

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

In mid-2007 the Albuquerque City Council and the City of Albuquerque Planning Department initiated a planning process for the South Yale area in recognition of the area's unique conditions, constraints and opportunities deserving of special design and policy guidance. The goal of this planning effort was to establish a vision for the South Yale corridor, and surrounding neighborhoods, and to propose technical solutions through zoning changes, development and design guidelines, streetscape improvements and recommendations for public improvements that would implement the community vision.



*Yale Blvd. facing South
from Cesar Chavez*

1.1 Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the South Yale Sector Development Plan ("the Plan") is to promote and guide development in a manner that supports the area's economic and social vitality. The Plan recognizes that South Yale Boulevard has considerable development potential as a successful transit corridor and should be improved through the control of adjacent development, and that large areas of land with underutilized commercial zoning offer significant opportunities for quality infill development and redevelopment. By fostering a balanced mix of neighborhood commercial, residential, and public uses, infilling with compact development, and adopting streetscape improvements that create an attractive, safe and comfortable pedestrian environment, the Plan seeks to make the South Yale area an important destination in and of itself, as well as a memorable, unique and attractive gateway into Albuquerque.



*Loma Linda Community Center and
Korean War Veterans Park*

1.2 Area Overview

The South Yale area is a vital part of Albuquerque. Yale Boulevard is an established entryway into the City from the Albuquerque Sunport, and for many visitors, it serves as a major transportation route to the University of New Mexico, Nob Hill and the Downtown area. Yale Boulevard is also the designated route for the City's Modern Streetcar project. Yale Boulevard today is automobile-oriented. Yet, it has the potential to become more pedestrian and transit-oriented. The scale of the street and parcel sizes, which are comparatively smaller here than on some of the newer, outlying corridors, allows for a potential character of development to emerge which is conducive to pedestrian activity.



Isotopes Park

The area is also home to Albuquerque's main sports and entertainment venues, including the UNM football stadium, the City's Isotopes Park and new Veloport, all of which attract hundreds of thousands of visitors to the area each year. Hotel occupancy rates for the over two thousand hotel rooms within a 1 mile radius is frequently 100 percent. However important the area is today, its full potential is unrealized, with large areas of vacant or underutilized land, streets that seem neglected, and large areas of unimproved parking. The goal of this plan is to develop a framework that addresses technical questions about the area while providing a vision for the future.

1.3 Planning Team

The planning process for the Plan was led by the City of Albuquerque Planning Department with support from District 3 Councilor Isaac Benton. In addition to the Planning Department, the planning team included Strata Design. The Planning Department provided assistance with the facilitation of meetings, gathering information, direction, review and production of the plan. Strata Design evaluated data and developed recommendations for achieving the community's vision for the area.

1.4 Public Input

Community involvement and input throughout the process was a key component of the overall planning effort. The planning team met with community members multiple times during the process to solicit input, review findings, and confirm recommendations. The process included five public meetings, including a day long visioning workshop. Throughout the process, information on the project was posted on the City's Planning Department website.



Lowell Elementary School



City Transit Maintenance Facility

1.5 Planning Process

The year long planning process began in late Spring, 2007. Information about the project was shared with the public at a kick-off meeting in May, 2007. Public input was solicited during a public meeting in July and at an all-day visioning workshop in September to generate initial ideas for land use policy and development, traffic and transportation, and amenities and public space recommendations. In these meetings participants defined and/or commented on physical, cultural and economic issues, assets and opportunities for the Plan area. This input helped to establish a clear vision for the South Yale Area.

A subsequent meeting was held in November 2007 to share and confirm findings from the workshop and build consensus for the regulatory recommendations to be advocated by the Plan. With feedback from City technical staff, the Planning Team then drafted a plan based on the resulting vision and regulatory strategy. The draft document was reviewed by the public in April 2008, and submitted to the Environmental Planning Commission in summer 2008. Summaries from community and public meetings are included as part of the Appendix.

1.6 Regulatory Tool

The South Yale Sector Development Plan is a "Rank 3" Plan which provides policy and regulatory guidance for development within its boundaries. Its adoption sets land use, design and development standards for the area to ensure development outcomes that are more predictable for the community and affected stakeholders, and supportive of the community's goals for the area.