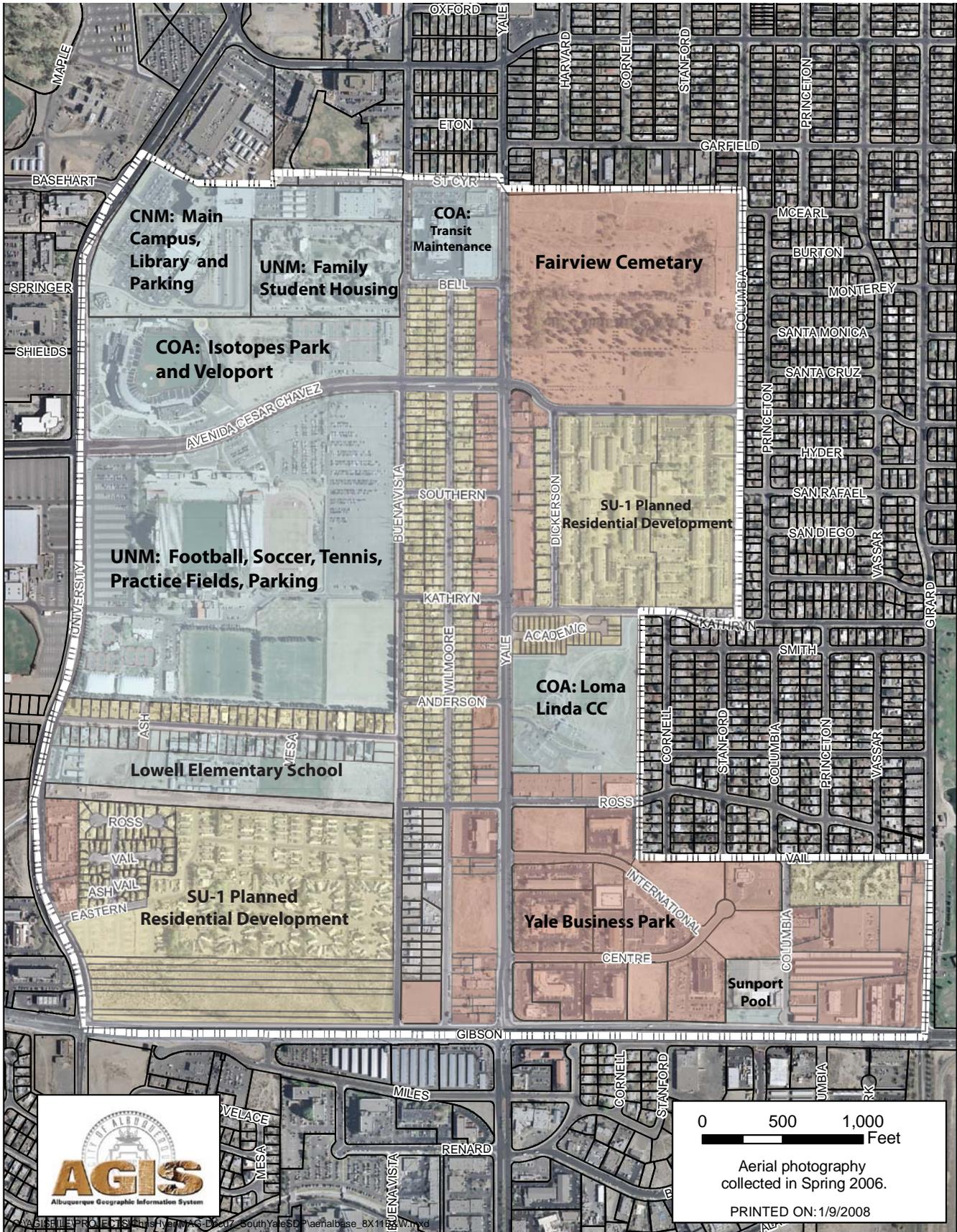


## CHAPTER SIX

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# A r e a C h a r a c t e r a n d C o n d i t i o n s



South Yale Sector Development Plan Area

## 1.0 Area Overview

The South Yale Sector Development includes approximately 519 acres and generally covers the area north of Gibson Boulevard SE, east of University Boulevard, south of St. Cyr Ave. and generally west of Columbia Drive. The Plan's boundary includes the Clayton Heights neighborhood on the west side of Yale Boulevard and a portion of the Victory Hills Neighborhood on the east. The area is within close proximity to UNM, Nob Hill, the Ridgecrest Neighborhoods, Downtown and the Albuquerque Sunport. The South Yale corridor is an important transportation route between the Sunport and the University of New Mexico area. Yet despite its strategic location, the area suffers from stagnant commercial development characterized by large areas of land with underutilized commercial zoning.

## 2.0 Public and Institutionally Held Land

The sector plan area is unique in that it encompasses large areas of land held by public institutions and local government. Of the 519 acres contained within the Sector Plan, a combined 180 acres (35%) are held by the City of Albuquerque, the University of New Mexico, CNM and Albuquerque Public Schools.

### 2.1 University of New Mexico, South Campus

The University of New Mexico holds approximately 98 acres within the Plan area, which includes Family-Student housing on Buena Vista, the football stadium, soccer fields, indoor practice fields and associated parking lots. According to UNM's South Campus Masterplan (See page 82 for more details on the masterplan) the University has plans to grow the existing football stadium, create a more campus-like atmosphere within the stadium and adjacent practice area and work to increase the safety for pedestrian circulation in the South Campus area.



*UNM Football Stadium*

### 2.2 Central New Mexico College

A large portion, 15 acres, of CNM's (formerly TVI) main campus also lies within the plan boundary. Approximately 20,000 students attend the main campus which has over 1,000 employees. CNM is in the process of expanding its campus and enrollment in the area. They recently acquisitional APS administration property across University and the APS-owned baseball field behind the Heights Community Center, where they are building a 100,000 sf student services building. CNM has also entered into a short term lease for a portion of the City of Albuquerque Veloport property which is has improved for student parking. The main campus will be undergoing a major master planning effort beginning in 2009.



*CNM Main Campus*

### 2.3 City of Albuquerque

City of Albuquerque properties cover approximately 50 acres and include: Isotopes Park, home to the City's Triple A Baseball team; the City Veloport which includes the new BMX facility and vacant land for a proposed Velodrome; the Yale Transit Facility; the Sunport Pool; and, the Loma Linda Community Center and Korean War Veteran Memorial Park located on the site of the former Cactus drive-in. The 14 acre site is also home to the City's first 100% accessible playground structure, the Korean War memorial and a community garden. Large portions of the community center land remain undeveloped with no proposed plans currently under consideration. The eastern portion of the site has environmental issues and an abandoned alley. Sunport Pool, located off Gibson and Columbia, was the City's first public pool. In addition to an outdoor pool, the facility is in possession of tennis courts and basketball courts which are in need of renovation.



*Award winning ADA playground at Loma Linda Community Center*

### 2.4 Albuquerque Public Schools

APS holds several parcels covering roughly 14 acres of land within the Plan area, including Lowell Elementary School which is currently close to capacity. In the next few years, Lowell will also be receiving children from the new Mesa



*Lowell Elementary School*

## CHAPTER SIX

### Area Character and Conditions



*APS Charter Schools along Ross*



*Isotopes Park*



*City Veloport's BMX Facility*



*Single family homes in the Clayton Heights neighborhood*



*Single family house in the Clayton Heights neighborhood*



*Multi-family units in the Clayton Heights neighborhood*

del Sol development until their population warrants a new school on the Mesa. Adjacent APS land is used for administrative use, storage, and parking. APS has plans to develop much of its vacant land in the area in order to expand the school. In addition, three APS charter schools are located at Ross and Yale: the Cesar Chavez Community School, a high school, provides afternoon & evening classes for non-traditional working students; La Resolana Leadership Academy, a junior high school, provides a mix of traditional and computer assisted instruction; and, the Ralph J. Bunche Academy, a k-7 school, provides a multicultural curriculum based on strong parental support and community partnerships.

#### 2.5 Community Concerns related to Event Venues

The large sports and entertainment related venues have both negative and positive impacts on South Yale neighborhoods and businesses. Large areas of land dedicated to parking have a strong physical influence on the area's appearance, while parking by fans and tailgaters for UNM and City events overflows into the adjacent residential community, often wreaking traffic havoc. UNM game day activities have a strong impact on the neighboring residential areas, causing traffic congestion, illegal parking, excessive trash, and overnight camping and UNM's park and shuttle service operates every 15 minutes daily on residential streets during the school year. The City's BMX facility, which opened in 2006, has been received with mixed feelings by the community. Originally sited further to the west, residents state that the new location is noisy, introduces dirt and pollution into area homes.

At the same time, as one of Albuquerque's primary sports and event venue locations, significant numbers of visitors come to the area on a regular basis, unleashing a still un-captured market of consumers for future retail and restaurant services. With continued City and UNM improvements and investment, the area should continue to draw significant populations.

#### 3.0 Privately Held Land

##### 3.1 Analysis of Residentially Zoned Land

The Sector Plan boundary includes a comparatively smaller area of residentially zoned land, roughly 150 acres comprised of approximately 50 acres of single family zoning and 100 acres of multifamily zoning. The residential areas consist primarily of the Clayton Heights neighborhood located on the west side of Yale which is mostly built out with 1950's single family homes and a few multi-family apartments and the large multifamily parcels located along Santa Clara and at Gibson.

The housing in the Clayton Heights Neighborhood is mixed, with a larger portion of single-family residential, a smaller concentrated mix of parcels zoned R-2, R-3, RG, and RT on Wilmore and Sunshine Terrace, a mobile home park, University Village, zoned SU-1 Planned Residential Development and the large undeveloped SU-1 Planned Residential Development site at Gibson. The Gibson tracts received EPC site plan approval in 2006 for 240 du and a 1.7 acre retail component.

The majority of the Plan area's single family residential land is developed, with a few vacant parcels located in the most southern block of Buena Vista Drive and some scattered lots along Sunshine Terrace Avenue. The majority of the residential development is located on narrow, deep lots, with the majority of the blocks oriented to the east/west. However, along Sunshine Terrace Avenue the orientation shifts to north/south. A subdivision adjacent to University Blvd., Lomas Del Cielo, built in the 1980's, is developed in a cul-de-sac form. The community has voiced concerns about the upkeep of properties, particularly related to landscaping and walls, as well as front yards being used as driveways despite the City's ordinance banning such use.

Only a small portion of the Victory Hills residential neighborhood lies within the designated boundary and is primarily multi-family. A small development adja-

cent to Loma Linda Community Center consists of a single street of duplexes on land zoned C-1 and O-1. An older, multi-family housing complex on 30 acres and zoned SU-1 PRD is located along Santa Clara. It currently consists of three parcels with 566 dwelling units. The site includes surface parking, two-story apartment buildings and a small playground. A block of four-plexes is located along Dickerson on land zoned C-2.

### 3.2 Analysis of Commercially Zoned Land

Commercial development in the area is limited and disjointed. A result of the significant lack of commercial development in the Sector Plan boundary is that area residents must drive to other areas for restaurants, stores and other neighborhood services. Much of the land zoned for commercial use within the Plan area is located along Yale Boulevard, but many of these C-2 zoned parcels have never been developed and remain vacant. These lots are narrow and deep with no alley access. The southern portion of Yale toward Gibson, in the SU-1 zoned Yale Business Park, has seen recent development with the introduction of several national hotel chains and an Applebee's frequented by airport travelers as well as area residents and local work force.

One of the issues with the current retail development pattern along south Yale is the abundance of similar services and the lack of retail diversity. Within the seven block section of Yale included in the Plan area, are three convenience stores, several auto repair shops and related services. Most residents in the area express a need for more restaurants, neighborhood services and post-event entertainment venues. Some unique businesses in the area include a Mosque, an upscale clothing retail store, Quarter's restaurant and liquor store, Project Share and the Yale Art Center. The southern portion of Yale, between Ross and Gibson, has developed as a hotel/office node with two new hotels planned for the large vacant parcels along Yale, south of Ross.

Other pockets of commercial land exist within the Plan boundary. A small commercial area is located at the northwest corner of Girard and Gibson. Currently this area is zoned C-3 and includes a business park, self storage units, apartment complexes and a vacant grocery store. Another area of commercial land is located along Gibson in the south west portion of the Plan area. The majority of this land is currently vacant. A large portion of the land, which was approved for residential development and a small commercial component in 2006, is now under construction.

The area bounded by Yale/Gibson/Columbia/Ross, the Yale Business Park, is zoned SU-1 for Permissive O-1, C-2 and IP uses. The majority of the land has been built out with hotels, offices, an Elks Lodge and the State Laboratory, or has been recently permitted for hotels. Two vacant parcels in this area are state owned land and are not affected by the applied zoning.

The Fairview Memorial Cemetery, located on 43 acres at the northwest corner of Yale and Santa Clara is zoned for SU-1 for Cemetery. The Cemetery is the burial site for several Spanish American war veterans, and is home to the Jewish Cemetery, dating to the early 1800s, located in the site's Northwest corner. The cemetery was recently purchased by Daniels Family funeral services, which has long term plans to restore the Cemetery.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Area Character and Conditions

#### Retail Modeling:

**One household** supports 10sf of retail

**Transit stops** can support 2,000-5,000sf of retail (Portland, OR supports 100,000sf/stop)

**Lifestyle retailers** (bookstores, clothiers) look for 7,500 households that make over \$75,000

**AbqUptown:** breaks model so that national retailers are beginning to look at NM differently

**Trade imbalance** in SDP area (more sales than should be generated by local population) indicates that businesses are being supported by outside visitors to the area.

### 3.3 Retail Opportunity: South Yale's Market Study

A market study for the South Yale Sector Development Plan area was commissioned in 2007 to analyze the existing and future retail opportunities of the area and to provide policy guidance related to the type of development the Plan should foster. The analysis was based on the current demographic data, area sports and entertainment event venue attendance, area employment (including the UNM Science and Technology Park), CNM student and staff populations, hotel and airport traffic, and overall trade area data.

According to the market study, based on the existing South Yale demographic makeup and the larger trade area forces, the following commercial and residential demands were determined:

#### Residential Development - Future demand:

2012: One mile radius will demand 500 new units (200 owner occupied, 300 renter)

2012: Trade Area will demand 1,850 new units

#### Commercial/Retail - Future demand:

Under current conditions, South Yale area can support only 28,100sf of new retail by 2008.

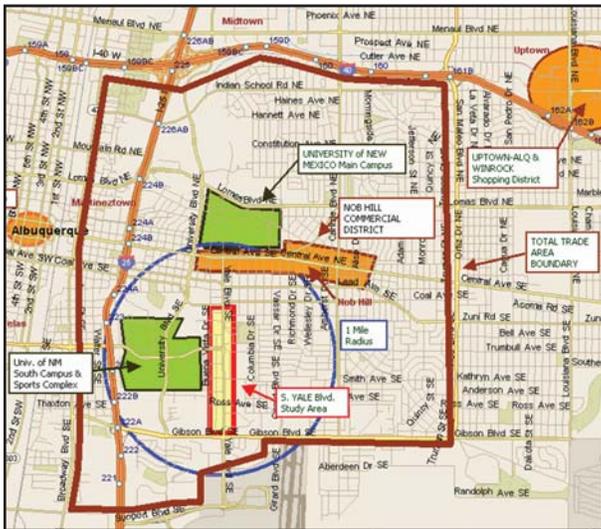
However, the retail potential is significantly greater with a transit-oriented, higher density, mixed use redevelopment.

Any new retail will compete with existing retail in the South Yale Trade Area.

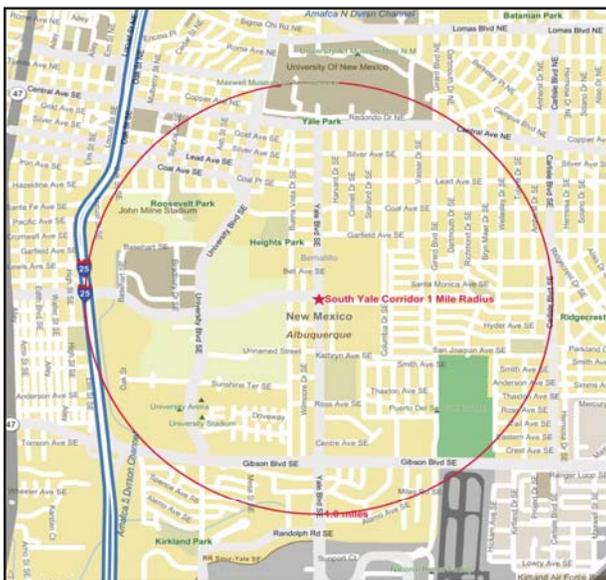
The Market Study also made specific recommendations for improving South Yale's commercial demands, including:

- New mixed-use development along South Yale should incorporate medium density housing (15-25 units/acre)
- New single family residential should strive to be 1-2 story townhouses 15'-20' wide
- New single family residential should be priced under \$300,000 and be sized between 1,800-2,200 sf
- New rental units should be townhomes or garden style apartments, 600-1000 sf each
- A full service hotel complex (with mixed use retail services) should be encouraged
- Retail success is more likely with a City/UNM partnership to increase development along Cesar Chavez.

The results of the Market Study were used to guide design standards which allow for increased density, a mix of uses and compact development along the South Yale corridor in order to generate the rooftops and retail setting necessary to attract new commercial and service providers the area.



Trade Area



1-Mile Radius

**Area Event Attendance Numbers 2007**

**UNM Athletics:** approximately 180 +/- events each year

**The Pit (basketball):**

Men: 19 games (14,500, avg attendance)  
Women: 19 games (10,500, avg attendance)

**Lobo Field at Isotopes Park:**

40 baseball games (3,000/game)

**Football Stadium:**

8 games (30,000)  
10 graduations

**UNM Soccer:**

Men: 10 games (3,629 avg attendance/game)  
Women: 10 games (1,848 avg attendance/game)

**UNM Softball:**

10 games

**Other events:**

2 PowWow (15,000 attendees)  
30 to 40 "special events" as well as special summer "camps"

**City Isotopes Park (April-Sept):**

72 Games (8,500 avg. attendance/game)

**City BMX Park:**

Practice sessions: 3x/week: 100 riders, plus 2.5 persons per rider  
Nationals (2/year): 2,500-5000/day, 3 days, plus 2.5 persons per rider  
State Championship (1/year): 325 riders, plus 2.5 persons per rider  
ABA camps (June through August): 200 riders/week

**South Yale Trade Area Incomes:**

Median Household Income (Trade Area):  
\$36,200 (moderate)

Average Household Income (Trade Area):  
\$65,200 (moderate)

25% (5,750) of households in trade area earn over \$75,000 (high)

**South Yale Populations:**

**UNM's** 26,000 students and employees

**CNM's** 20,000 students (15,000 FTE) and 1,000 employees

Strong **residential population** density in proximity to Plan area:

13,725 persons within 1 mile;  
54,600 within larger trade area

23,000 housing units within the Trade Area (50% renter occupied)

7,550 housing units within one mile area (60% renter occupied)

**Albuquerque Sunport:**

6.5 million passengers per year/1,000 flights per week

**Area hotels:**

Over 2,000 hotel rooms within 1 mile of Plan area, with occupancy rates of 100%



Trade Area Incomes

#### 4.0 Transportation and Traffic

##### 4.1 Street Connectivity and Pedestrian Accessibility

Connectivity within the plan area is problematic. Due to large portions of institutionally held land and a local cemetery, many streets in the area are not through-streets. Access to Yale from the Victory Hills neighborhood is limited to Ross and Kathryn. The only direct access from University Blvd to Yale occurs along Cesar Chavez and Gibson. Residents of the University Village trailer park and Lomas Del Cielo housing area only have access to University Blvd. Area bicycle and pedestrian routes are not clearly marked and are not part of a cohesive neighborhood network. An abandoned alley runs north/south from Kathryn behind the Loma Linda Community Center site to International Blvd.

##### 4.1.1 Pedestrian Crossings on Cesar Chavez

Pedestrian access to City sports venues from UNM parking lots requires crossing Cesar Chavez, a heavily traveled minor arterial. Currently, the only crossing points with a traffic signal are located at the University intersection and the Yale intersection. As a result, large groups of pedestrians cross mid-block on event days, creating unsafe conditions for pedestrians and traffic snarls for both visitors and residents.

##### 4.1.2 Community Center and Sunport Pool Access

Pedestrian access from the adjacent community is limited to the Loma Linda Community Center and Sunport Pools. Residents on the west side of Yale must cross at the off-set intersection at Kathryn to access Loma Linda Community Center and have no direct access to Sunport pool.

##### 4.1.3 APS School Crossing Zones

The Lowell Elementary School boundary is bisected by Yale which, with its current speeds and limited pedestrian crossings, makes access to the school by young children dangerous. There are currently two school crossings on Yale: an intersection crossing at Kathryn and a marked crossing and crosswalk at Ross. According to APS, the high-speed traffic conditions along Yale are hazardous enough to warrant busing children less than 1/2 mile from the school.

#### 4.2 Traffic Speeds

Traffic moves quickly along Yale Blvd from Gibson until it narrows above Avenida Cesar Chavez. Although this provides convenient access from the Airport to the UNM area, fast moving traffic creates an unfriendly and sometimes dangerous environment for pedestrians, resulting in limiting appropriate neighborhood scale commercial growth for nearby residents and visitors alike. Currently, there are three separate speed zones along Yale from Gibson to St. Cyr: a 45 mph zone, a 40 mph zone, and 35 mph zone north of Cesar Chavez. Traffic speeds along Cesar Chavez are posted at 45 mph, however traffic travels significantly faster.

#### 4.3 Problematic Intersections

The existing street patterns on the west side of Yale are not in alignment with the existing street grid on the east side of Yale. As a result, streets do not align as they cross Yale. Of particular concern is the signalized intersection at Kathryn where it is unclear where to stop for the light heading southbound. In addition, this intersection is problematic in that the access to the service station on the southwest corner is located in the middle of the intersection and exiting traffic does not have to respond to the traffic signal. The intersection at Ross and Yale also has alignment problems. Though there is no signal, it is a designated school crossing and difficult for pedestrians to navigate. An existing pedestrian refuge interferes with vehicular movement through the intersection.

### 5.0 South Yale's Regulatory Framework

In developing the South Yale Sector Development plan, adopted City plans were reviewed for their policies and goals guiding development in the area. The Sector Development Plan (or Plan) complies with and furthers the goals and policies of other adopted plans, including:

#### 5.1 Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan provides general policy framework for development in the City and County. It designates the South Yale area as part of the City's Established Urban Area with directives for compact mixed-use and higher density development along its primary streets. The goal of the Plan's Centers and Corridors policies is to create market conditions which support development of activity centers and corridors that contribute to the redevelopment of these designated areas. By developing and connecting transit corridors with activity centers vehicle needs are balanced with other forms of transportation that reduce the auto dependency, trip times, and increase citizens usage of multi-modal transportation services, including public transit, bicycle and pedestrian opportunities.

The Yale Sector Development Plan represents an opportunity to create the mix of land uses and densities that promotes the use of transit and links designated enhanced transit corridors with connections to major activity centers.

**Nearby Comprehensive Plan designated "Major Activity Centers":**

Sunport  
University of New Mexico  
CNM  
Downtown  
Nob Hill

**Comprehensive Plan designated "Special Activity Centers":**

UNM Sports Complex  
Isotopes Park, City Veloport

**Comprehensive Plan designated "Enhanced Transit Corridors":**

University Blvd  
Gibson Blvd  
Yale Blvd (south of Gibson)

#### 5.2 Planned Growth Strategy

The Planned Growth Strategy was adopted in 2002. It proposes a strategy for creating new vitality in existing neighborhoods by developing various regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms to encourage quality community-based infill development and redevelopment. As part of its overall implementation strategy, the PGS encourages the adoption of Smart Growth and Traditional Neighborhood Development principles, codes and processes for inclusion into local governing plans, such as Sector Development Plans like the South Yale Sector Plan and Metropolitan Redevelopment Plans. The Traditional Neighborhood Development principles advocated by the PGS include: Creating economic and social vitality by allowing a mixture of complementary land uses including housing, retail, offices, commercial services, and civic uses; developing commercial and mixed-use areas that are safe, comfortable and attractive to pedestrians; reinforcing streets as public places that encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel; encouraging efficient land use by facilitating compact, high-density development and minimizing the amount of land that is required for surface parking; and facilitating development (land use mix, density and design) that supports public transit.

#### 5.3 The City of Albuquerque Comprehensive Zoning Code

The Zoning Code regulates land uses, densities, and building location and height. The South Yale Sector Development Plan utilizes the Zoning Code's land use zones as an organizing element, but tailors the permitted and prohibited uses to meet the goals of the South Yale community.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Area Character and Conditions

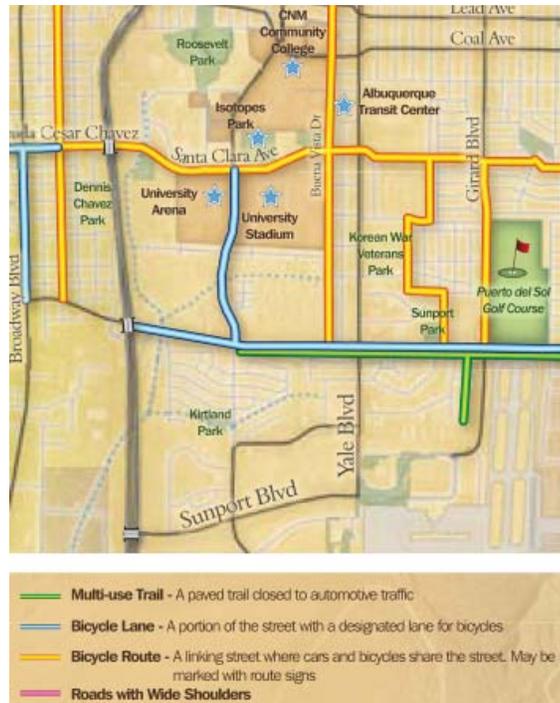
#### 5.4 Transportation Plans

##### 5.4.1 Long Range Bikeways System Map

The Middle Region Council of Governments Long Range Bikeway Plan designates Buena Vista Drive as a Bike Route sharing the street with the traffic lane, and University and Gibson Boulevard as Bike Lanes, with a designated lanes separated from the vehicular traffic lane.

##### 5.4.2 Long Range Roadway Plan

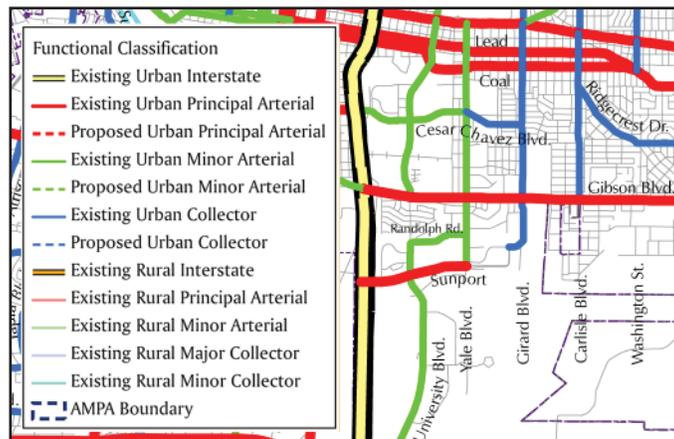
The Middle Region Council of Governments' Long Range Roadway map designates Yale Boulevard, University Boulevard and Cesar Chavez as minor arterials, Girard Boulevard and Santa Clara as Collectors, and Gibson Boulevard as a



limited access Principal Arterial. As the Sector Plan proposes no modifications to area street designs which would impact capacity, no changes to the streets classifications are required.

##### 5.4.3 Albuquerque Modern Streetcar

The City's modern streetcar project has been in planning since 1999, when it was initially envisioned as a light rail system. Unlike light rail, streetcar systems cost substantially less and are designed for local, shorter trips with slower speeds



and more frequent stations. Streetcars are able to share a lane with automobiles, allowing them to fit into a lane of traffic without altering traffic flow. Because the streetcar flows with the traffic, like a bus, and is subject to the same traffic signals as other vehicles, it operates safely in high-pedestrian areas.

Streetcar systems have the potential to activate urban spaces and attract economic development. As seen in cities across the country, modern streetcars have historically acted as a catalyst to higher density, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development along their routes and support long-term economic growth and development due to their fixed nature. A primary principle of streetcar systems is their capacity to reduce the amount of parking required by users from 30-50%. Decreasing parking allows for more efficient use of land, allowing more building per sf, and creating greater financial feasibility for parking structures in the long-term.

The proposed routing for Albuquerque's modern streetcar will take the streetcars along Cesar Chavez and Yale Boulevard in their "Downtown – Sunport" route. This routing was identified for its proximity to multiple sports related venues, for the availability of underutilized land along Yale Boulevard with significant redevelopment potential, and nearby park and ride facilities, including UNM student parking and the Loma Linda Community Center. Within the Plan area, proposed stops identified in a 2006 Stop Study Report are located approximately ¼ miles intervals and occur along Cesar Chavez at University, at the UNM Football stadium and at the Veloport. Along Yale Boulevard, stops are located at Cesar Chavez, Kathryn, Ross and north of Gibson.

Along Yale, streetcar stops will occur at bulbouts equal in length to about 2-3 parking spaces for a single streetcar stop. Stops are programmed to include: Benches, Shelter/ Canopy, Platforms, Bike Racks, Trash Cans, landscaping, and public art.

### 5.5 Other Plans Influencing the Sector Plan's Development

In addition to the existing adopted plans and policies guiding development in the area, South Yale is uniquely located in an area where the master plans of large institutional landholders, including the City of Albuquerque, UNM, CNM and Albuquerque Public Schools, play a significant role in shaping the urban character of the area.

#### 5.5.1 South Yale MRA Designation and Plan

The South Yale Plan area received a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area designation in early 2007. It received this designation from the Albuquerque City Council upon recommendation by the Albuquerque Development Commission, based on findings that "the presence of a substantial number of deteriorated structures, unsafe conditions, deterioration of site and other improvements, obsolete and impractical planning and platting and low levels of commercial activity and redevelopment which substantially impair and arrest the sound growth and economic well being the area." The designation allows the area to receive funding for metropolitan redevelopment projects to assist in the area's redevelopment, based on the development and approval of a Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan. In addition, the designation allows Albuquerque Public Schools to solicit additional state funding for educational programs at Lowell Elementary School, and potentially allows developers building within the MRA Plan area to receive reductions in their City Impact Fee assessments.

#### 5.5.2 UNM South Campus Masterplan

The 2007 UNM South Campus Masterplan covers the large parcels of land owned by the University of New Mexico. The plan divides the South Campus into two areas: The Research Park, located within the northwest portion of the South Campus and the Athletics South Campus. The masterplan list of potential projects for Research Park include a hotel development, parking garage development, as well as continued Research Park development. According to

the masterplan, the large area of vacant land located south and west of the Pit was not included in the planning effort; instead the plan identified the area as an opportunity for future expansion of the Athletics South Campus.

Recognizing that the existing character of the area is defined by isolated facilities surrounded by parking, the masterplan identifies as its primary objective “unifying the South Campus in a manner similar to the main academic campus through an emphasis on the pedestrian oriented design.” The plan sets out circulation concepts and landscape concepts to improve pedestrian navigation in the area, create a more pleasurable walking experience and establish a campus identity. The plan also addresses aesthetic modifications to the structures in the area as a mechanism for creating a more visually pleasing environment and creating a unique South Campus identity.

The masterplan acknowledges neighborhood concerns related to the current aesthetic character as well as event impacts and neighborhood livability. Some of the masterplan’s suggestions for addressing those concerns as well as larger South Campus improvement issues include:

- Enhancing area landscaping

- Removing and replacing chainlink fencing with attractive fencing material and landscape

- Introducing additional enhanced crossing zones to handle pedestrian traffic

- Developing the corner property that fronts on Buena Vista and Avenida Cesar Chavez with a use that can both serve the neighborhood and the thousands of students who use the shuttle service from the east parking lot to the main campus

- Introducing an area wayfinding system

- Developing opportunities for pedestrians to linger after a game including daily use restaurant, additional meeting places and some hospitality areas