3-22-2013

Lomas Boulevard/UNM Campus

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LOMAS BOULEVARD/ UNM CAMPUS
Design concepts for Lomas Boulevard in relation to the University of New Mexico and adjacent areas

Urban Design/ Planning Studio
in conjunction with
Design Planning and Assistance Center
School of Architecture and Planning
University of New Mexico
March 1 to May 1, 2002
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For duplicate copies in color please contact Mark Childs, Director of Design Planning and Assistance Center at (505) 277-5050 or email mchilds@unm.edu
LOMAS BOULEVARD/ UNM CAMPUS
Design concepts for Lomas Boulevard in relation to the University of New Mexico and adjacent areas

Concepts for the enhancement of the portion of Lomas Boulevard through and serving the North and Central campuses of the University of New Mexico, adjacent neighborhoods and the City of Albuquerque.

Urban Design/ Urban Planning Studio

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We would like to acknowledge the following people for their advice and counsel during this eight-week urban planning and design studio.

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BACKGROUND

UNM was founded in 1889 on the north side of Central Avenue, about two miles east of downtown Albuquerque. At the time, the people who made the decisions thought that the University was far enough from the growing city downtown to avoid future planning problems. Now the campus area is defined and surrounded by the City of Albuquerque. In 1908 the UNM president, William George Tight, thought that the Southwest adobe style should be adopted as the official building typology for all structures on the campus. In 1918 a Chicago architecture firm suggested that a network of buildings be constructed around plazas and courtyards consistent with the Pueblo style. This style, called Pueblo Revival, was reflected in the homes and structures in the surrounding neighborhoods and throughout the city. As the city grew Lomas Boulevard has evolved into an alternate major east-west thoroughfare connecting the downtown area of Albuquerque through the University of New Mexico.

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Introduction:

This document summarizes the work of an eight-week study of the physical setting and possible concepts for enhancement of the portion of Lomas Boulevard east from Interstate 25 to Girard Boulevard. The primary features of this section of Lomas Boulevard are the University of New Mexico North and Central campus, the University Health Sciences Center and the residential neighborhoods. The analysis and concepts proposed were developed by students in a combined graduate Urban Design studio, Arch 503, the Urban Planning studio, CRP 520, in partnership with the Design Planning and Assistance Center studio, spring semester 2002, at the University of New Mexico, School of Architecture and Planning.

Context:

Lomas Boulevard is now a six lane major arterial connecting the historic and business centers of Albuquerque. These centers include: the State Fair Grounds, downtown Albuquerque, the University of New Mexico, and the University Health Science Center. Lomas Boulevard also connects these historic and business centers with large residential areas in the northeast heights. Lomas was designated an “Enhanced Transit Corridor”, on the Centers and Corridors Plan adopted in February of 2002 by the City of Albuquerque and by Bernalillo County. In the area of the University of New Mexico, Lomas provides important gateways from both east and west but, due to its 100 feet right-of-way and its high traffic volume, creates a barrier to pedestrian activity and north-south campus connections.

Objectives:

The overall objectives of the studio were to analyze the multiple issues relating to this setting and to propose concepts for enhancement of this portion of Lomas Boulevard and adjacent areas. The goals of the study were to:

- provide a better physical environment for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit users.
- provide for vehicular capacity consistent with existing demand
- improve capacity for right and left turns
- regulate traffic flow thru sequential traffic lights
- provided enhanced transit capacity by providing a designated lane for an improved bus or rail system including pay-to-enter bus waiting-shelters for rapid transit exchanges
- create a connection with open and green spaces between North and Central campus
- provide clear and compatible edges consistent with the character of the University areas.
Mardon Gardella is active in the Spruce Park Neighborhood Association and is a participant on the board of the University Campus Planning Committee. She is concerned, that the existing zoning laws in place are upheld. She would also like to see pedestrian pathways in place that school age children can use that are safe and attractive.

Frances Blair is a pharmacist and has lived in the north campus area since moving to New Mexico from Kansas. Her major concern is the preservation and careful use of the city’s water resources. She believes that the City of Albuquerque has been slow in responding to the wasteful use of our water supply. She would like to see a limit set statewide on per household water use and education about water usage.

Katie Crawford, a member of the Campus neighborhood association, is a native New Mexican. She would like to see the Lomas Boulevard area designed to be more pedestrian friendly. She read about Curitiba, a city in Brazil, which has successfully planned for transportation, public spaces and pedestrian networks. She would like to see some of the same ideas from Curitiba, used in Albuquerque.

Neighborhood Association Interviews and Community Context

North Campus Neighborhood Association

Mike White has lived in his house in the north of Lomas on Girard since 1947. He is a retired Albuquerque Public School principal. He built the house himself and he and his wife raised two children there. He is very worried about the heavy traffic on Girard Boulevard. Mike believes that slowing and reducing the traffic on Girard is a major concern for the neighborhood quality of life.

Frances Blair is a pharmacist and has lived in the north campus area since moving to New Mexico from Kansas. Her major concern is the preservation and careful use of the city’s water resources. She believes that the City of Albuquerque has been slow in responding to the wasteful use of our water supply. She would like to see a limit set statewide on per household water use and education about water usage.
Related Plans and Resource Documents:
The following documents provided content basic to the development of this document

Campus Development Plan, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, Barton Myers Associates, fall 1996

University West Concept Plan, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, Barton Myers Associates, fall 1997

Visions for an Intergenerational Community, University Village Studio, School of Architecture and Planning, University of New Mexico, 1997


Start at the Source, Design Guidance Manual for Stormwater Quality Protection, Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association (BASMAA), 1999

Centers and Corridors Plan, Amendment to the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, Albuquerque Planning Department, November 2001

High Capacity Transit Project, Study Report, City of Albuquerque Transit Department, Parson/Brinkerhoff, February 2002.
**DESIGN ISSUES:**

- Connection between North and South Campus
- Pedestrian paths between the two campuses
- Development of Lomas Boulevard
- Development of businesses on Lomas
- Transportation

**DESIGN GOALS:**

- Boulevard enhancement
- Business Corridor
- Transportation nodes
- Pedestrian Paths
- North - South campus connection

**Lomas Boulevard from I-25 east to Girard**

Left to right: Beate Ortley, Manjeet K. Tangri, Christel Haught, Mary Kenney
**City and Campus Transit Routes**

**TRANSIT**

There is a need to have a better transit connection between the City of Albuquerque and the students of the University of New Mexico.

The proposed solution will benefit both the students and the people of the City of Albuquerque.

**CITY TRANSIT**

- Connection of city transit and campus transportation system
- Provide easy access to downtown
- Extend University Blvd. transit line to Mesa del Sol
- Serve the south parking lots

**ON CAMPUS TRANSIT**

- Provide transportation to north parking lots
- Create a people mover system for campus
- Have stops to major facilities (public transit, hospital parking, etc.)
- Serve all of main campus and north campus
I-25 to University

Design Intentions

- We propose a commercial and institutional zone on Lomas Boulevard between I-25 and University Blvd.

- In order to break up the expansive institutional section on this boulevard we decided to design city blocks by adding in smaller sub-streets. In addition, two roads are added behind the new city blocks to connect the new frontage road and University Blvd.

- This newly designed system will give relief to congestion on Lomas Blvd.
Design Intentions

- We consider the section of Lomas Boulevard between University Blvd. and Yale an entertainment district in which there will be shops and eating establishments.

- This will give both north and main campus students a central place to seek entertainment and socialize, as well as find employment which is within walking distance from the dorms.

- The sidewalk is widened in order to allow for sidewalk cafes on the north side of the street.

- A two way bike lane is also added on the north side of Lomas separated from traffic by a median and from pedestrians by hedges.

A typical proposed section of Lomas Boulevard between University Blvd. and Yale.
Yale to Stanford / Hospital

Design Intentions

- **Open space / Bioengineered arroyo**
  Cover existing north diversion channel with concrete cap. This hides the unattractive concrete ditch from view while creating parking spaces above.
  Divert a portion of the flow from the channel to bioengineered arroyo in order to create naturalized open space. The capacity of the existing (covered) channel will not be altered and will continue to handle the 10 and 100 year flood volumes of 500 and 2000 cfs respectively.

- **Connection of North and Central campuses**
  Bridge building across Lomas. The bridge building will contain student services shared by students on both the North and Central campus. (e.g. Financial Aid, Bursar, Cashier etc.)
Lomas Boulevard is divided into three sections all with distinctly different uses:

- **commercial / institutional**
- **entertainment district**
- **open space**

The location of these three sections will serve the community as well as the student population of the University.

- Commercial / institutional is placed near the Interstate for visibility.
- The open area will serve to connect both north and south campus. It will also provide a benefit to the surrounding community.
- The entertainment strip is nestled between the institutional and open space area. This area connects the north and main campus and eliminates the isolation between the students of both campuses.
Our project concerns itself with Lomas Blvd. as it runs between I-25 on the west and Girard Blvd. on the east. Within this range, it intersects University Blvd., an “enhanced corridor” carrying traffic north-south and linking the UNM campus with the sports facilities located in the South Campus. Lomas Blvd. along with Lead Ave., Coal Ave., and Central Ave. forms the “Central Transit Corridor” linking downtown to points east and west. Recognized as an “enhanced corridor,” Lomas carries a large portion of the vehicular traffic moving across town, linking downtown, Old Town, the State Fairgrounds, and the UNM campus as well as the Northeast Heights area and the Uptown Development District. With the redevelopment of “The Big I” intersection, direct access to the interstate from Lomas has been cut off and University Blvd. will now become the path of access from Lomas to the interstate system.

At one time, Lomas served as the northern border of the UNM campus. This is no longer the case today. While the campus and University Hospital have developed on the north side of Lomas, the character of the street itself has failed to develop in relation to these changes. The need to establish, strengthen and maintain connections between the main and north campuses and UNMH is incompatible with the wide, barren and pedestrian unfriendly swath of asphalt that is Lomas Blvd today. The intersection of Lomas and University has been identified as an entry to campus as well as marking a transition between the downtown and university communities.

Our analysis of the strip of Lomas between I-25 and Girard has led us to identify three distinct “zones” within the project area, each with its own character (or lack thereof):

1) the area between I-25 and University Blvd. which can be seen more or less as a blank slate for the creation of a mixed use development scheme.

2) the “campus zone” between University Blvd. and the UNMH development, which includes Yale Blvd. serving as the major connection between the main and south campuses.

3) the area associated with UNMH linked with issues of access to the hospital facilities.
Character & Identity-
- The six lane arterial acts as a divider between the North Campus and the Main campus at UNM.
- Lomas mostly serves the automobile so it is a travel corridor, not a place.

Hospital Access-
- The south entrance serves three distinct types of travelers: pedestrians, automobiles and ambulances.
- The entrance lacks an idea of a gateway.
- There is no distinction between the street and the hospital.
- The current emergency drop-off gives no safe-haven qualities for patients.
- The overall result promotes confusion and chaos.

Campus Continuity-
- Lomas acts as a non-entity that divides the North and Central campuses.
- Crossing through the campus becomes an unsafe and undesirable activity.

Traffic Issues-
- Lomas is more like a major highway.
- This East-West artery does not connect people to places.
- Lomas street intersections are too wide.
- The automobile is given priority over public transportation and pedestrians.

City/UNM relations-
- The insularity of UNM does not integrate urban spaces and academic settings.
- Lomas does not boast cafés, bookstores or other private amenities that could cater both to students and the larger general public.

Enhanced environment-
- Lomas lacks water collection systems to promote desert vegetation.
- The corridor is barren with more asphalt and concrete than green space.
- The street does not create a healthy environment within which to exist.
- There are no shading structures for strollers along Lomas.

LEGEND:
- Pedestrian / Bike Traffic
- Vehicular Traffic
- Run-off
- Bus Stops
- Views
The section of Lomas between University Blvd and I-25 offers the opportunity for the development of a commercial/pedestrian zone on the south side of Lomas. Relief roads to the north and south of Lomas ease traffic volume at the major intersection of University and Lomas. This intersection has been realigned to advantage pedestrian crossing.
Lomas 13 - Yale Promenade

- Draw people from city
- Encourage Mixed Use
- Terraced

UNM

City

City

New Yale

Yale Promenade

Lomas looking east
In the 1930’s, at the Tuberculosis Center the sickness laid within the walls of the elegant hospital. Patients looked out to the Sandia Mountains and felt a renewed freshness. How can the UNM Hospital cure patients when the sickness is itself and it spreads easily along Lomas. Lomas is now the patient for which we must find a cure. The cure lies in the answer to a simple question: Are we a city for people or are we a city for the automobile?

by Patrick Shanahan
Lomas 13 - Hospital Area

With water from street run-off, one could easily replace a lane of traffic with a natural desert-scaped buffer between pedestrians and the automobile.

Volume of run-off per 50 feet strip of 2 lane Lomas
V = 3 x .2 x 1100s.f.
V = 66 Cubic feet

100% increase in new surface run-off allows us to utilize 1/2 to water local landscapes.

For the sake of the patients, the hospital should invest in views rather than handicap the visits.

Circulation Layers at the UNM Hospital Intersection

Reconnecting the automobile with the pedestrian is essential for future success of the UNM Hospital.

The new plaza will have outdoor, restaurants, shops, shaded sitting areas and most importantly the plaza will be filled with activity and people.
The pedestrian flow diagram shows two major paths along Stanford and Yale. The two bridge buildings will be placed on these intersections on Lomas. They will serve to centralize the campus on Lomas and bind North and South campuses.

**Main Issues**

- Development along Lomas Between I-25 and University.
- Creating identifying landmarks on the intersections of Lomas / University and on Lomas / Girard.
- Centralizing and unifying the north and south campuses.
- Exploring alternatives with the water within the arroyo.
- Transforming Lomas into a boulevard with safe pedestrian areas and landscaping.
This portion of Lomas Boulevard would have a 2 way frontage road on the south side providing high value property access with full arterial capacity retained on Lomas. Adjacent new streets connecting from Mountain Road to University on the north, and from Medical Arts Avenue to Mesa Vista on the south, would serve new multi-use development in these areas.

1. entry sign
2. future frontage road
3. future connection w/ mountain road and university
4. future connection w/ mesa vista and medical arts road
5. future pedestrian mall
6. future plaza with tower
7. future residential development
8. future hotel
9. pedestrian path
10. future multi-use development
PLAZA AND TOWER ON SOUTHWEST QUADRANT OF LOMAS AND UNIVERSITY GATEWAY
Intersections of Lomas / Girard and Lomas / University.

The boundaries of the campus should be identified at both intersections. A landmark node can provide an identifying element for the campus that is safe, practical, and attractive.

The landmarks will serve as guiding markers leading towards the suggested bridge/ student services building at Yale and Lomas.

At the intersection of Girard and University, the proposed street plan suggests a slight “tweak” of University Blvd. This will align both streets more perpendicular to one another:

1) allowing smoother turns for traffic.
2) clearer, safer views for pedestrians.
3) practical and elegant space and form for design of intersection.

Sidewalks on the north side of Lomas should be 10’ wide along the entire stretch from University to Girard, 20’ wide on the south. This will provide a safe pedestrian flow around the campus for students and the community.
The SW corner of the node consists of the suggested student housing project with residential quarters and commercial buildings. The circular courtyard is set south of the busy intersection, creating a safe plaza within the structure. The plaza also opens and connects with the node. This will be the main plaza and will offer food, drinks, school supplies and comfortable shaded seating areas.

The SE corner of the node will have two transit stops with shaded seating areas. Simple landscaping and decorative paving around an identifying landmark is sufficient for this area.

The NE corner will lie within a quasi-circular paved plaza with a handful of trees to provide shading. A water element such as a reflective pool with a fountain would be appropriate for this space. Food stands surround the plaza to offer a quick bite to eat.

The NW corner should be in the form of a continuing circle from the adjacent plaza. Currently there is a business operating on this corner, but landscaping with shaded seating allows for future expansion and design on this site.
Objectives for Lomas/Yale Intersection:

- create a recognizable node for the University on Lomas
- provide green space
- connect North and Central Campuses across Lomas
- capture runoff water from site and Campus Wash

Strategies:

- Open space along edge of North Diversion Ditch, from Hospital to Indian School.
- Use some of the water from the channel to create naturalized arroyo, delivering water to cottonwoods and other native species in the open space.
- Capture Chiller Plant runoff, divert its flow into the new arroyo.
- Cover the existing Diversion Ditch with parking, from Hospital to Tucker.
- Create University/retail center with bridge and surrounding buildings at Lomas/Yale intersection.

Pedestrian Bridge Building to span over Lomas/Yale intersection

View North along Yale from ROTC

Pedestrian Diagram
Options for Campus Wash/Chiller Runoff

Let some of the water flow from the bottom of the wash and the chiller, into the new arroyo, down hill, to the south and west, for water-table recharge and landscape beautification.

Campus Wash Watershed to N. Diversion Ditch
- 7 square miles.

Rate of Flow from Campus Wash into Diversion Channel
- 100 yr. = 2000 cfs.
- 10 yr. = 500 cfs.

Capture up to 10 yr. flow
Flow filters into naturalized arroyo.

Chiller Plant Discharge to New Arroyo/Wetland
- Several hundred gallons per minute at peak season (May through September).
- Chiller water will need to be filtered before it enters the arroyo.

Planter box curbs that collect and cascade runoff from the street surface along Lomas.
Pedestrian Plaza at Stafford Drive

The two plans on this page show the proposed pedestrian plaza at different phases of the University hospital’s Master Plan. The proposed plaza looks at providing a crossing that is elevated rather than at street level. The Plaza starts at grade level south of Hokona Hall and stretches out across Campus Drive and Lomas. A 20’+ drop in elevation works to the advantage of this structure. In the existing phase of the University Hospital, the plaza would provide connections between the hospital entrance, the parking garage, Lomas, Campus Drive and the plazas between Anderson Hall, the Department of Education and Hokona Hall. In the final phase of the hospital, the plaza would be extended to connect the plaza behind the Cancer Center with the South Campus. This structure would provide a pleasant outdoor plaza that both campuses could utilize for studying, eating, relaxing or playing.