

CHAPTER FIVE

Plan Implementation: Projects

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This section identifies key projects whose implementation would significantly advance the redevelopment of the area as envisioned by this Plan. The following project recommendations range from those which create the necessary impetus for redevelopment investment to those which improve the overall quality of life in the area by enhancing existing amenities. The projects are divided into two categories: those which are prioritized for City CIP funding and those which are general recommendations to be implemented by the community.

2.0 CIP PROJECTS

The following is a list of potential CIP projects identified as part of the South Yale planning process.

2.1 South Yale Streetscape Improvements

In order to create an environment that is pedestrian-friendly, attractive to retailers and visitors, and generally improves the aesthetic characteristics of an area, it is important to upgrade existing pedestrian infrastructure on south Yale Boulevard. The following improvements are recommended:

- Streetscape Landscape – Streetscape Landscape should provide shade, interest and definition to the pedestrian realm. Introduction of street trees in grates along the sidewalk spaced a minimum of 30 feet on center. New bulb-outs and curb extensions should be landscaped. Plant materials should follow recommended plant palette for this plan.
- Street Furnishings – Street Furnishings should add comfort for the pedestrian and character to the street. Street furnishing should be durable, consistent in material and design and secured permanently. Street furnishings should include benches, trash containers, kiosks, transit shelters and public art.
- Street Lights – Street lights should add a comfortable level of light for pedestrians for safety and visibility. Street lights should be pedestrian in scale and oriented to light the sidewalk. Pedestrian lighting should follow lighting standards in this plan.
- Curb extensions and bulbouts – Curb extensions and bulbouts should reduce crossing times for pedestrians at intersections, provide refuges for transit stops, define street parking and create additional usable space in the pedestrian realm for street furnishings. Curb extensions and bulbouts should be landscaped in an attractive manner.
- Crosswalk articulation – Crosswalks should be clearly legible by vehicular traffic as a defined space for the pedestrian.
- Median and Streetscape Improvements south of Ross – In order to improve the pedestrian and vehicular safety, improve area character and provide opportunities for gateway elements, a landscaped median should be introduced south of Ross on Yale. The median should be utilized for a linear public art piece which acts as a gateway to the South Yale area.
- Street trees in grates and furnishings should be introduced in existing sidewalk areas along Yale Blvd. south of Ross.

2.2 Gateway at Yale and Ross and Gateway at Cesar Chavez

In order to define the pedestrian zone of south Yale, the intersections on Yale at Ross and Cesar Chavez should be improved as north and south gateways. Four way traffic signals should be introduced at both intersections to reduce traffic speed, improve pedestrian crossing safety and to provide a visual cue to the entrance to a pedestrian zone. Intersections should include bulb-outs to increase pedestrian safety and reduce crossing times and should include public art elements which act as a gateway to the South Yale area.

2.3 Loma Linda Master Plan Update

Loma Linda Community Center is a valuable community asset located in the heart of the south Yale Commercial Corridor. The existing master plan should be revisited and updated to assess the needs of the current community and to complete the original program of the community center to include a library, gym, and community garden, as well as the completion of the existing veterans' memorial. New program elements should be considered such as a dog park, skate park, and police substation which have been requested by the community. In addition, the existing alley should be incorporated as part of a larger community trail system connecting the community center to Sunport Pool to the south and the open space of Geneva's Arroyo.

A master plan update for Loma Linda Community Center should evaluate the potential of the community center as the heart of a pedestrian commercial corridor and its relationship to the street. Opportunities exist for community center land to be utilized for a Park and Ride facility or shared parking for community services. In addition, the community center land located adjacent to Yale could be developed at the street to mask parking areas, provide a street wall and to create additional opportunities for area services. These structures could be used for community center program or leased as café and retail space to the public at a prime location adjacent to a park setting.

2.4 Cesar Chavez Improvements

Cesar Chavez between University Boulevard and Yale Boulevard is the site of heavy pedestrian traffic during area events and daily student traffic. Several designated crossing points should be introduced between major intersections in order to improve pedestrian safety and to reduce vehicular speed in the area. Existing medians should be improved to accommodate pedestrian refuges and should have well designed pedestrian barriers to controlling crossing points to designated areas. Pedestrian areas should be aesthetic and are opportunities for public art. Pedestrian street crossings should be well articulated and clearly visible to vehicular traffic.

In addition, to improve pedestrian mobility in the area, sidewalk areas along the north side of Cesar Chavez should be completed. New sidewalk area should include street trees and street furniture such as benches, kiosks and trash receptacles. Street trees should be introduced along existing sidewalks on Cesar Chavez to provide a buffer for pedestrians and improve the character of the street.

New Intersection at Cesar Chavez and Buena Vista. Buena Vista is a designated north/south bike route and is heavily utilized by student and local traffic. In addition, the UNM south parking area is located on the south side of Cesar Chavez and thousands of students parking here daily to attend the University to the north. In addition to pedestrian and bicycle crossing needs, vehicular egress from the UNM south lot is forced to migrate through the south Yale residential areas due to difficulty crossing Cesar Chavez at Buena Vista. A Four way light is needed at this intersection to improve traffic flow, increase pedestrian safety and reduce impact of event traffic on area residents.

2.5 Gibson Improvements

Gibson Boulevard is a designated limited access roadway traffic travelling at high speeds and in high volumes. However, opportunities exist for improving pedestrian safety and comfort, making the south Yale area accessible to residents south of Gibson as well as airport hotel visitors. Pedestrian refuges are recommended in Gibson medians and at triangles adjacent to the right turns lanes, for the intersections at Yale and Girard. Refuges should be at minimum, large enough to accommodate a wheelchair or stroller with an accompanying pedestrian.

2.6 Wrapping the BMX facility

The community has expressed concern with the noise, air-quality, smell and visual impact of the BMX facility. In order to address these concerns, this plan recom-

mends that the BMX facility be wrapped along Cesar Chavez and Buena Vista with pedestrian scale retail and residential buildings. The introduction of the new structures will provide additional opportunities for much needed housing and services in the area, provide a comfortable pedestrian street edge, and mask the scale of the structure.

2.7 Yale Rear Drive Aisle (alley) Improvements

Should the City require rear drive aisles along the properties adjacent to Yale in order to improve area drainage and facilitate vehicular movement in the area, the standards in Chapter 4 are recommended as CIP projects.

2.8 Traffic Study

South Yale neighborhoods are heavily impacted by area event traffic and vehicular circulation moving through the area to access the freeway and airport. A study of traffic and parking problems is recommended as well as improved traffic coordination and security on event days.

2.9 Area Trail Improvements

In order to improve area pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in an area with limited access, the existing arroyo, alley east of Yale and the dead-end streets such as Mesa and Ash should be developed as part of a greater comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle trail system.

In addition, pedestrian linkages should be developed to Centre Ave and to Loma Linda Community Center via the existing alley and dedicated easements between Kathryn and Ross. This path has the potential to be developed as an exercise trail or art trail which would provide much needed linking elements between Loma Linda Community Center and Sunport Pool.

2.10 Sunport Pool Improvements

The community has expressed a desire to see the existing infrastructure at Sunport pool improved to include rehabilitation of the existing tennis and basketball courts and improvements which would make the facility usable year rounds. In addition, access to and from the community should be improved through development of neighboring alleys and access easements.

2.11 Residential Traffic Calming Projects

Event traffic heavily impacts the Clayton Heights neighborhood. Speeding and parking problems impact the daily lives of the residents with event parking on game days block access to driveways. This plan recommends the introduction of four-way stops at all intersection in the Clayton Heights neighborhood with bulbouts to slow vehicular movement and increase pedestrian safety. In addition, area residents have expressed concerns with the traffic circle at Santa Clara and Columbia which due to its small size frequently fails in calming traffic.

3.0 Non-CIP Projects

3.1 Permit Parking

Permit parking is recommended for the Clayton Heights neighborhood on an as needed basis to mitigate impact of event and UNM parking.

3.2 Transit

In order to improve access to transit in the south Yale area, this plan recommends an increase in the frequency of area transit service to 15 minute intervals and provides later service and Sunday service as the area develops. Extended service should be implemented to the airport and sporting venues.

The Modern Streetcar has been planned for the area and this Plan, as well as the market study prepared for this Plan recommend the introduction of the Modern Streetcar on Yale Blvd.