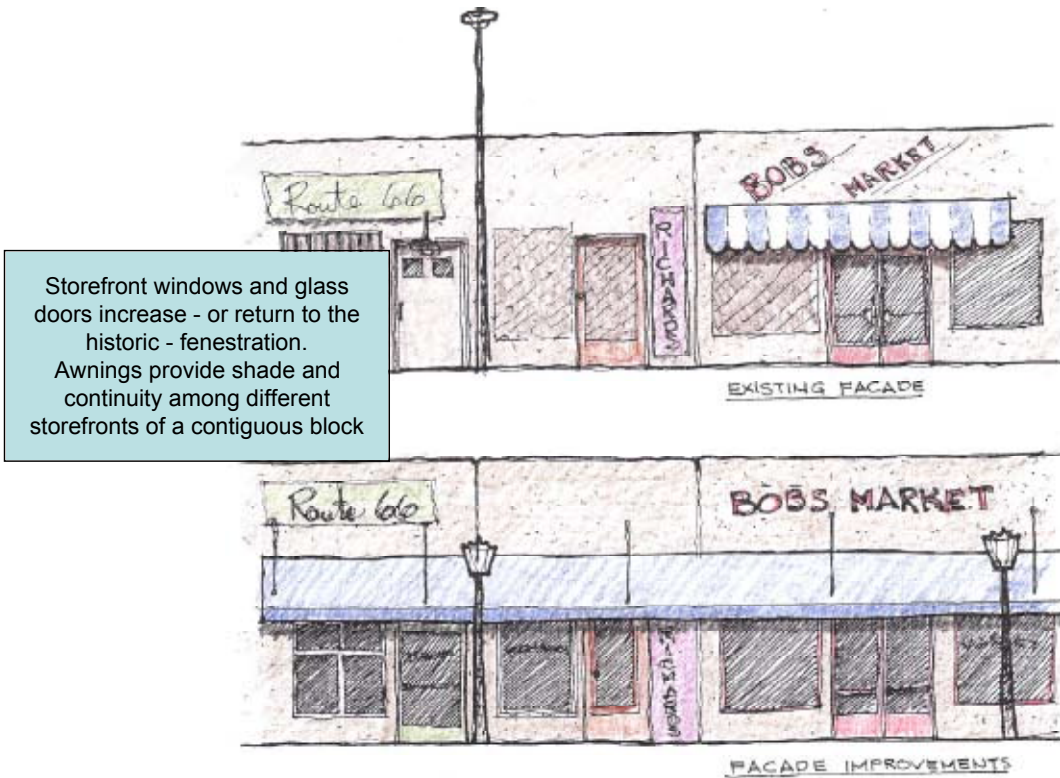
North Fourth Street: Entire Length



North Fourth Street Study: Rank III Corridor Plan

Review Draft - 6/06

North Fourth Street - Entire Length



Storefront windows and glass doors increase - or return to the historic - fenestration. Awnings provide shade and continuity among different storefronts of a contiguous block

Live-work, or "flex" units encourage residents to work in their neighborhoods and increase business opportunities by locating housing near commercial developments. They are typically condo units with office and/or shop located at street level and living quarters above.



This example illustrates stepping back of upper floors to soften the massing impact of a multi-story building, while allowing for balconies and more outdoor space.

North Fourth Street - Entire Length



Mixed use block with retail on the first floor and tall "loft" residential units on second floor. Massing is broken up by differing materials, height, and front setbacks.

Corner is open space with wide sidewalk, planting and restaurant seating.

Arched arcade area provides shaded public space for pedestrians, allowing for a planting space in the sidewalk R.O.W.



Stepped back upper stories provide diversity in massing, decrease in street enclosure and more solar access.

Front façade is modulated. No single wall is very long so to appear monolithic. The main entrance is on N. 4th Street.

Parking on side rather than in front. One or two curb-cuts give access to parking lot.

Landscape strip between curb and sidewalk provides separation between pedestrians and vehicles. On-street parking is highly accessible.

Character Zones

The North Fourth Street Corridor study area runs more than four miles from Lomas Boulevard NW to the city limits at Solar Road NW. To manage such a long corridor, the study area has been divided into “Character Zones.” Character Zones are continuous stretches of the study area displaying qualities that differentiate them from the rest of the corridor. Elements that influence the Character Zone divisions include, but are not limited to, the number of residences per zone, the types of commercial opportunities in the zone, the existence of vacant or underutilized properties, traffic volumes and circulation issues, and the existence of civic amenities (parks, wide or narrow sidewalks, trails, plazas, etc.) Descriptions of each Character Zone, coupled with illustrations of typical street cross-sections and recommended enhancements, begin on the following page.