

# Recommendations: City Facilities and Services

## 2.0 City Facilities and Services

City Services include Fire Stations, Libraries and Community Centers. The sections below contain recommendations for these services. These recommendations were developed through an analysis of existing conditions and input from community visioning sessions. For detailed information on the existing conditions that these recommendations were based on, see Chapter 5, Context: City Services.

### 2.1 Fire Station Recommendations

A new fire station will be built at Central Ave. and 57th St. Based on input received at community visioning services, the community feels that they are well serviced by fire protection services and there are no recommendations.

### 2.2 Library Recommendations

- a. Investigate the potential for a new library to serve the eastern portion of the plan area.
- b. When new facilities are built and/or older facilities are updated, ensure that these facilities include pedestrian and bicycle connectivity both within the site and to the Central Ave. corridor and surrounding residential neighborhoods.

### 2.3 Community Center Recommendations

Most of the plan area is well served by community centers. However the western portion of the plan area is currently underserved. While there are no community centers within the plan area, there are access issues from the Plan area to adjacent centers.

- a. Investigate the potential for a new community center in the western portion of the plan area. West of Coors there is no community center to serve the large residential population north and south of the Central Ave. area. A future joint use community center and park should be considered to serve this area.
- b. Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections at the Alamosa Community Center specifically across Coors Blvd. to serve the residential neighborhoods on the west side of Coors but also to and from Central Ave.
- c. Ensure future facilities include multi-modal access from the Central Corridor and across major thoroughfares like Coors and Unser, as well as to and from surrounding neighborhoods and adjacent services.

## Recommendations: Drainage

### 3.0 Drainage Overview

Drainage issues vary by segment. In Segment One, there are drainage constraints related to limited capacity in the storm drain between Unser and Coors Blvds., which requires all new development to pond on site. In Segment Two, in the area between New York and Rio Grande Blvd. there are significant drainage problems related to flooding and inadequate infrastructure. Drainage recommendations for the Plan area assume, that individual development must comply with City and County Ordinances and that each development must have a City approved plan for the drainage of property and not exceed downstream capacity.

A key element of many of the following recommendations is the implementation of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques. LID seeks to mimic pre-development hydrology in order to protect waterways, habitat and ground water recharge. Conventional planning focuses on access, circulation and parking. New designs for streets can maintain high function while minimizing impervious surfaces and promoting open space and landscaping.

#### 3.1 Drainage Recommendations:

- a. **Ponding areas along frontage road.** The City should employ stormwater capture and treatment techniques through landscape and swale improvements to the frontage road area. Plan for ponding areas in vegetated areas along new multi use trail in order to help alleviate the significant drainage problems on the road.
- b. **Ponding areas as landscape and streetscape amenities.** As new development occurs, in front and side street setbacks encourage ponding areas that coordinate with required front setback landscaping. The intent is that these ponding areas support the irrigation needs of landscape and that ponding areas become landscape amenities, not forgotten eyesores.
- c. **Private Development and Low Impact Development (LID) practices.** In anticipation of potential policy changes to City stormwater management policy which may mandate “first flush” capture and on site stormwater water treatment, all new development and redevelopment should employ LID practices.
- d. **Ponding in medians.** As new medians are installed, they should be depressed

from the roadway in order to help capture and treat stormwater run-off.

- e. **Ponding in bulbouts.** The City should investigate stormwater capture and treatment in proposed pedestrian bulb out locations.
- f. **Reuse of drainage ponds to a higher use as development necessitates.** There are two drainage ponds/jurisdictional dams that are owned by the City and managed by the Office of the State Engineer located at the northwest corner of the Central Avenue and 98th St. intersection. These ponds are mostly handling stormwater drainage from undeveloped properties in the area. These ponds are located on land that is more ideally suited for commercial and/or higher density commercial development, as the rest of the intersection has already begun to develop in this way. As more development occurs in this area, property owners will be required to manage more stormwater on site and alleviate the need for this pond. The future objective for a higher land use on this site should be kept in mind when approving site drainage plans and planning for stormwater drainage in this area.
- g. **Require LID techniques in areas to offset limited storm drain capacity in the Segment One.** In this section of the corridor, any redevelopment should manage excess stormwater through increased landscaping and Low Impact Development (LID) techniques.
- h. **Require LID techniques in areas of existing flooding.** There are significant issues with flooding in the area between New York Ave. and Rio Grande Boulevard. This is largely due to the flat topography and the abundance of impervious surfaces. In this section of the corridor, any redevelopment should manage excess stormwater through increased landscaping and Low Impact Development (LID) techniques.
- i. **Draft Mid Valley Drainage Study.** The following general principles and recommendations were made by the Draft 2012 Mid Valley Drainage Study. The section of Central Ave. from the River to Rio Grande Blvd. is included in the study as part of the Alcalde Drainage Basin. The recommendations are included because they are relevant to all areas within the Plan appropriate for LID treatments.  
**General Principles:**
  1. The objective is to capture and treat pollutants in the “first flush” stormwater event.

2. Structural stormwater quality control is best implemented at or near the source of run-off.
3. Retention or long term detention of runoff from storms larger than the 90% equivalent rainfall (0.44 in.) may have negative downstream water rights implications.
4. As in all drainage and flood control facilities there is a tradeoff between land area consumed by the facility and its capital cost.
5. Design should be “first flush” friendly with a bypass for larger flows-otherwise “first flush” gets flushed.
6. Every reasonable opportunity to install LID techniques should be explored and exploited (almost no area is too small so long as the cost to implement and maintain is commensurate with treatment effectiveness and value received)
7. Maintenance cost and enforcement are important in planning and design considerations
8. Depending on the anticipated use of harvested water (e.g. shrubs vs. vegetable garden) water harvesting systems may need to be design and operated to bypass the “first flush” rather than capture it due to high concentrations of nutrients or pollutants-thus reducing the stormwater treatment quality.
9. Designs that are self-enforcing are the best (the owner is the first to feel/ see effects when maintenance is required)
10. Public education is essential to controlling the floatables (trash) and pet related biological loads to the streets and storm drainage systems.

### Micro opportunities for detention

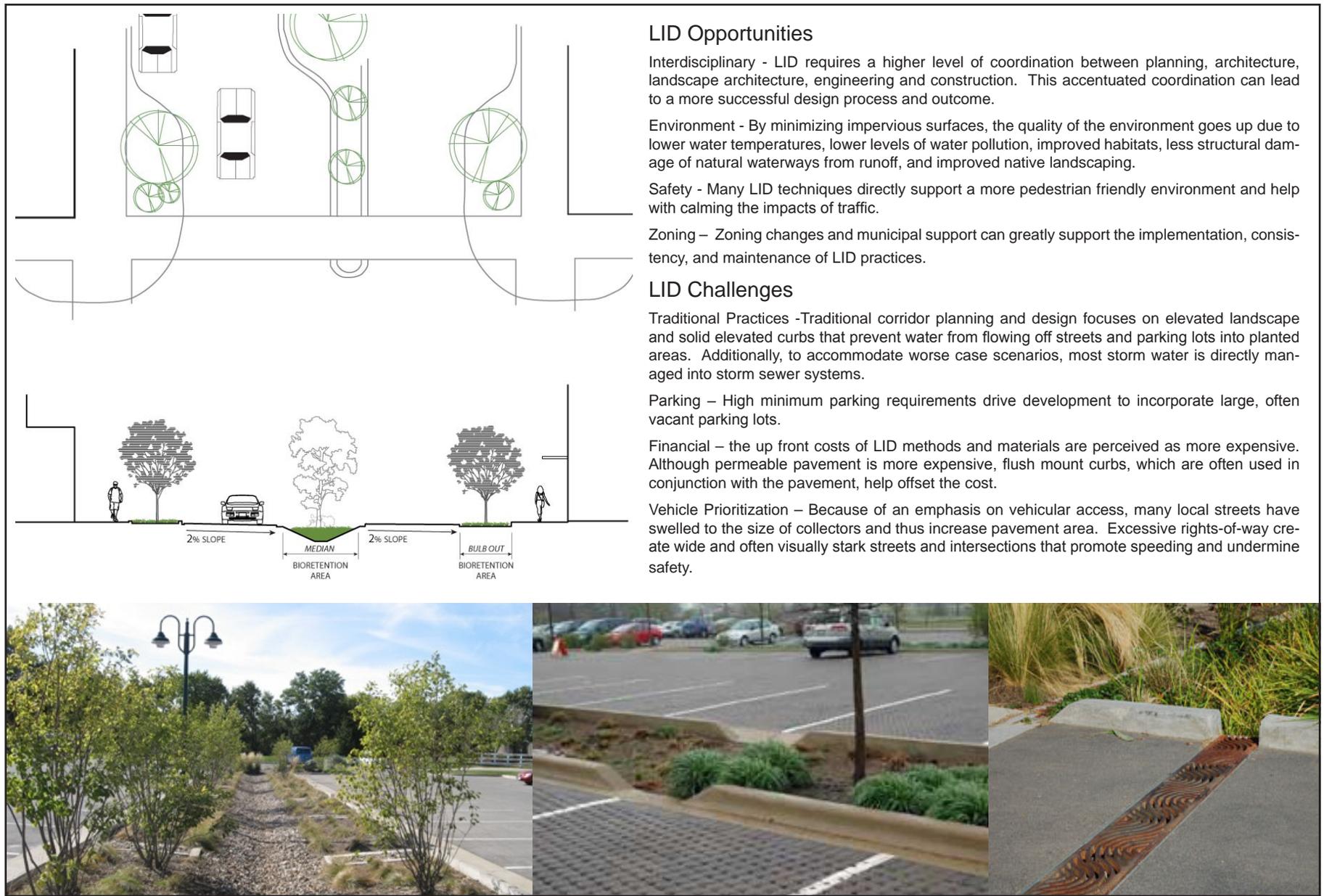
- Tree wells
- Medians
- Parking lot islands
- Pocket parks
- Backyard/front yard ponds
- Parkway between curb and sidewalk
- Area behind sidewalk
- Unused or rarely used areas of parking lots

### Local opportunities for detention

- Small parks
- On-site drainage ponds retrofit for “first flush” and floatables treatment
- Re-graded parking lot landscape areas (use speed bumps/dips as diversions)
- Channel tributary entrances
- Subdivision scale detention basins
- Subdivision entry features

As any public facilities (including public buildings, parking lots, streets, medians, parks, etc.) are remodeled, expanded or refurbished or their use changes, each should be investigated for opportunities to capture and treat “first flush” stormwater for as much of the site as makes practical sense.

# Recommendations: Drainage



## LID Opportunities

**Interdisciplinary** - LID requires a higher level of coordination between planning, architecture, landscape architecture, engineering and construction. This accentuated coordination can lead to a more successful design process and outcome.

**Environment** - By minimizing impervious surfaces, the quality of the environment goes up due to lower water temperatures, lower levels of water pollution, improved habitats, less structural damage of natural waterways from runoff, and improved native landscaping.

**Safety** - Many LID techniques directly support a more pedestrian friendly environment and help with calming the impacts of traffic.

**Zoning** - Zoning changes and municipal support can greatly support the implementation, consistency, and maintenance of LID practices.

## LID Challenges

**Traditional Practices** - Traditional corridor planning and design focuses on elevated landscape and solid elevated curbs that prevent water from flowing off streets and parking lots into planted areas. Additionally, to accommodate worse case scenarios, most storm water is directly managed into storm sewer systems.

**Parking** - High minimum parking requirements drive development to incorporate large, often vacant parking lots.

**Financial** - the up front costs of LID methods and materials are perceived as more expensive. Although permeable pavement is more expensive, flush mount curbs, which are often used in conjunction with the pavement, help offset the cost.

**Vehicle Prioritization** - Because of an emphasis on vehicular access, many local streets have swelled to the size of collectors and thus increase pavement area. Excessive rights-of-way create wide and often visually stark streets and intersections that promote speeding and undermine safety.

Figure S9: LID Opportunities and Challenges

#### 4.0 Utilities

The following recommendations for utilities are based on an analysis of existing conditions, meetings with relevant City and governmental organizations and input received at community visioning sessions. For detailed explanation of existing conditions see Utilities Context in Chapter 3.

#### 4.1 Water and Wastewater Recommendation

Ensure coordination between the City and the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority in order to monitor and permanently resolve any issues of odor control in the Central Ave. and Yucca Dr.

#### 4.2 Gas Recommendation

The aesthetics of the New Mexico Gas Company border station at Central Ave. and Atrisco Dr. should be improved either through landscape screening, or removal and replacement of chainlink visible from public rights-of-way with an alternative fencing material.

#### 4.3 Electricity and Telephone Recommendations

- a. From Cypress Dr. to Atrisco Dr. on the south side of Central Ave., and from New York Ave. to Rio Grande Blvd. on both sides of Central, utility poles are located in the sidewalk, intermittently blocking the sidewalks which creates an unsafe conditions and makes sidewalks inaccessible to wheelchairs. As new streetscape improvements are implemented utility poles should be moved out of sidewalk locations or the pedestrian walking zone should be expanded at the conflict locations.
- b. Alleviate typical voltage dips. In the section between New York and Rio Grande Blvd. there have been reports of power outages due to inadequate power transmission. Currently there are voltage dips from 282 to 215 volts.

## Recommendations: Parks

### 5.0 Parks

The following recommendations for parks are based on an analysis of existing conditions, meetings with relevant City and governmental organizations and input received at community visioning sessions. For detailed explanation of existing conditions see Parks, Trails and Open Space Context in Chapter 5.

The current level of service standard used by the City of Albuquerque Parks Department is 2.6 acres per 1,000 population. Based on this level of service, the plan area is adequately served by parks under existing development conditions. However based on input received at community visioning sessions and the increases to residential development on the corridor it is likely that there will be an increased need for parks in the future.

#### 5.1 Parks Recommendations

- a. While the City level of service standard for parks is currently being met, the Sector Plan is proposing land use changes that will increase density and intensity of development. These land use changes will increase the need and demand for park space in the area. In anticipation of this development, the City should plan for additional park space in the area with a preference for sites that offer multi-modal connectivity opportunities to nearby commercial services as well as residential development.
- b. Consider a joint use site with Parks and Family & Community Services for the 2.2 acre city owned vacant parcel at 90th St. and Volcano Rd.
- c. Where the Alameda Lateral intersects Central, create a pocket park with sculptural elements and an educational interpretive exhibit that explains the history and continued use of acequias for agricultural irrigation, and provides way-finding to area amenities. This intersection is across from the El Vado Metropolitan Redevelopment site and has the potential to become an important pedestrian amenity on the corridor.
- d. Encourage on-street parking, shared parking and parking reductions for parks in exchange for proximity to residential development and transit in order to reduce the acreage requirements for parks.
- e. An urban park model that offers more opportunities for passive recreation and less programming for active uses may be more appropriate for park development on the corridor.



*The intersection of the Alameda lateral and Central Avenue is a cultural and historical fulcrum between the natural experience of the acequia and the built heritage of Route 66 and Central. Although small in scale, this pocket park can be a destination. The intention is to use dry sculptural materials (wood, metal, concrete...) to interpret and create a space for pedestrians to explore.*

Figure 60: Concept for Pocket Park

### 6.0 Open Space

The Rio Grande State Park is the only Open Space adjoining the plan area. It is located in the Bosque on both banks of the Rio Grande and is managed by the City in collaboration with MRGCD and the Army Corps of Engineers. The Bosque is an important recreational and environmental resource which should be maintained to preserve the highest and best use for ecological and recreational purposes.

#### 6.1 Open Space Recommendations

- a. Improve the Bosque access and parking on the west side of the river. Ensure that improvements enhance the aesthetics and safety of the parking area to encourage increased visitor use. By increasing visitor use, the additional “eyes on the Bosque” will provide greater safety and discourage illegal uses.
- b. Create a new parking area with ADA trail access on the west side of the river.
- c. Plan for a pedestrian bridge across the river. A pedestrian bridge is an amenity that will bring visitors and locals alike across the river and engage additional opportunities for recreational use. A well-conceived bridge could become a destination in and of itself.
- d. Ensure coordination between City of Albuquerque Open Space, the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District and the Army Corps of Engineers regarding Bosque maintenance, trails, access and parking lots.

### 7.0 Trails

Central Ave. bisects numerous drains and ditches in the areas east and west of the river. This interface between a major urban thoroughfare and the traditional system of acequias provides a unique opportunity to enhance awareness and appreciation of the acequia system for visitors to the area. In addition, celebrating this interface highlights the identity for this section of the corridor. The informal pathways along the ditches, canals and laterals also offer unique opportunities to connect area neighborhoods to Central Ave. Formalizing these pathways would require agreements between the City of Albuquerque and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District. Where appropriate, this action has been recommended below. Other recommendations involve improving access to these pathways from the corridor.

#### 7.1 Trails Recommendations

- a. Create a formal connection on Central Avenue at Arenal Canal with a HAWK signal (see Transportation Context for description) to facilitate pedestrian crossing.
- b. Enhance and extend the trail along the Atrisco Ditch. The trail could function as a pedestrian and bicycle gateway to the South Valley from the Central Ave. corridor. The Atrisco Lateral bisects the MR property on the north side of Central Ave. and Sunset Rd. This is a unique opportunity to incorporate a water feature, and potentially an agricultural theme, into redevelopment plans for the site.
- c. Any redevelopment plans for the newly created River Activity Zone on the west side of the river should include an ADA accessible parking lot with access to the ADA trails in the Bosque.
- d. Remove the existing chain-link fence where the Alameda Lateral meets Central Ave. or replace with a more attractive design.

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