LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

UNM/CNM/Sunport Transit Study

Prepared for:

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March 2014

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Executive Summary

The Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) recently completed an alternatives analysis (AA) for a proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route serving the UNM/CNM/Sunport corridor in southeast Albuquerque. Because land use and economic development are two critical metrics included in the evaluation process used by the Federal Transit Administration to rate projects, a preliminary assessment of these factors was conducted in parallel with the AA. The assessment was limited to: (1) the identification of current land use and economic development conditions within the corridor; (2) identification of the challenges to transform corridor land use to be more consistent with the transit supportive needs of a BRT corridor; (3) identification of potential economic development opportunities; and, (4) the identification of future actions to encourage better integration of land use and the proposed BRT system.

The assessment of challenges and economic development opportunities was conducted in collaboration with major agency and institutional stakeholders within the study area. These include representatives from UNM, UNM Hospital, CNM, City Council representatives, Bernalillo County Commission representatives, Albuquerque Planning Department, ABQ Ride, the Albuquerque Sunport, and Rio Metro. Discussions with major land owners also occurred to ensure the needs of this stakeholder group were known and considered.

Key findings of the land use and economic development assessment include:

1. The corridor contains the state's premier higher education and health care institutions, the state's largest commercial airport and the state's premier sporting venues – creating an area of concentrated economic activity of statewide importance. The corridor is also surrounded by established neighborhoods, a diverse mix of vibrant shops and restaurants, and two clusters of hotels and adjacent restaurants. The combination of these uses reinforces the areas diversity and importance at both the regional and local levels.
2. Existing development along the proposed BRT route is generally not consistent with the characteristics of successful transit supportive developments (TSD). The desired characteristics for TSD include medium to high densities, mixed land uses, pedestrian orientation, a defined center, and managed and/or limited parking. Most locations along the corridor have not been planned and developed to achieve these characteristics.
3. Numerous land use plans guide development within the project area. These include sector development plans, metropolitan redevelopment plans, and master plans prepared by the City of Albuquerque, and master plans and capital improvement plans prepared by UNM and CNM. Although all of the adopted plans generally support the vision of a transit-friendly, higher-density corridor, integrating transit was not a primary objective of these plans except for the South Yale Sector Development Plan and the Clayton Heights/Lomas del Cielo MRA Plan.
4. Specific redevelopment activities are underway or are being considered within the project area. These include a major expansion of UNM Hospital, development of the parcels located in the northwest quadrant of Central and University Boulevard, and development of a 47 acre parcel south of Avenida Cesar Chavez and west of University Boulevard. Because specific sites plans have not yet been prepared for these developments, opportunities still exist to plan these properties following TSD principles.

5. Specific development opportunities were identified along the proposed BRT corridor at ten locations. These locations have the potential to support higher densities, more compact and diverse development, shared or limited on-site parking, and, in some instances, housing choices. Of the ten locations with redevelopment potential, seven are on lands controlled by the state. Only three are on privately owned parcels.

6. Potential barriers to change were identified along the BRT corridor. The two most significant barriers are the absence of a shared vision and the lack of consistent development policies within the corridor. The proposed BRT route is approximately 5 miles in length, not including the portion on Sunport Loop. Of this, 41% of the lands along the alignment are managed by UNM or CNM on at least one side of the alignment. This number increases to about 52% when only those areas with redevelopment potential are considered. The remaining lands are within the planning and zoning jurisdiction of the City of Albuquerque. While master plans and sector development plans have been established for much of the corridor, their goals and objectives generally focus on the needs and goals specific to each area. Thus, a common vision for transit does not exist. Further complicating the situation is the lack of consistent development guidelines and review procedures. Without a shared vision and a consistent review process, the ability for stakeholders to encourage and facilitate transit supportive development along the proposed BRT route is greatly diminished.

7. Actions were identified and recommended to facilitate transit supportive development along the BRT route. These actions should be completed concurrently with the refinement of the LPA that will occur in project development. These actions include:

    - The development of a shared vision for the corridor by stakeholders (City of Albuquerque, UNM, CNM, Bernalillo County, neighborhoods, etc.). This vision should: reflect the market considerations impacting stakeholders and reflect the unique districts along the corridor; include a streetscape component in the corridor vision that promotes a more livable, walkable public realm; and, recommend development policies that support transit use and which are agreed upon and adopted by all stakeholders in the corridor.
    - Establish consistent design guidelines and review process for the property along the BRT corridor.
    - A shared parking and access management plan for critical uses and sections of the corridor that improves the utilization of parking resources and provides and opportunity to redevelop existing parking lots with the uses envisioned by stakeholders.
    - Develop a pedestrian / bicycle infrastructure plan for the corridor to improve access to and from the BRT and surrounding uses.
    - Pursue an economic plan to determine specific infrastructure improvements that will provide catalytic private investment while generating higher revenues and enhancing the quality of life for area residents.

1.0 Introduction and Background

The Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) recently completed an alternatives analysis (AA) for a proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route serving the UNM/CNM/Sunport corridor in southeast Albuquerque. The AA concluded that a BRT system, along with changes to existing parking policies, could improve local and regional access to the major institutions and other destinations within the study area. Figure 1 illustrates the BRT route and associated park and ride lots recommended by the AA.

The findings of the AA will be used as documentation and support for a funding grant application under the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Small Starts program. Because land use and economic development are two critical metrics included in the FTA evaluation process to rate projects, a preliminary assessment of these factors was conducted by MRCOG in parallel with the AA study. For this phase of the process, the assessment was limited to the identification of current land use and economic development conditions within the corridor, and the actions needed to better integrate land use and development in the future.

The land use and development task was conducted by MRCOG in collaboration with the major institutions and agencies with jurisdiction over development within the study area and that provide transit service. These include the Rio Metro Regional Transit District (RMRTD), City of Albuquerque, University of New Mexico (UNM), Central New Mexico Community College (CNM), and Bernalillo County. In addition, other entities with an interest in land use and development within the BRT corridor also participated in the task.

The topics and issues discussed in this paper include:

- An overview of the FTA Small Starts program evaluation process as it pertains to land use and economic development.
- A brief discussion of the principles of transit supportive development.
- Existing land use, ownership, and development within the BRT corridor.
- Land use plans and policies that have guided where and how development has occurred or will occur in the future.
- Emerging development plans.
- Potential opportunities for economic development within the study corridor.
- Challenges and barriers that may limit transit supportive development within the corridor.
- Recommended actions to better achieve transit supportive development along the recommended BRT route.

Figure 1 – Recommended BRT Route

1.1 FTA Small Starts Criteria for Land Use and Economic Development

The assessment of land use and economic development opportunities within the proposed BRT corridor is an important first step in the pursuit of federal funding for the proposed project. At an estimated implementation cost of approximately $60 million, the proposed project is a major public investment. Consequently, funding support through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Small Starts Program is desired. While improving the project's FTA rating is an important objective of the assessment, integration of land use and the transportation system, and the economic development benefits that integration provides, is also consistent with the goals and priorities of the institutions and major landowners along the corridor as reflected in their respective plans and policies.

Small Starts is a competitive discretionary program and involves a rigorous evaluation and rating process. Land use and economic development are two of the six "project justification" criteria used by FTA. The land use measure focuses on existing development and is measured by the total employment served by the project and population densities and affordable housing within ½ mile of station areas. Given the existing density of population, number of housing units, and high employment associated with UNM, UNM Hospital, CNM, and the Albuquerque International Sunport, the proposed BRT project is likely to rate well for the land use criteria, with one potential exception — the availability of "legally binding affordability restricted" housing within ½ mile of station areas. While low-cost housing exists within the project area, the amount housing with legally binding affordability restrictions is still being investigated.

In contrast to the emphasis on existing conditions for land use, the economic development measure considers the extent to which a proposed project is likely to help transform a corridor to include additional, transit-supportive development in the future. The assessment of economic development is based on a qualitative review of the plans and policies already in place (or that are under development) that support economic development within the transit corridor. Small Start projects are rated during the "project development phase" and again when an application for a funding agreement is requested. In general, to obtain a medium rating during the project development phase, applicants must demonstrate significant progress towards the development and implementation of transit supportive plans, policies, and zoning for the proposed BRT corridor.

1.2 Principles of Transit Supportive Development

The proposed BRT project would substantially improve transit service within the project area. With preliminary estimates of 17,300 riders per day, the proposed service would be the most productive transit route within the metropolitan area in both overall riders and riders per mile. However, if land use and development within the corridor were transformed to be consistent with the principles of transit supportive development (TSD), ridership performance and the overall attractiveness of the corridor could be improved even more.

The fundamentals of TSD strive for the creation of a place that attracts people through safe streets, provides a strong center, includes local services, parks/open space, and housing choices, and provides a mix of employment. While transit is rarely the primary driver of a development market, it can generate pedestrian activity that can induce the market to integrate a mix of uses. The general characteristics of successful TSDs are summarized below.

1. *Medium to higher density development pattern*
    - A denser district compared to the community average

- Densities that increase as they are in closer proximity to transit service. Typical densities are 6 to 7 dwelling units per acre for BRT systems and 9 to 25 dwelling units for light rail transit.
- Retail and office uses are closest to transit, with residential uses occupying next row lands.

2. *Mix of uses*
    - A mix of uses with retail, office, and residential.
    - Residential development with a mixture of price, size, and ownership.
    - The most active uses, such as commercial and office, placed at ground level to help excite the street space.
    - Mostly successful when automobile use is at least partially prohibited along actual transit route.
3. *Compact pedestrian oriented environment*
    - Block sizes of approximately 400 feet to provide an average 5 minute walk.
    - Building facades oriented to the sidewalks.
    - Streets designed to improve walkability with features such as on-street parking, designated curb zones, wide sidewalks with carriage ways, etc.
4. *Active defined center*
    - Should have a designated central area of the district which is designed to be active with a mix of daytime and evening uses (18 hours of activity).
    - Should exude a quality public realm and specific sense of place.
    - Often the most compact and dense portion of district.
    - Major employment centers targeted close to the central area.
5. *Limited and managed parking*
    - The parking approach should be district-wide and govern the size, location, design, and management of parking facilities.
    - Requires a departure from traditional zoning codes which stipulate minimum parking/ square footage ratios, and often involves instituting maximum ratios.
    - Most successful when parking is completely disconnected from buildings and managed through designated parking areas on the periphery of the district.
6. *Strong public leadership*
    - The most critical factor for successful implementation of TSD.
    - Political will must be aligned with TSD objectives, including identifying influential champions of the concept within the business community, development community, and local government.
    - City regulations and capital budget must be aligned with TSD plans to be properly implemented.
    - Most successful when progressive developers with projects that fit into TSD principles and the corridor vision are nurtured and supported by public leadership.

The proposed BRT corridor already has some of the above characteristics, but others are absent and will need to be developed. Assessing the existing land use conditions, the status and influence of adopted plans and policies, and the political/institutional framework within the corridor was one of the

objectives of the land use task. This was accomplished via partnering efforts with the institutions, businesses, and other organizations which are active and influential within the corridor, and whose assistance may be necessary in order to achieve the desired vision for the corridor. To that end, the project team organized two stakeholder workshops to facilitate discussion on the corridor's land uses and development potential.

The workshops focused on how TSD could expand opportunities for land use and economic development along University Blvd. Over the course of two sessions, the project team and stakeholders explored how parcels along the corridor could take advantage of access to high quality, reliable transit and a shift to higher intensity land uses. During the workshops, the participants toured the corridor and analyzed the current challenges for pedestrians to navigate the current auto-centric design of University Boulevard and, to a lesser extent, Yale Boulevard. As an outcome of the workshops, the project team and stakeholders agreed on a series of follow-up measures to help define a shared vision to help transform the corridor into a more transit supportive district. The recommendations of this report reflect the input and insight gained from the workshops.

One recurring theme from the stakeholder meetings was that the character of development is driven primarily by the market and not the provision of transit alone. If the market for TSD does not currently exist, the groundwork must be laid early to begin to change market factors towards a more mixed use and pedestrian-friendly environment. This process can be difficult, as a successful TSD is not limited to a parcel or even a series of parcels, but instead to the entire area within an approximate five minute walk.

The six principles outlined above were used to generate discussion with the stakeholders during the workshops. Stakeholders generally agreed that these components should help inform future development in the corridor in order to move the existing pattern of land uses more towards a more transit oriented district.

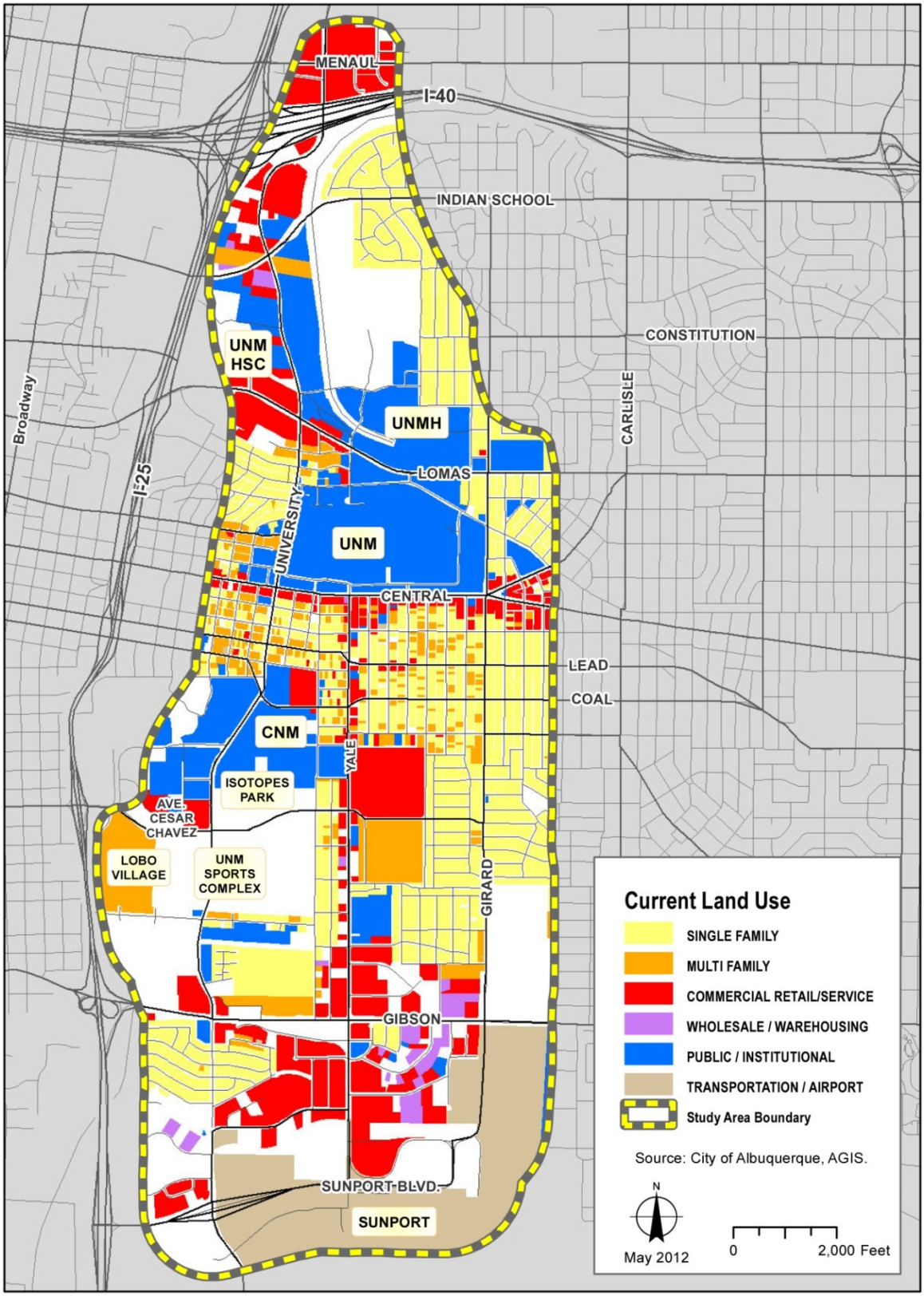
2.0 Existing Conditions

The study corridor is located in the southeast portion of the Albuquerque metropolitan area, about one mile east of downtown Albuquerque. The recommended BRT route alignment begins at a proposed park and ride near Menaul Boulevard and University Boulevard and follows University Boulevard south to Lomas. From there, it jogs east to the University of New Mexico Hospital and then south on Yale, where it follows Las Lomas and Redondo around the northwest side of UNM Main Campus. The route rejoins University Boulevard at Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, then follows University south past CNM to Avenida Cesar Chavez, where it turns east to Yale and then south to the Sunport (Figure 1). As an option to this alignment, the route could continue south on University Boulevard to Gibson Boulevard before turning east and joining Yale, bypassing Avenida Cesar Chavez and the segment of South Yale between Avenida Cesar Chavez and Gibson Boulevard.

2.1 Land Use

Land use within the corridor is highly variable and ranges from residential neighborhoods to large institutional uses and some light industrial uses. The predominant character is that of the institutional uses including the UNM campuses, CNM campus, UNM Hospital, and the regional collegiate and professional sports facilities. These state-owned facilities occupy large parcels throughout the northern two-thirds of the corridor. However, there are also numerous commercial, service, and residential uses within the corridor, most of which are located on smaller, neighborhood-scale parcels (see Figure 2) in the middle and southern areas.

Figure 2 – Current Land Use



The northern end of the corridor includes light industrial uses, interstate trucking services, and a cluster of hotels. Between I-40 and Lomas Boulevard, the corridor consists primarily of hospital and university uses, such as the UNM Cancer Center, the Carrie Tingley Children's Hospital, and the UNM Continuing Education Center. There are few adjacent businesses or residential developments, with those that are present located near the intersection of University Boulevard and Indian School Road.

The area around University and Lomas is dominated by the University of New Mexico. North of Lomas is the UNM Health Sciences Center, a 270-acre campus that includes research, education, and hospital facilities. The UNM Hospital, the state's only Level One Trauma Center, fronts onto Lomas east of University. South of Lomas is the UNM Main Campus, a 210-acre campus that is the primary destination for more than 25,000 students. To the west are the older Spruce Park and Sycamore neighborhoods, home to many UNM students and faculty members.

Most of the existing commercial activity is located along Central Avenue, including a particularly vibrant stretch east of University Boulevard. Between UNM Main Campus and CNM Main Campus are a number of established older single-family neighborhoods that include a high percentage of rental units occupied by students. South of this area is the region's major sports facilities which surround the intersection of University and Avenida Cesar Chavez. These facilities include the Pit (the UNM basketball arena), Isotopes Park (home of the AAA Albuquerque Isotopes baseball team), and University Stadium (home of the UNM football team), as well as other university sporting facilities such as baseball, soccer, and tennis facilities. South of this intersection are neighborhoods with single-family residential uses, mobile home subdivisions, as well as multifamily apartments. To the west, the area between University Boulevard and I-40 is largely undeveloped.

This southern stretch of University Boulevard, from Central to Gibson, contains almost no commercial or retail establishments. This issue came up repeatedly in conversations with CNM students and staff in particular, who lack access to restaurants and basic services during the day. The nearest services are located along Central Avenue, which is difficult for CNM students and staff to access during their lunch hour or other breaks.

The lands along Avenida Cesar Chavez from University to Yale consist primarily of sports- and university-related parking, which will be discussed in the next section. The southern part of Yale, from Avenida Cesar Chavez to Gibson, consists of some single-family residential neighborhoods and limited commercial activity. The businesses in this area have struggled. Consequently, many of the lots and buildings are unoccupied, especially in the area close to Gibson Boulevard. Near Yale and Gibson, there is another cluster of hotels that serve the Albuquerque International Sunport, as well as office and light industrial uses and airport parking.

2.2 Parking

The study area contains extensive surface parking, most of it related to UNM and CNM (Figure 3). The two institutions account for approximately 25,600 total parking spaces distributed across 86 surface lots and 5 structures (Table 1). This tally includes remote parking for students, event parking at the sports stadiums, and staff, patient, and visitor parking at the UNM medical facilities. Combined, these spaces take up 210 acres, which is about 21 percent of the land within the study area.

There are also many more parking spaces related to private businesses and the Sunport. Within the study area's core, most of the parking is located on-street or in small surface lots. Further out, the

Figure 3 - UNM and CNM Parking Lots

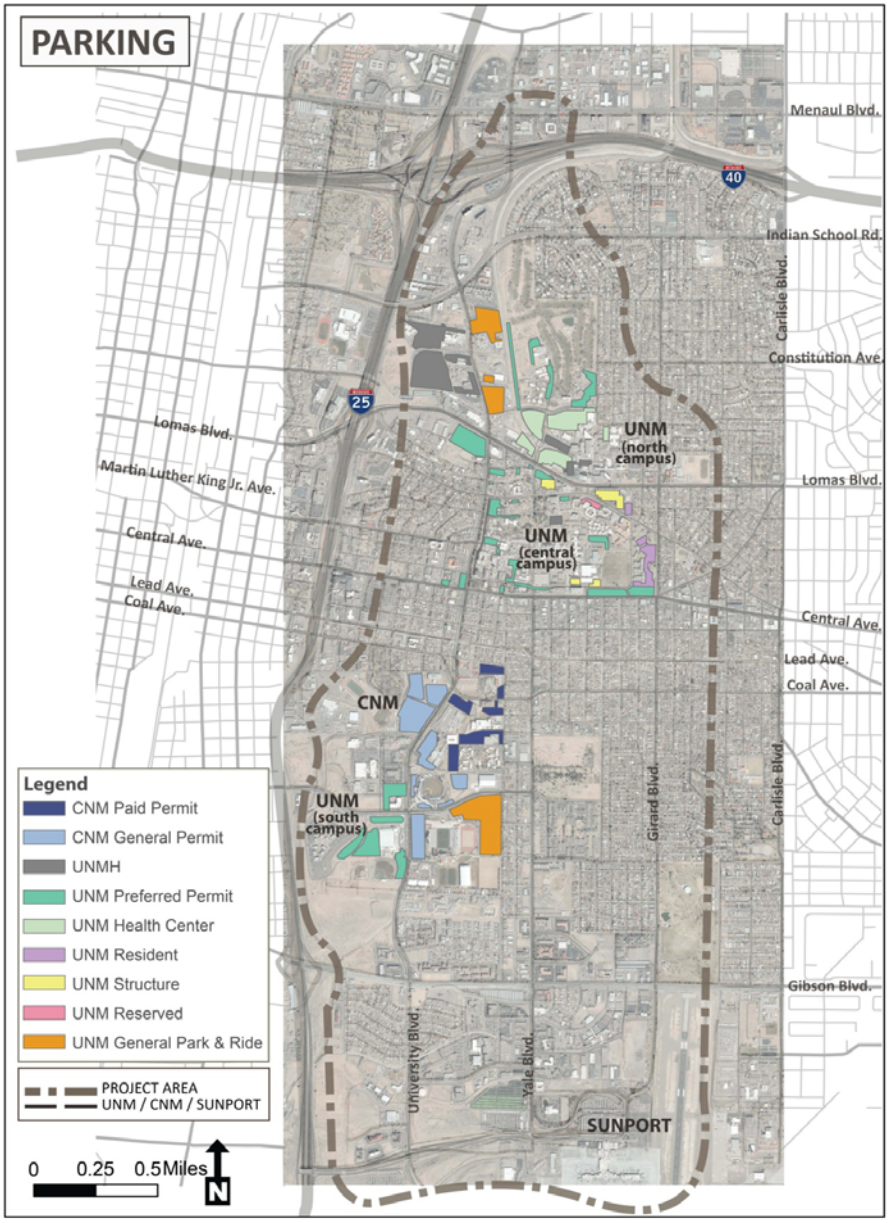


Table 1: UNM and CNM Parking Capacity by Location

Campus Subarea	Surface Parking		Structure Parking		Total Capacity	Total Acres
	Lots	Capacity	Structures	Capacity		
UNM North	23	7,852	1	372	8,224	81.3
UNM Main	24	3,352	3	2,971	6,323	34.1
UNM South	13	5,069			5,069	43.8
Science & Tech Park	10	1,495	1	498	1,993	13.1
Student Family Housing	7	342			342	2.5
CNM	14	3,641			3,641	36.0
Totals	91	21,751	5	3,841	25,592	210.8

surface lots grow larger. In particular, there is a large cluster of surface parking near the Sunport, including parking for hotels, office parks, and both off-site and on-site airport parking.

Parking within the study area is more tightly regulated than perhaps anywhere else in the state, and there is relatively little in the way of free or unrestricted parking. UNM students, staff, and faculty must purchase permits to park in any of the university's lots at a cost ranging from $175 to $475 surface lots and approximately $700 to park in on-campus parking structures. Paid visitor parking is available in two parking structures located at the north and south sides of the UNM main campus. CNM students, faculty, and staff also must obtain parking permits to use any of the CNM lots. Most of the permits are free, in accordance with CNM's mission of providing a low-cost education, but they are limited to current CNM students, staff, and faculty. Reserved paid parking is available in some lots for $43 per term. CNM also shares some parking facilities with the nearby sports stadiums, although CNM parking is not allowed on game days.

Most of the neighborhoods adjacent to the UNM and CNM campuses require city parking permits, which are free but are limited to residents and their guests. This permit system was put in place to discourage students, staff, and faculty from parking within the neighborhoods. The permits must be displayed during weekdays, but not on weekends or weeknights. Many neighborhood residents still complain about parking, particularly when there are evening sporting events such as Isotopes baseball games and basketball games. Parking for sporting events is paid, resulting in some fans avoiding fees by parking in nearby neighborhoods.

There are also numerous on-street parking spaces in the area, particularly on and around Central Avenue. Most of these spaces are metered and time-limited.

3.0 Adopted and Ongoing Plans

The City of Albuquerque and other major institutions have already adopted land use plans for many subareas within the corridor. This section includes an overview of applicable plans and policies, including the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, City of Albuquerque Sector Development Plans, City of Albuquerque Metropolitan Redevelopment Plans, and the University of New Mexico Master Plan. Some of these plans, such as the various City Sector Development Plans, are regulatory in nature and prescribe specific zoning requirements. Others, such as the UNM Master Plan developed by the University, lay out specific but non-binding visions for the area. Because the University is on state-owned lands, they are not bound by local land use policies and development regulations.

3.1 UNM Master Plan (2009) and UNMHSC Campus Master Plan (2010)

The University of New Mexico Master Plan considers long-term growth plans for the north, central and south campuses which includes transportation planning to link these areas and to connect to the larger transit system.

Central Campus - Enrollment is expected to grow from 26,000 in 2009 to 35,000 by 2018. The plan is to increase the number of students living on the main campus and to maximize the expansion of academic and research space. The overall strategy is to reduce parking and automobile impacts while improving pedestrian, bike and transit options to connect north, central and south campuses. The plan includes a cap on parking spaces on the Central campus and improvements to bicycle and pedestrian entrances along Lomas Boulevard and Central Avenue. Parking will be consolidated in multi-story structures

located on the perimeter of the campus to meet short-term parking needs, and access to portions of Redondo Drive will be limited to transit and bikes only.

South Campus - The Science and Technology Park includes the addition of structured parking which is expected to provide opportunity for infill development of the existing surface parking areas. The master plan for this area included a new student housing village for upperclassmen, which has been built, south of Avenida Cesar Chavez, west of The Pit. The plan also calls for retail and commercial uses along Avenida Cesar Chavez and University Boulevard.

North Campus - The UNM Health Science Center (UNMHSC) Campus Master Plan includes the development of three distinct districts: a Clinic District along University Boulevard, a Hospital District west of University Boulevard, and a Mixed-Use District along Lomas Boulevard. Parking facilities will be located at the perimeter of the UNMHSC campus and accessible from the I-25 Frontage Road and Lomas Boulevard. The plan proposes mass transit links between the existing UNMHSC campus and the campus expansion west of University Boulevard.

Proposed road network improvements include extending Camino de Salud west and north to connect to the Hospital District west of University Boulevard. The Camino de Salud and University Boulevard intersection will be developed as the gateway to the north campus and is planned as a major activity node. According to the University plan, the extension of Mountain Road from the I-25 frontage road east to Legion Street is considered critical to the overall development of this area due to the limited access to this area.

The Hospital District development plans include a new 96 bed, Adult Acute Care Hospital west of University Boulevard and east of I-25. The Linear Park development is an open space corridor that will link the east and west UNMHSC campus that is proposed to underpass University Boulevard and terminate at the proposed hospital. The Mixed-Use District along the north and south sides of Lomas Boulevard from University Boulevard west to I-25 is planned for commercial and residential uses. The Plan also identifies a Multi-Modal Center just east of I-25 and north of Lomas Boulevard to connect the ABQ Rapid Ride, UNM Shuttle system, and a new large parking lot to provide better access to the area for hospital and clinic patients.

3.2 Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan (2003)

The Comprehensive Plan is the highest-ranking planning document in the city and county: a Rank I document. It establishes land use and transportation policy guidance, while lower-tier plans such as Sector Development Plans contain legally-binding regulations. All lower-tier plans are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan classifies most of the corridor as “Established Urban.” According to these policies, infill development should be encouraged, particularly next to existing urban infrastructure and facilities such as University Boulevard, as long as it is appropriate to the surrounding neighborhood context. The area of University between roughly Central and Coal is designated as “Central Urban,” which indicates an area that is intended to be the city’s arts, public facilities, and cultural hub.

The Comprehensive Plan also contains Centers and Corridors policies, in which the City’s and County’s significant activity centers are linked by tiered transportation corridors. Within the study area, there are three Major Activity Centers – the highest intensity of activity – and two Special Activity Centers. The three Major Activity Centers are UNM, CNM, and Sunport/Airport. These are major employment and

activity centers that draw people from around the region. They should be accessible to all transportation modes, including transit, pedestrians, and bicycles, should have strong transit connections, and should include on-street and structured parking. The core of each Major Activity Center should consist of high-density uses, including residential developments, and should transition to the lower densities of the surrounding neighborhoods. Buildings in the core should be three stories or taller, with floor-area ratios of 1.0 and greater, indicating a highly urbanized area. There should also be strong connections between buildings and sidewalks.

The two Special Activity Centers are UNM South/Sports Complex and Sunport/Airport. These areas provide unique attractions, serving local, regional, and state needs. In this instance, the UNM South/Sports Complex houses most of the state's major sporting venues, and the Sunport serves as the state's largest and most significant airport. These areas are generally intended to be more car-oriented, but safe pedestrian and transit access is still encouraged.

The Comprehensive Plan identifies University Boulevard from Menaul to Gibson as an Enhanced Transit Corridor, which is designed to "improve transit and pedestrian opportunities for residents, businesses, and other users nearby." The Comprehensive Plan encourages transit-supportive development, including residential uses where feasible, near Enhanced Transit Corridors in order to generate additional transit ridership. Lomas and Gibson are also identified as Enhanced Transit Corridors.

A recent update to the Comprehensive Plan designates Yale Boulevard as an Enhanced Transit Corridor as well. It also establishes a new Community Activity Center at the UNM South/Sports Complex, in addition to the existing Special Activity Center designation. Community Activity Centers serve a smaller market than Major Activity Centers and are more auto-oriented, but should still be pedestrian-friendly in the center and provide strong connections to the regional transit system. Land uses are intended to be less intense than in Major Activity Centers, but still somewhat dense.

3.3 University Neighborhoods Sector Development Plan (1986)

The University Neighborhoods Sector Development Plan, adopted by the City of Albuquerque in July of 1986, is a Rank III plan specifically addressing the southern University area and the Sycamore Neighborhood. The Sycamore Neighborhood, the most western and northwestern portion of the Sector Plan Area, adopted a plan in 1982 which designated it a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area.

The University Neighborhood Sector Plan Area is an irregular shape bordered by Girard Boulevard on the east and I-25 on the west. To the north, it is largely bordered by Central Avenue, however it continues north on University Boulevard to include what is now Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue. In the years after the plan was adopted, Central New Mexico Community College (CNM), formerly known as Technical Vocational Institute (TVI), has expanded and closed a portion of St. Cyr Avenue in the southern part of the plan area.

The plan seeks to provide sufficient roadway capacity while encouraging the development of multimodal transportation alternatives. Issues identified include increased traffic on residential streets and the intrusion of parking lots, as well as commercial and institutional uses into residential areas. The plan addresses improved pedestrian access and crossings, additional bus shelters and benches, and zoning amendments to improve the mixed-use character of the area and buffering incompatible uses such as parking lots and residential areas. The plan also discourages further expansion of CNM, UNM, and Presbyterian Hospital ownership or activities into areas zoned as residential. As noted for other areas owned by UNM and CNM, development plans on UNM and CNM lands are not subject to review

and approval by the City. Thus, the language included in the sector development plan is advisory when it involves these state-owned lands.

3.4 South Yale Sector Development Plan (2009)

The South Yale Sector Development Plan (SYSDP), adopted by the City of Albuquerque in 2009, covers the area north of Gibson Boulevard SE, east of University Boulevard, south of St. Cyr Avenue, and generally west of Columbia Drive. The SYSDP area includes or is adjacent to three important Activity Centers: the UNM South Sports Complex, the CNM main campus, and the Albuquerque International Sunport. In this way, the South Yale corridor is an important transportation route between the Sunport and the University of New Mexico. The SYSDP has several goals for the area which focus on increasing pedestrian activity and safety and transit access. The long-term recommendations include ideas specific to a previous proposal for a Modern Street Car Project as a transit alternative. While the street car project is no longer active, the proposed design changes would benefit development of the proposed BRT. Short-term recommendations include increasing existing transit services as well as improvements to bicycle and pedestrian routes, access, and connections.

Most notably, the SYSDP applied five revised zones to the area: Yale Commercial Corridor (YCC), Residential Multifamily 1 and 2 (RMF1, RMF2), Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMX), and Planned Neighborhood Residential (PNR). The YCC zone was specifically tailored to support commercial mixed-use development in conjunction with multi-modal transportation options. The southern portion of Yale Boulevard in the Plan area is zoned NMX which encourages commercial and residential development with specified design criteria. The northern portion of Yale Boulevard is zoned YCC which prohibits exclusively residential projects but encourages mixed-use projects with residential uses on the upper floors. These zones include form-based elements and are designed to encourage pedestrian-oriented development with minimal setbacks from the street.

In addition, the SYSDP identifies a number of key projects whose implementation would significantly advance the redevelopment of the area and promote its goals. The projects include streetscape and corridor improvements for south Yale, Gibson, and Avenida Cesar Chavez, the addition of gateways, traffic and drainage studies, and trail and transit improvements.

3.5 Clayton Heights/Lomas del Cielo Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan (2010)

The Clayton Heights/Lomas del Cielo Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan covers the area east of University Boulevard, north of Gibson, generally south of Avenida Cesar Chavez, and generally west of Columbia. The plan addresses general modifications and improvements to roadways to calm traffic and to support and encourage redevelopment of vacant or underutilized land.

Importantly, the plan designated a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area that has access to a wide range of implementation and funding tools to assist in achieving desired change in this area. The plan recommends complete and thorough assessments of any transportation recommendations for the area and specifically addresses pedestrian safety improvements along Avenida Cesar Chavez. Transportation recommendations include a streetcar along Yale Boulevard. The land use and development plans for the 14-acre Korean War Veterans Memorial Park are to be determined through the *Loma Linda Community Center and Korean War Veterans Memorial Park Master Plan/Needs Assessment*.

3.6 Silver Hill Historic Overlay Zone (2010)

The Silver Hills Historic Overlay Zone provides a set of mandatory development standards for the Silver Hill Historic Zone, a residential area bounded roughly by Gold, Lead, Yale, and Sycamore. The historic district is aligned east/west perpendicular to the University corridor and only affects about two blocks along the proposed BRT route. The overlay zone is designed to protect architectural features on contributing (historic) buildings, including foundations, walls, doors and windows, roofs, porches, and general architectural character. These restrictions also apply to certain streetscape features such as sidewalks and planting strips. Additions to contributing historic buildings should complement the original structure and reflect the design, scale, and architectural type of the original building. New construction, as well as modifications to non-contributing (non-historic) buildings, should blend in with the surrounding historic structures and have similar lot sizes, architectural features, height, mass, and scale.

Most building additions, demolitions, and new construction within the overlay zone require a certificate of appropriateness from the City of Albuquerque and must be approved by the City's Landmarks and Urban Conservation Commission. This indicates that within the overlay zone, it would be difficult to redevelop existing parcels.

3.7 South Yale Complete Streets Plan (ongoing)

The City of Albuquerque is currently in the process of developing a "Complete Street" Master Plan for South Yale Boulevard between St. Cyr Avenue and Gibson Boulevard. The "Complete Street" concept facilitates the safe and efficient use of roadways for multiple user groups including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. The overall goal is to develop an implementable plan for the corridor that encourages the desired land uses associated with the three distinct areas along the corridor. These areas include the Commercial/Main Street District, located between Cesar Chavez and Kathryn; the Community-Serving District, located between Kathryn and Ross; and the Hospitality District, located near the Sunport between Ross and Gibson. Recommendations and design elements are intended to promote private redevelopment in the Commercial/Main Street District. Improved pedestrian facilities and neighborhood connectivity is recommended in the Community-Serving District. The Hospitality District recommendations are intended to improve the transition between residential areas and the intensity of uses on Gibson Boulevard. All segment recommendations propose enhanced transit facilities.

3.8 Summary of Existing Plans

Although all of the above plans were developed prior to this transit study and the resulting recommendation to implement a BRT system, they generally support the vision of a transit-friendly, higher-density corridor. However, with the exception of the South Yale Sector Development Plan and the Clayton Heights/Lomas del Cielo MRA Plan, integrating transit was not a primary objective of these plans. Thus, some updates to these and/or other plans may be necessary to advance transit-specific land use policies within the study area.

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that the area is home to many of the region's key activity centers, and it encourages infill development and improved transit, pedestrian, and bicycle access in the area. The South Yale Sector Development Plan encourages commercial and mixed-use development that fronts the street and is pedestrian-oriented. Building upon that plan, the ongoing South Yale Complete Streets project proposes specific streetscape improvements that would encourage pedestrian activity, and the study team will work with the City of Albuquerque to ensure the proposed BRT project is integrated into the streetscape plans. The

Clayton Heights/Lomas del Cielo MRA encourages pedestrian-friendly redevelopment in the area. In its Master Plan, UNM proposes a significant amount of development in the corridor, including new development on vacant parcels and redevelopment of existing surface parking lots.

The Silver Hill Historic Overlay Zone addresses an area with a distinct character that the City has determined is worth preserving. The overlay zone along with the single-family residential zoning would make redevelopment of this area difficult. However, it only affects a small portion of the corridor just north of CNM. Likewise, the University Neighborhoods Sector Development Plan is a relatively old document designed to protect existing single-family residential neighborhoods from institutional and commercial intrusions, and could possibly impede some redevelopment along the portion of Central Avenue that is directly connected to the BRT study area. In addition to the challenges of redevelopment within these two plan areas, residential areas in other neighborhoods will have similar challenges due to the small lot size, zoning, and diverse ownership. However, the areas affected would not significantly hinder overall redevelopment within most of the opportunity sites identified in Section 5.

4.0 Planned Development

There are currently many developments planned along the University corridor, perhaps more than anywhere else in the region. What makes this corridor especially unique is that many of the parcels are under single institutional ownership, as opposed to private ownership. UNM in particular owns vast amounts of land in the corridor, and as state property, it is exempt from City of Albuquerque zoning regulations and review. As a non-profit institution, as opposed to a private developer, the university is also relatively immune to market cycles. This means that the university can build without approval from local planning authority and is subject to approval by the state Board of Regents and funded in the annual budget. This is also true for CNM properties.

4.1 Lobo Development

Lobo Development is the development arm of the University of New Mexico. Its goal is to develop non-campus lands owned by UNM to their highest and best use, increasing the university's revenues and contributing to the area's overall quality of life. Lobo Development recently constructed Lobo Village, a privately-operated off-campus student housing facility west of the Pit, and has plans for other significant developments.

The highest-profile project is the South Campus Development, an area of roughly 47 acres located immediately northwest of University and Gibson and south of the UNM athletic facilities. The area is master planned as a retail and commercial facility, oriented around internal streets and parking lots. Lobo Development has entered into development agreements with a private developer and anticipates construction will begin in 2014 and will be complete sometime in 2015. The preliminary plans appear to be car-oriented rather than transit-oriented, with large setbacks, limited street connectivity, and buildings oriented around extensive internal surface parking. If decisions for the BRT project advance before the development plans are finalized, it may be possible to influence a development type that is more transit oriented and pedestrian friendly.

Lobo Development also plans to construct a 4.3-acre retail and restaurant facility immediately west of Lobo Village, as well as new infill projects at the Science and Technology Park across the street from CNM and Isotopes Park. Longer-term, Lobo Development intends to develop the area along the Lomas corridor near University. In 2011, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) held a symposium to help determine the

potential of the lands at University Boulevard and Lomas Boulevard. The ULI report recommended a mixed-use development, including residential and commercial with structured parking.

4.2 UNM Hospital Expansion

To alleviate a bed shortage, the UNM Hospital plans to build a new 6-story, 96-bed, 185,000 square foot hospital northwest of Lomas and University, as discussed in the UNMHSC Campus Master Plan. Currently, the existing hospital has about 300 adult beds and typically operates at 95% of capacity, which has significantly increased patient waiting times and does not allow enough excess capacity for unexpected emergency situations.

The goal is to create two related but separate "wings" of the hospital: a new facility west of University Boulevard that focuses on adult acute care and a repurposing of the existing hospital east of University Boulevard to focus on labor, delivery, and pediatric services. Key to this concept of expanding the hospital is an east/west transit link that would connect the two facilities. Integration of this transit link with the larger transit service on University Blvd. is critical to providing good access to the hospital.

5.0 Economic Development Opportunities

Although the existing plans discussed in Section 3 generally support and promote pedestrian- and transit-oriented development, those visions have not yet become a reality. Existing and proposed development does not always conform to the vision of the guiding plans and policies. To create improved transit-supportive conditions, there are other opportunities that can be leveraged, including capital improvements, shared management agreements, and consistent transit-supportive development policies. This section describes specific development-related opportunities, barriers to be addressed, and ongoing actions that should be explored to achieve a more transit supportive corridor that sparks economic development and aligns strongly with FTA ratings.

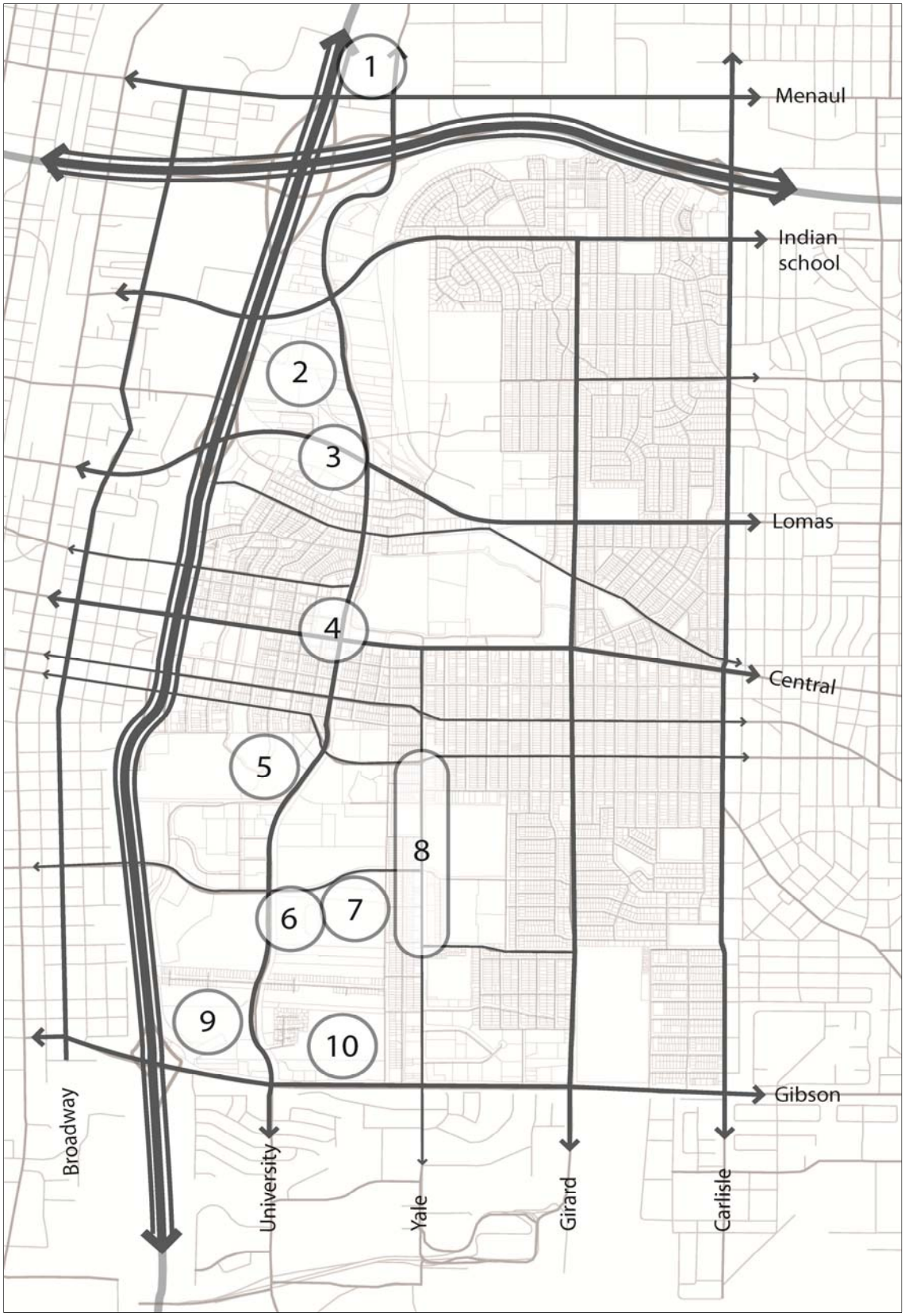
5.1 Specific Opportunities

Within the project area, specific areas have been identified as having potential for higher and better transit-supportive uses (Figure 4). These areas were identified through land use workshops, stakeholder outreach, review of planning documents, and land-based analysis. Each of the specific sites discussed below can be developed and/or improved to include higher densities, more compact development patterns and diverse land use mixes, additional housing choices, and less intense on-site parking. However, some of these sites are not under public control (e.g., the north terminus area and South Yale area) and would require acquisition or partnering with the current owners. Other opportunities involve state-owned lands that are and not subject to local planning and zoning policies and regulations. These will create challenges for integrating transit supportive development along the corridor without an agreement in place. Additionally, while some of the sites discussed have low relative utilization from a tax revenue generation perspective, the specific business models may provide acceptable revenue for the owners, and could delay timing for redevelopment without acquisition or partnering. These areas will be studied further with the appropriate owners and stakeholders to determine the level that transit supportive objectives can be met.

1. *North terminus between Menaul and Candelaria.*

   This underutilized location is just northeast of the I-25/I-40 intersection, and could be a strategic site for a parking structure and other commercial related development, including office operations.

Figure 4 – Economic Development Opportunity Sites



While a park and ride location could be located here or south of I-40, the lands south of I-40 may be better used for a higher use than a park and ride. Surrounding land uses between Menaul and Candelaria include light industrial and hospitality. Due to a lack of active pedestrian-oriented uses in this area and no nearby residential neighborhoods, this terminal location is unlikely to generate a district level catalytic development affect that some terminal locations are capable of producing.

- Ownership: Private
- Approximate size of area: approximately 7.5 acres
- Relevant plans and policies: Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, City of Albuquerque Comprehensive Zoning Code, City of Albuquerque Development Process Manual
- Zoning: The parcel proposed as a potential park and ride lot is not currently zoned as it is former NMDOT right-of-way. Adjacent properties are zoned M-1 and are occupied by light industrial, wholesale, and manufacturing uses.

2. *UNM Health Science Center at Camino de Salud.*

This area is the location for a growing cluster of UNM HSC clinics that require good patient access, including a regional Cancer Center and Outpatient Surgery and Imaging Center. With the proposed construction of a new hospital and supporting medical offices, this area could be part of a much larger medical and health-related district. Two stations have been conceptually located in this area, adjacent to existing surface parking areas. Redevelopment could occur at either location with pedestrian-oriented development. Key to this success would be creating smaller blocks through the expansion of the street network off University. The service road parallel to the west side of the AMAFCA channel could be developed as a two lane access road with a bicycle lane to accommodate the existing channel trail.

- Ownership: State/UNM
- Approximate size of area: 10 acres
- Relevant plans and policies: University of New Mexico Master Plan
- Zoning: The parcels in this area are zoned C-3; however, they are owned by the state (UNM) and therefore, not subject to City of Albuquerque zoning regulations.

3. *Lands along Lomas between I-25 and University.*

The November 2011 Urban Land Institute report provides sufficient recommendations and guidance for this area. This location provides access to I-25 and I-40 via freeway frontage roads and is adjacent to the UNMH campus to the north, UNM main campus to the east and to an established residential neighborhood to the south. Most of the lands in this area are controlled by the Sandia Foundation and UNM. Lands on the north side of Lomas would be better suited for medical related uses, while uses along the south side of Lomas may be better served by general university needs. Potential new uses in this location could include: housing for the medical professionals, faculty, and students; support retail to address the needs of the area; and other uses such as additional hospitality facilities (to serve the hospital and main campus), medical offices, and university research. Key barriers to this location include topography challenges; a site configuration that is linear and lacks the ability to create a strong center; and high traffic along Lomas. Key to the success of a successful center would be creating smaller blocks through the expansion of the street network off both sides of Lomas with improved pedestrian-friendly street crossings. If desired by the

adjoining communities, existing roads from the Spruce Park neighborhood and the Medical Arts development could be extended to improve connectivity with existing residential areas.

- Ownership: State/UNM and Sandia Foundation
- Approximate size of area: 59 acres
- Relevant plans and policies: Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, City of Albuquerque Comprehensive Zoning Code, City of Albuquerque Development Process Manual, UNM Master Plan
- Zoning: The parcels in this area are zoned C-2 and C-3; however, the parcels owned by the state (UNM) are not subject to City of Albuquerque zoning regulations.

4. *Transfer location at Central and University.*

Central Avenue is an existing enhanced transit route with plans to expand to BRT. The proximity of this location to the University BRT route and the main campus of UNM provide an opportunity for a main campus station that accommodates transfer east-west connections to Central Avenue and north-south connections to University Boulevard. The lot on the northwest corner of this intersection is owned by UNM and used to house the university's Parking and Transportation Services. It could be redeveloped to include local retail, commercial or institutional uses. However this parcel is less than 1 acre in size and could be difficult to develop in a pedestrian-oriented form unless on-site parking is reduced. The UNM Arts Lab and ancillary structures are located west on Pine Street to Ash Street. If all of these lots could be assembled, a parcel size of about three and one-half acres could be created with frontage on both University and Central. An iconic, transit supportive mixed-used development could be created including university support uses, commercial and residential. Additionally, a large surface parking lot that serves Central United Methodist Church is located north of Copper Street. If on-site parking regulations were reduced and enhanced transit was provided along this route, the parking lot could be redeveloped into a compact development form with higher and better economic use that could include commercial or church related uses.

- Ownership: State/UNM and private
- Approximate size of area: 3 acres
- Relevant plans and policies: University of New Mexico Master Plan
- Zoning: The parcels in this area are zoned SU-2; however, the parcels owned by the state (UNM) are not subject to City of Albuquerque zoning regulations.

5. *Parking areas between Coal Avenue and Basehart Street*

This area is the main entry to the CNM campus and includes large surface parking lots along both sides of University Boulevard. The presence of enhanced transit service, together with the creation of a parking management agreement, could reduce the need for many of these parking lots and provide an opportunity for CNM to manage their land for urban compact campus expansion. One or more additional parking structures could address on-site needs, while transit could allow students to park remotely. Key sites in this area are located on the south corners of Coal Avenue along University, and at the intersection of University and Basehart. Coal Avenue is a gateway and separates residential uses to the north from CNM campus uses to the south. New uses in this location could be transitional-scaled housing, university support uses, and limited community-based retail. On the east side of University Boulevard at Basehart, a new building is planned by CNM. It will be important that this new building provides improved frontage along University, with active uses

that enhances the character of the street. Improved pedestrian crossings along University should also be provided to facilitate safer crossings and better connections to new uses along the west side of University.

- Ownership: State/CNM
- Approximate size of area: 8 to 17 acres
- Relevant plans and policies: CNM Capital Improvements Plan
- Zoning: All of the parcels in this area are state-owned and therefore, not subject to City of Albuquerque zoning regulations.

6. *Parking areas south of Avenida Cesar Chavez and along University Boulevard*

This area has developed as a sports and entertainment hub and includes Lobo Stadium (UNM football stadium), the Pit (UNM basketball arena), and Lobo Field (UNM baseball field). The UNM Master Plan recommends liner buildings along the east side of University Boulevard in front of Lobo Stadium. This could greatly improve the frontage along University if the buildings contain active uses, such as restaurants, entertainment or retail. The two mid-block crossings that connect this area to the Pit across University Boulevard provide good examples of access management and connectivity. Similar crossings should be considered across Avenida Cesar Chavez, east of University Boulevard, to improve connectivity between Lobo Stadium and Isotopes Park, and to complement the existing crossing between University and Buena Vista.

A possible expansion of Lobo Village west of the Pit may also be an option. While a significant grade change exists between these two facilities, the topography may be suited for a shared-use parking structure along the embankment. A stepped building mass could provide a direct connection between Lobo Village and the Pit while also providing an opportunity for additional student housing.

- Ownership: State/UNM
- Approximate size of area: 6 to 20 acres
- Relevant plans and policies: University of New Mexico Master Plan
- Zoning: The subject parcels are state-owned and therefore, not subject to City of Albuquerque zoning regulations.

7. *Parking area between the Stadium and Buena Vista*

The large 16-acre surface parking area (UNM South Lot) currently provides general parking for UNM and accommodates parking for sporting events. With enhanced transit along University and a parking management agreement in place, a portion of this area could be redeveloped into more productive uses, including a mix of housing, some of which could include affordable units to address FTA criteria for legally binding affordability restricted near station areas, as discussed earlier in this report. A key to success would be to partner with UNM to accommodate the range of parking needs in a more efficient manner. From a connectivity perspective, a new north-south street could be built along the east edge of the track and field facility, and Southern Avenue could be extended west to create a direct connection to South Yale. This would produce two large six-acre sites that could be further bisected with another access street for townhouse-type development. Alternatively, the six-acre parcels provide flexibility for higher density housing that can step down to lower heights to the east and taller to the west. A parking structure in this area could provide needed parking while also serving as a visual screen to the track facility, and help buffer noise created during events.

- Ownership: State/UNM
- Approximate size of area: 16 acres
- Relevant plans and policies: University of New Mexico Master Plan
- Zoning: The subject parcel is state-owned and therefore, not subject to City of Albuquerque zoning regulations.

8. *South Yale corridor between Santa Clara and Ross*

Many small-scaled parcels exist along Yale Boulevard that could be redeveloped into local shops and services. The recently adopted South Yale Sector Development Plan includes compact development regulations that will result in pedestrian-friendly places. This area is challenged with small lot sizes, narrow lots configurations, limited market demand and low land cost relative to the cost of development. However, this corridor has a natural pedestrian-friendly scale to development and could mature into a more vibrant place for local restaurants, shops and entertainment. While the area at University and Cesar Chavez is imagined as a larger scaled entertainment and sports district, this South Yale corridor can become a smaller-scaled complementary area and enhance the broader entertainment district.

- Ownership: Private (various owners)
- Approximate size of area: various small lots ranging in size from 0.5 to 2 acres
- Relevant plans and policies: Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, City of Albuquerque Comprehensive Zoning Code, City of Albuquerque Development Process Manual, University of New Mexico Master Plan, South Yale Sector Development Plan
- Zoning: SU-1 and SU-2

9. *Vacant land northwest of Gibson and University*

This 45-acre site, also known as the Gibson Commercial District, is currently planned for auto-oriented retail and local services with provisions for pedestrian access. However, given the prime location as the southern gateway into the UNM/CNM district, and with the recent acquisition of Sunshine Terrace, it may be possible to create a broader mixed-use development that can connect with enhanced transit along University Boulevard, and the Pit and Lobo Village to the north. Uses could be expanded to include entertainment, retail, structured parking, and additional housing, a portion of which could be deed-restricted affordable units.

- Ownership: UNM/State
- Approximate size of area: 45 acres
- Relevant plans and policies: University of New Mexico Master Plan
- Zoning: The parcels in this area are zoned R-2, R-3, and C-1. However, most of the area is owned by the State and is not subject to City of Albuquerque zoning regulations.

10. *Residential area northeast of Gibson and University*

This approximately 25-acre site is located a block north of Gibson Boulevard between University and Buena Vista and has one of the lowest economic utilization ratios in the study area. It consists of a low-density mobile home subdivision that currently provides a need for attainable housing. However, because it is not deed-restricted affordable housing, it does not meet the FTA affordable housing criteria. The size and location of this parcel within close proximity to University Boulevard, Gibson Boulevard, and Yale Boulevard provide a good opportunity for redevelopment. Moreover, it

could include compatibly scaled housing, a portion of which could be deed-restricted affordable. Site density could be greatly increased and result in higher revenues to pay for services and some affordable housing. Increasing residential densities in this area would also improve the viability for additional retail and commercial services west of University Boulevard.

- Ownership: Private
- Approximate size of area: 25 acres
- Relevant plans and policies: Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, City of Albuquerque Comprehensive Zoning Code, City of Albuquerque Development Process Manual, South Yale Sector Development Plan
- Zoning: SU-1 and SU-2

5.2 Barriers to Change

There are multiple opportunities within the University Boulevard corridor to promote the types of land use and development that can enhance the ability of transit to better serve its transportation needs. Achieving this objective begins with identifying, understanding, and addressing the barriers to change. The nature of the barriers are broad and include the existing street system, existing development character, parking management, inconsistent development policies and regulations, market response to the local economy, and the existing institutional framework and how it affects decision-making.

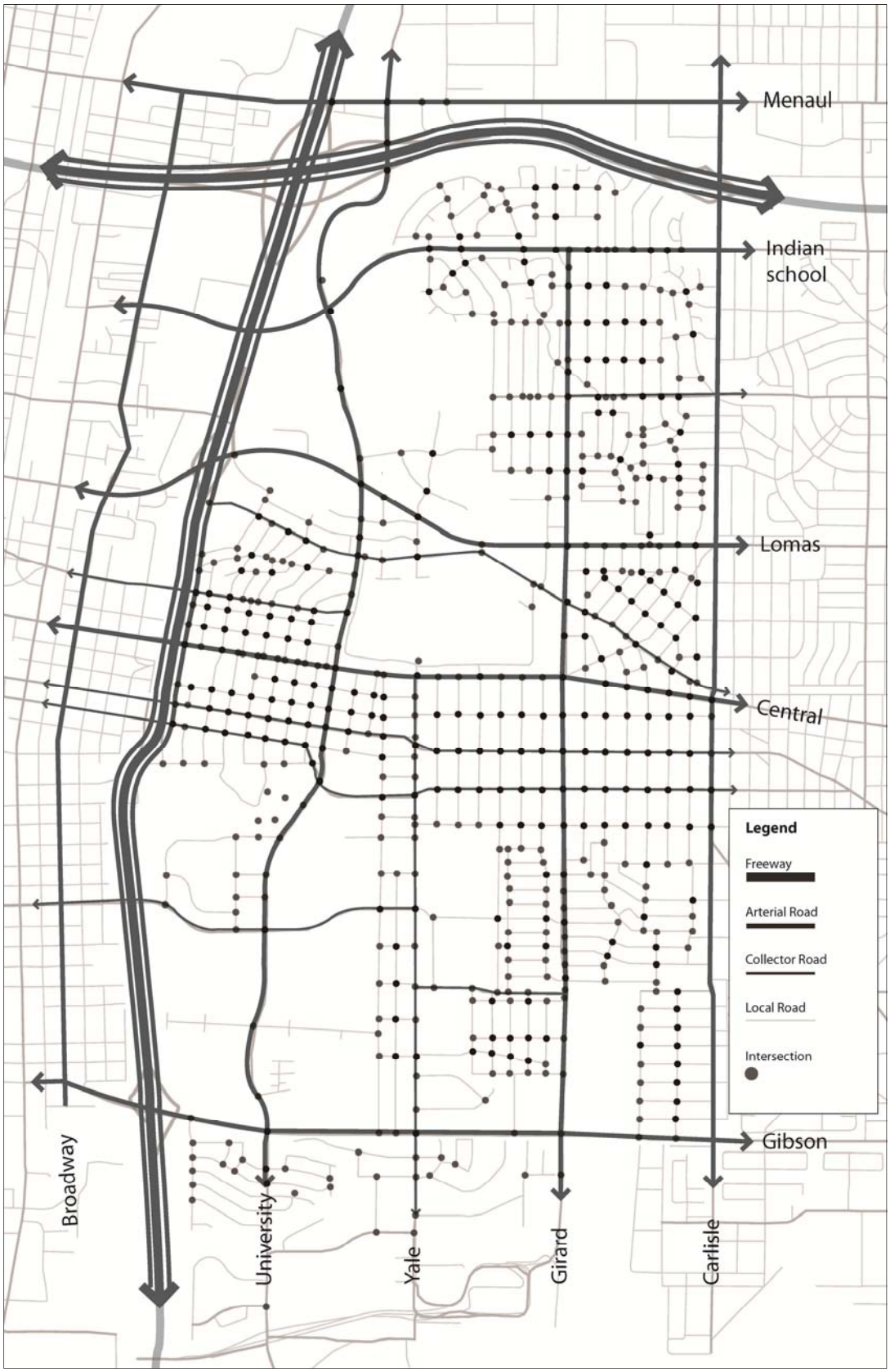
1. *Roadway Network and Hierarchy* – The existing roadway network does not support pedestrian travel and, in some instances, discourages travel by pedestrians and bicyclists. As illustrated in Figure 5, University Boulevard has very few collector and local streets between I-40 and Lomas Boulevard, and between Avenida Cesar Chavez and Gibson Boulevard. This condition forces all local vehicular circulation and access to use the arterial street. The lack of side streets also creates large unbroken street blocks ("superblocks") that front onto University Boulevard. The street hierarchy and configuration is due in part to the "campus" character of the adjoining UNM and CNM properties.

   In addition to the lack of a collector and local street network, pedestrian and bicycle amenities are deficient and buffers between sidewalks and traffic lanes are absent. Sidewalks are narrow (or absent in some locations), few pedestrian crosswalks exist and those that are present require pedestrians to cross a high speed 6-lane arterial street, and bicycle lanes are not continuous. In most locations, buffers are narrow or absent altogether to separate and shield pedestrians from adjacent traffic lanes. These superblocks, along with inconsistent amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists, create an uncomfortable pedestrian experience and discourage walking.

   Conditions where primary access is from arterial streets have been shown to encourage low density strip development, while the lack of rear or side parcel access has been shown to limit the types of development form most appropriate for transit. Strip buildings and a high number of driveways discourage walking and biking and create a greater number of vehicle and pedestrian conflict points. Access control measures such as driveway consolidation and side parcel access could improve future development forms while allowing for a more walkable and safe pedestrian atmosphere.

   Adding more collector and local streets that intersect University Boulevard in the areas north of Lomas and south of Avenida Cesar Chavez would increase circulation through the provision of alternative redundant routes, smaller more walkable blocks, and denser compact development more appropriate to transit supportive densities. If a finer-grained street network is not feasible, then a framework for enhanced pedestrian and bicycle circulation is necessary.

Figure 5 – Roadway Network



2. *Development Character* – The character and urban form along University Boulevard is a result of the automobile oriented nature of the corridor. As discussed above, the absence of a local street network and superblocks in the areas north of Lomas Boulevard and near CNM and the UNM south campus area results in few small parcels that enable incremental development. This situation encourages large scale automobile developments at non transit supportive densities. The utility service is also oriented to the larger block configuration, which complicates parcel reassembly to smaller sites, greatly increases development costs, and limits the number of possible developers.

   The majority of existing buildings are single use, which limits the ability to create activity areas and districts centered on a mix of uses that can remain active throughout the day and into the evening. Most buildings are large institutional or commercial facilities that are not oriented toward University Boulevard, lack active edges and are not built to the pedestrian scale. This discourages pedestrian activity and diminishes the overall visual quality of the corridor.

   The streetscape of University Boulevard itself also contributes to the erosion of the corridor's character. The buildings are set back at inconsistent distances from the street and fronted with surface parking lots. The parking lots are mostly unscreened from the street, creating a generally unattractive appearance in many locations throughout the corridor. The street space is lacking in consistent and unified landscape treatments, pedestrian amenities, and streetscape materials such as lighting and way finding signs that are unique to the corridor and attractive to pedestrians. All of these factors diminish the corridor as a memorable place and destination, and create a substantial challenge in attracting new development opportunities appropriate within a transit corridor.

3. *Parking Management* – Different sections of the University Corridor have different parking requirements. For instance, the Health Science Center, with its cluster of patient-oriented clinics, requires parking that is easily accessible and connected to the medical facilities. In other areas, remote parking lots exist that serve the UNM and CNM campuses. Parts of the corridor could benefit from a more comprehensive and consolidated parking strategy. The majority of commercial parcels along the corridor are served by individual surface parking lots that contribute to the automobile focus of the corridor. The surface lots, along with the large setbacks of many buildings and minimal sidewalks, also degrade the visual street character. The abundance of parking also reduces the perceived need to create a walkable development pattern, as driving to destinations within the corridor appears easier than walking.

   For the institutional facilities, parking is a mix of lots dedicated to particular buildings and a large inventory of shared parking lots accessed by UNM-operated shuttles. CNM's parking lots on the west side of University Boulevard are the primary parking area for students. It is free as long as the vehicle displays a current CNM sticker. At UNM, most institutional lots require a parking permit. Students, faculty, and staff must purchase an annual permit at a cost ranging from $175 to $475 surface lots and approximately $700 to park in on-campus parking structures. While not excessively high, the cost for parking, fuel, and maintenance is an incentive for some students, faculty, and staff to use alternative transportation. For those that pay for a permit, there is little incentive to walk or bike, since the cost of parking is fixed for the semester.

   The existing institutional framework limits the ability to implement a more efficient parking strategy. To be effective, it will be necessary for all of the institutions (UNM, UNM Hospital, and CNM) to participate in a collaborative parking strategy developed in concert with the proposed BRT system. A potential approach to parking management is described in a separate document — *Parking*

and Travel demand Management Strategies. Further discussion of parking management can be found in that document.

4. *Land Use Policy and Development Regulations* – Challenges such as the current orientation of parcel size and access, parking management, automobile-oriented infrastructure, lack of pedestrian character, and lack of consistent development regulations can be addressed through changes to land use policies. These conditions occur throughout the corridor and are not specific to state-owned or private properties. The core issue is to create an overall environment that attracts private investment. The private sector excels at economic value creation and the development of transit-rich environments. An integrated land use policy that UNM, CNM, City of Albuquerque, and the private sector can invest in will be essential to maximizing benefits from premium transit service.

   In addition to an integrated land use policy, an immediate challenge to achieving transit supportive development within the proposed BRT corridor is the lack of a shared development vision among stakeholders and the lack of a consistent review process. Design guidelines specific to transit-supportive development are limited. Without a common vision, consistent review process, and specific development guidelines, it is unlikely that the overall corridor will develop in a way that works in unison with the BRT system.

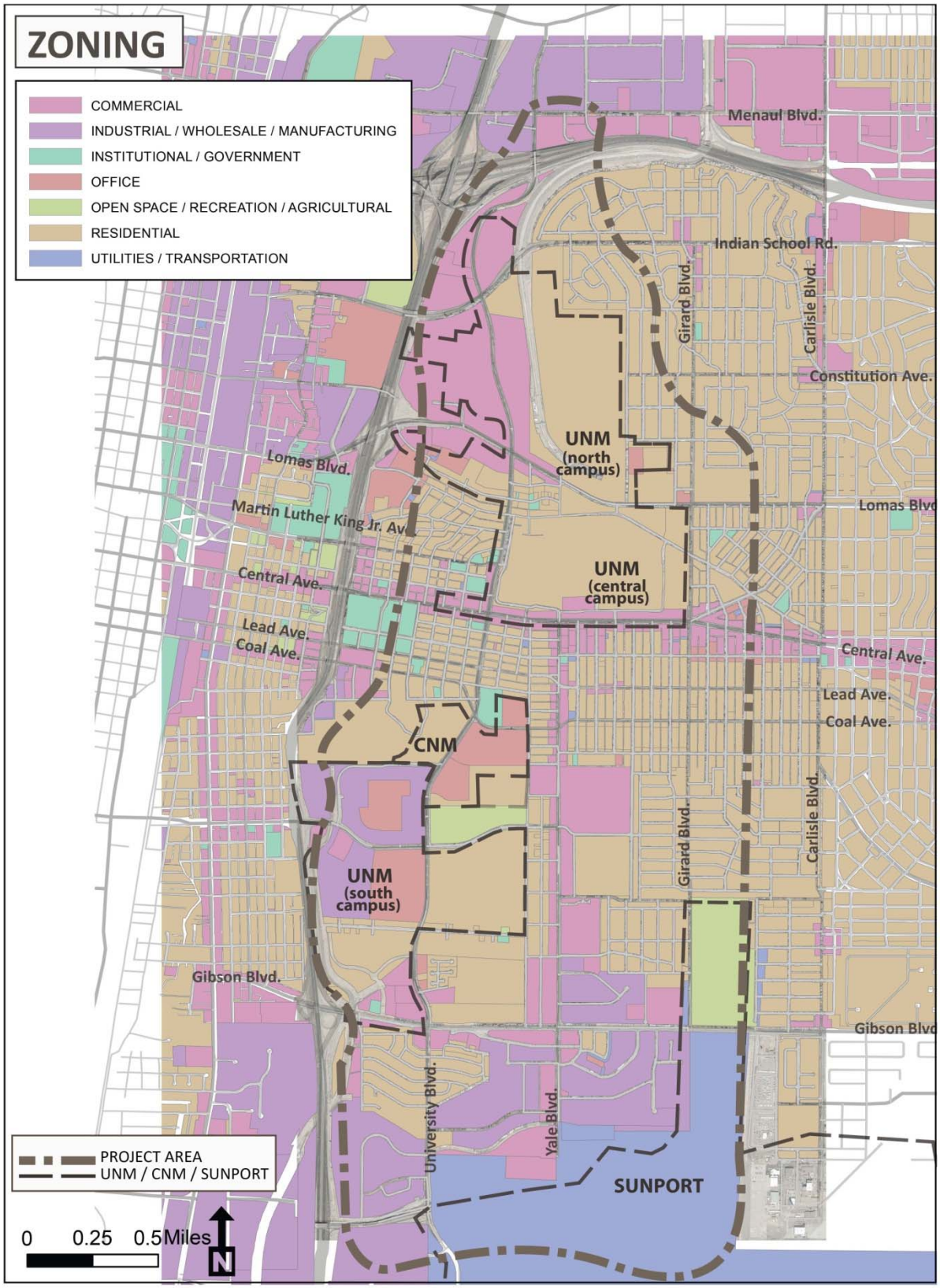
   The lack of a consistent review process is because UNM and CNM are on state-owned lands and are not required to follow City of Albuquerque zoning requirements. As shown in Figure 6, institutional property makes up the majority of the University Boulevard corridor. Both institutions have development policies of their own, with architectural review committees, boards, and oversight by various departments within their organizations. The ability to bypass the City process can expedite a development and may be perceived as a lower barrier to realizing a project. However, the potential to create a more coherent overall character for the corridor could also appeal to developers looking to be part of a larger, high quality district. Additionally, a lack of zoning and development regulations can reduce development certainty, as expectations for adjacent properties are unknown.

   A design overlay zone with development guidelines that are adopted by all stakeholders could be used to create a baseline for site and building standards. This design overlay zone could be jointly administered by a City/UNM/CNM review committee. An important near term task for the creation of a multimodal environment would be for the corridor stakeholders to designate a type of overlay district along the corridor, and adopt a set of shared development polices.

   The use of an overlay zone with form-based code should be considered. Form-based codes exist within the City of Albuquerque Zoning Code but they are not mandated; rather, they are a form of "opt-in" zoning that property owners can use. As an example, the South Yale Sector Development Plan uses a form-based approach in an effort to encourage transit-supportive development along the portion of Yale Boulevard between Avenida Cesar Chavez and Gibson Boulevard. With a shared vision and formation of a joint oversight committee, a type of form-based design overlay should be considered to clarify expectations for development character and form.

5. *Local Economy and Market Demand* – Some issues like relatively low market rents and limited market demand are the product of the overall metropolitan economy. Despite strong demand for some product types like multi-family and student housing, the target rents may be lower than in

Figure 6 – Zoning



other metropolitan areas, thus limiting the ability to create certain types of development patterns that are more feasible in other regions of the country or in areas with a stronger economy.

The infrastructure and character barriers discussed previously have placed substantial limitations on the market demand for new development within the corridor. Transit supportive development requires more compact building forms at medium to high densities, typically 6 to 7 dwelling units per acre for arterial BRT and 9 to 25 dwelling units per acre for rail-based transit. For commercial, this translates to floor area ratios of 0.4 to 1, respectively. These densities are greater than the average community, and much greater than what currently exists on University Boulevard. Higher density developments are also more expensive to construct compared to lower density alternatives.

Figure 7 shows land utilization for private property within the study area. Due to the large amount of underutilized properties, along with character and infrastructure limitations, current land costs throughout the corridor would not support new development at the desired densities. However, improved access and parking management, street network development, and streetscape improvements would help to create a truly memorable place, lead to higher land prices, and support projects at transit supportive densities. In turn, the increased densities, along with a more diverse mix of uses would also increase revenues to adjacent landowners. To support new commercial and retail development, higher-density housing is necessary to increase the number of "rooftops" within the corridor.

6. *Institutional Framework* – With a large portion of the corridor controlled by public institutions, the actions taken by UNM, UNM Hospital, and CNM play a significant role on land use and transportation. This is particularly important in two areas. First, most of the land available for redevelopment is owned by the state and is under the control of UNM and CNM. Table 2 shows the amount of land under state and private ownership for each major segment of the corridor.

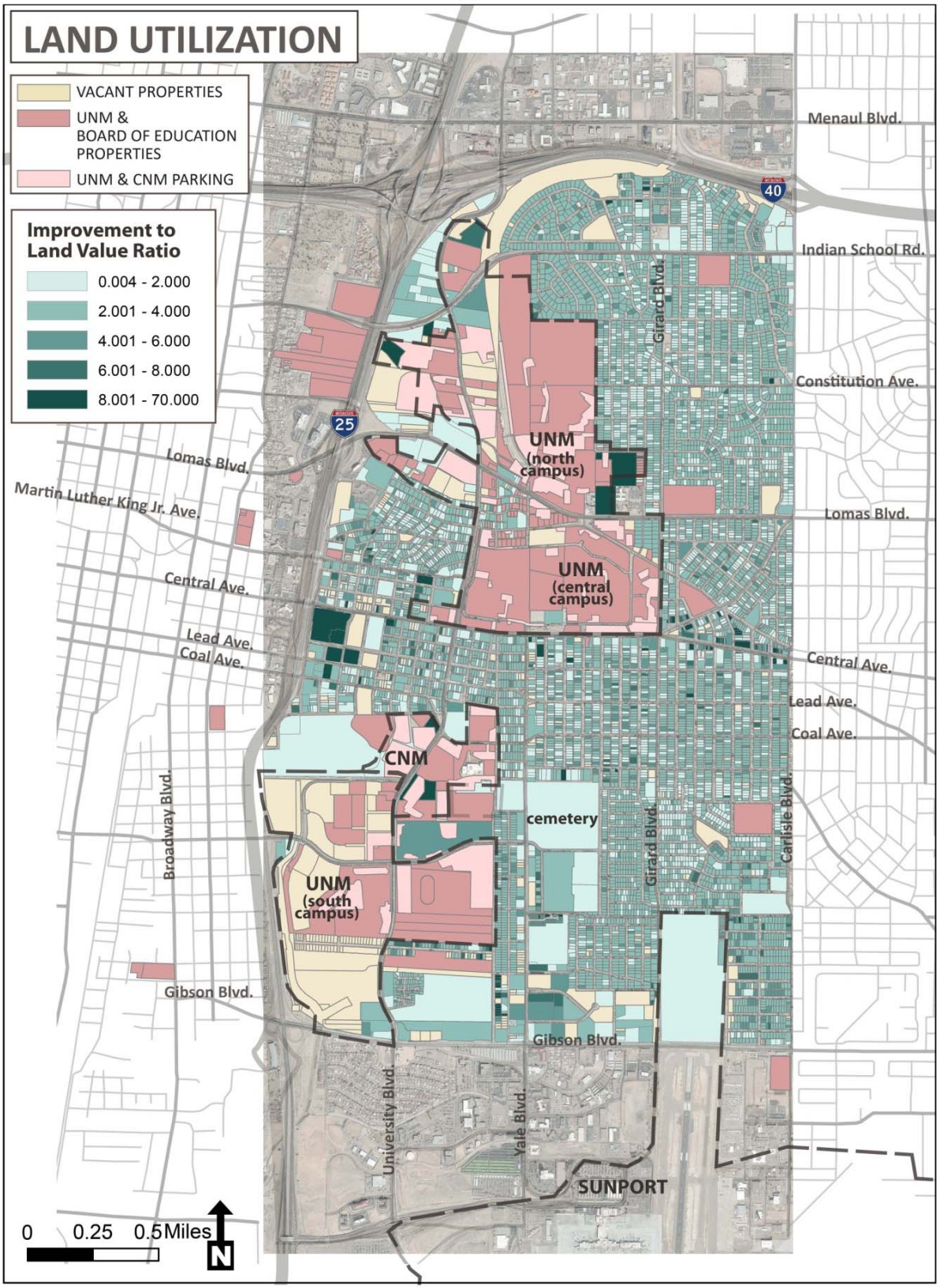
Table 2: Land Ownership

Segment	*Length (mi.)*	*Private*	*State*	*Redevelopment Area*
Terminal to south side of I-40	0.51	0.41	0.09	Area 1
South side of I-40 to Indian School Rd.	0.57	0.37	0.20	None Identified
Indian School Road to Lomas Blvd.	0.60	0.00	0.60	Areas 2 and 3
Lomas Blvd. to Central Ave.	0.62	0.41	0.21	Area 3
Central Ave. to Coal Ave.	0.40	0.40	0.00	None Identified
Coal Ave. to Avenida Cesar Chavez	0.56	0.00	0.56	Areas 5 and 6
Avenida Cesar Chavez	0.50	0.12	0.38	Areas 6 and 7
Yale - ACC to Gibson Blvd	0.75	0.75	0.00	Area 8
Yale - Gibson Blvd. to Sunport Loop	0.45	0.45	0.00	None Identified
Totals	4.96	2.91	2.04	
Percentage of Overall Corridor		59%	41%	

Note: data shown are where lands on at least one side of the BRT alignment are state owned.

As shown in this table, 41% of the lands along the proposed BRT route are owned by the state, either UNM or CNM. This percentage increases to 52% for the areas that correspond to potential redevelopment areas. Development decisions for these properties are at the discretion of the institutions. Consequently, the development desired by these institutions may not complement or

Figure 7– Land Utilization



be consistent with an investment in a BRT system. As an example, the 45 acre parcel (area number 9 in Figure 4) west of University Boulevard between Avenida César Chavez and Gibson Boulevard could be developed as a transit supportive development. Conversely, the development could be auto-oriented and have limited elements that enhance pedestrian and transit use. Currently, there is no assurance that the development of this site will be transit supportive. This same problem extends to many of the development opportunities identified within the corridor.

The existing institutional framework also limits the ability to implement a more efficient parking strategy. Parking at UNM operates as an "enterprise" department with the revenues generated used to support the overall cost of managing the transportation and parking functions. While several large parking lots are operated by UNM, the permit system in place limits their use to UNM students, faculty, and staff. Parking for CNM is similar, although their pricing model reflects the institution's focus on affordable education. For the BRT system to be effective, all partner institutions (UNM, UNM Hospital, and CNM) must participate in a collaborative parking strategy developed to be compatible with and supportive of the BRT system.

Changes to the institutional framework are essential for the investment in the BRT system to be optimized. For land use, a strategy must be in place that assures development and the BRT system work in tandem. This strategy could begin with the formation of an interagency task force that set the vision for the corridor and establish guidelines and/or a design overlay to guide development within the corridor. Parking management will require a similar strategy.

5.3 Recommended Actions

Despite the multiple barriers that are prevalent within the University Boulevard corridor, there are also proven strategies that can be utilized to take advantage of the available opportunities to generate transit-supportive change.

A key action is to evaluate the study area against the FTA's *Guidelines for Land Use and Economic Development Effects for New Starts and Small Starts Projects*. This could include identifying specific criteria and outcomes that will optimize the rating by FTA. This criterion should rate the importance in achieving stated outcomes, and should also rank the level of effort required to produce these outcomes. This evaluation should include specific and prioritized actions that need to be resolved to achieve the highest rating possible from FTA.

An essential first action is for corridor stakeholders to establish a shared vision for University Boulevard. The vision should include a set of agreed upon goals that will contribute to transit supportive change within the corridor and the specific strategies to meet those goals. Specifically, the vision must include measures to address parking and access management, improve infrastructure and character, create development opportunities, direct the development market to designated areas, formulate economic policies, and provide specific land use and design guidelines. Specific considerations for each action area are discussed below.

- *Parking and Transportation Systems* – An essential first step in the vision is to develop a shared parking and access management plan for the entire corridor. This will require institutional commitment from those that currently manage most of the parking and shuttles. The plan needs to have a strong commitment and backing from UNM and CNM. This may take the form of a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines the steps needed to create a more integrated

model for parking and transportation. A report that documents a potential parking strategy has already been prepared and can serve as a starting point for this action.

- *Vehicular Parking and Access Management* – The plan should define standards and incentives for shared parking lots and structures detached from buildings, and specify locations for larger park and ride areas for travelers shifting from automobile to transit use. The plan must also consider access management policies that address turning movements, standard distances between curb cuts, as well as identify opportunities to reconfigure primary access drives away from University Boulevard.
- *Market Considerations* – An important component of the vision will be for corridor stakeholders to partner with representatives of the development community to fully understand the intricacies of market demand within the corridor, and identify designated districts based on the targeted markets that would be responsive to those specific locations. Stakeholders must also assist the development community in identifying and pursuing market based development opportunities that will be supportive of transit.
- *Pedestrian/Bike Infrastructure* – Another component is to prepare a pedestrian/bike infrastructure framework plan for the corridor. The framework plan will analyze and specify the location of new bike and pedestrian routes, as well as propose enhanced bike and pedestrian connections to the campuses and existing bike/pedestrian framework.
- *University Boulevard Character and Urban Form* – A corridor streetscape plan for properties adjacent to University Boulevard should also be prepared, which will govern the design character of the corridor, and include considerations that will help to create a more livable and walkable public realm. The plan should also address standards for landscaping, property edge conditions, street trees, lighting, wayfinding, and pedestrian and bicycle amenities.
- *Development Polices* – The vision must also create development policies that standardize the building forms and design most appropriate to support transit. They should also address pedestrian and bicycle circulation in a way that counter-balances the negative impacts of the superblock structure and provides the type of movement that is conducive to transit-usage. The development policies must be agreed upon and adopted by all stakeholders within the corridor and account for land use types, zoning standards (including setbacks, density, height, bulk and parking), design guidelines, and the provision of affordable housing within the corridor. Specific standards may be specified for properties within a certain distance of transit station areas, where a greater building density and mix of uses should be permitted or required.
- *Economic Plans* – The successful implementation of a vibrant multimodal corridor also requires an economic plan to determine the specific infrastructure improvements that will provide catalytic private investment while generating higher revenues and enhancing the quality of life for all people in the study area. The basis of the economic plan should be the analysis of the economic gap within the corridor, or the difference between market-based development and the cost of building the desired development form ahead of the market to achieve the desired development patterns necessary for transit supportive development. This economic plan should also estimate the value proportion to stakeholders for cost and revenue sharing.