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SOUTH ARIZONA
Entry Corridor Study

Chandler, Arizona

Final Report
October 20, 2006

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Section 1
URBAN DESIGN PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South Arizona Avenue Entry Corridor Study is prompted by a Mayor and Council goal for redeveloping the section of Arizona Avenue from Pecos Road to Boston Street as a new entryway to downtown from the Santan/ Loop 202 Freeway. The plan was created with extensive neighborhood participation, which included six neighborhood meetings and individual meetings with property owners. The comprehensive approach to this study can be broken down into four primary areas: Land Use, Traffic Circulation, Conceptual Design Standards, and Neighborhood Planning. The following are the major elements of the study:

A Bring in high and medium density residential development to the southern half of the Corridor along South Arizona Avenue and on selected sites in the immediate neighborhood. New zoning encouraging higher densities will create an incentive for developers to assemble small parcels for development. Where possible, select commercial uses such as dry cleaners, cafes or offices will be included with residential units.

B Revise neighborhood streets in the southern neighborhoods to facilitate traffic safety and local circulation for residents, create opportunities for new development along South Arizona Avenue and reinforce the development of the Corridor.

C Re-build South Arizona Avenue with a more pedestrian-oriented street section, narrower lanes and wider sidewalks, new traffic signals, streetscape and landscape elements. Adopt design standards for the private development.

D Create a cultural and entertainment commercial zone on the west side of Arizona Ave and north of Fry Road. Chicago Street can become a pedestrian corridor linking cultural and entertainment uses on the west side of Arizona Ave to City Hall and the civic area on the east side of Arizona Ave. Furthermore, existing downtown commercial can be reinforced through shaded pedestrian walkway connections.

E Recommendation to study the feasibility for locating a new performing arts center and a convention center within the Corridor study area.

F Create Public and Private Design Standards to guide the quality and functionality of the development in the Corridor, both for private and public sector buildings and for streetscape and open space design.

G Locate City Hall South of Chicago Street and locate the Historic Museum on Site 6. The commitment of the new center of civic life will create a climate for new private development in the Corridor. The City Hall can anchor a new south civic campus around a new green civic commons where future municipal and county buildings will be a civic anchor to the corridor's revitalization.

H Preserve and enhance the residential neighborhoods in the southern half of the corridor through single family residential infill on small lots and renovation of existing homes.

I Continue to solicit and utilize the creative input of the neighbors, property and business owners in the Corridor, to create a plan that has unique public buy-in and enthusiasm.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Downtown Chandler Gateway

New Development South of the 202 Freeway

Background

The City of Chandler is a community of over 240,000 people located in southeastern Maricopa County, Arizona. Chandler has grown from its agricultural roots at the turn of the 20th Century into a high tech oasis. In 25 years, Chandler has grown from a population of 30,000 people to its current population of over 240,000 residents, and is planned for growth to 286,000 people in the next ten years. It is the 6th largest city in Arizona.

As Chandler has grown, the infrastructure of the Phoenix region has also been developing. New freeways now serve a fast-growing low density metropolitan region, changing access patterns and creating new economic development opportunities for cities at the periphery. Chandler, as part of the southeast valley, is destined to benefit from the recent addition of the Santan Freeway to the Phoenix metropolitan transportation system.

The South Arizona Avenue corridor under consideration is the location of a new interchange of the Santan Freeway. The corridor includes the area bounded by Chandler Boulevard, Pecos Road, South Palm Lane, and South Delaware Street. South Arizona Avenue bisects this area north to south, connecting the Santan Freeway to Downtown Chandler.

The northern portion of the Corridor from Chandler Boulevard to Boston Street encompasses the original historic Downtown of Chandler that today includes the City government center, the San Marcos Hotel, A.J. Chandler Park and a variety of historic buildings surrounding the park. The southern portion of the Corridor from Boston Street to Pecos Road is comprised of strip commercial uses and freestanding buildings situated on small lots (typically 50 feet wide by 150 feet deep) that front on Arizona Avenue.

Existing land uses along Arizona Avenue generally consist of retail with a mixture of office uses, quasi-public uses (churches) and retail/service uses. At the southern end of the Corridor is a large apartment complex at the northwest corner of Pecos Road and Arizona Avenue. South of Pecos Road are three large new shopping centers surrounding the intersection of the Loop 202 Freeway and Arizona Avenue. Those shopping centers include Kohl's department store at the southwest corner of the interchange, a Sam's Club and small shop space at the southeast corner and a Wal-Mart and small shop space at the northeast corner.

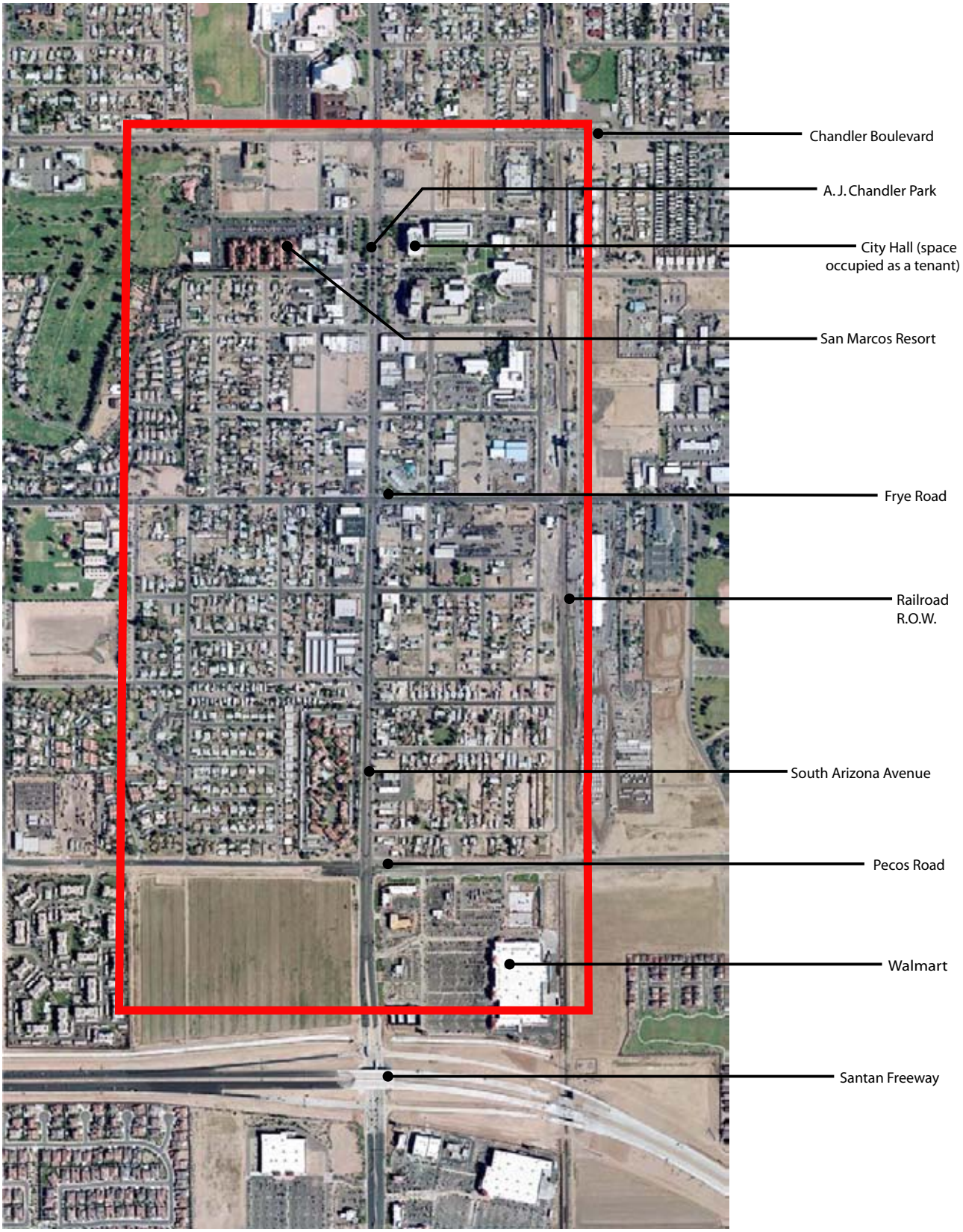


FIGURE 1 Aerial Map of the Corridor

Taking advantage of the new Santan Freeway access will involve time and effort. The keys to new development are planning the Corridor's changing land uses, streets and other public investments in a strategic way and implementing a series of actions targeting developers who will provide the essential investment in the future.

Northeast corner of Pecos Road and S. Arizona Avenue

The evolution of the South Arizona Avenue Corridor is a vignette in the history of Chandler. Dr.. A.J. Chandler commissioned a plan for the city in 1911. It included a classic Beaux Arts park straddling the north-south line that would become State Highway 87, the current Arizona Avenue.

The State highway divided into two one way lanes, running around the edges of the park. Running east-west across the park's mid-section was the Commonwealth Canal. Cars and trucks detoured around the park on dirt roads, coming from both north and south. Few buildings defined the city at that time, but already there were the beginnings in Chandler of a memorable place on the expansive plain of the valley.

By the 1930's, traffic on State Highway 87 was creating safety concerns. The highway was re-designed to go straight through the middle of the park, creating the present configuration, with park land on both sides. Since that time, downtown Chandler has faced north toward the intersection of South Arizona Avenue and Chandler Boulevard as its gateway from the region.

For roughly 70 years, this has been the configuration of the corridor and the orientation of Downtown. In 2005 the Santan Freeway (Loop 202) was extended eastward, including on and off-ramps at South Arizona Avenue. The freeway now continues east to create Loop 202, connecting with the metro area's freeway system.

Santan Freeway Development

This new access will have a powerful effect on the South Arizona Avenue Corridor, as it now will become the front door into Downtown Chandler. At least three shopping centers will dominate this freeway exit ¾ mile south of Downtown, providing a strong attraction to a high exposure location.

At this time the Corridor resembles a barbell, with the Downtown at the north end and the freeway exit and centers at the south end. The South Arizona Avenue Corridor lies between these two. It will be heavily influenced by the new shopping centers and the new pattern of access to and from the freeway on the south, and the new public investments in courts and City Hall at the north end. The recommendations of the study are to include recommendations for Downtown's revitalization as well as the Corridor. The two areas are integrally related.

Project Methodology

In September 2005, the City of Chandler retained the services of RNL Design, architecture and planning firm, to develop an urban design study of the South Arizona Avenue Corridor, and make recommendations to revitalize the corridor, taking advantage of the new access presented by the Santan Freeway.

RNL began work in September, meeting with key City staff to initiate the study. For the corridor study, RNL held community meetings and open houses for residents and business and property owners in the corridor on both sides of South Arizona Avenue from South Delaware Street to Palm Lane.

These six neighborhood meetings were characterized by strong attendance and involvement by residents and owners. They were held prior to the Public Hearing process of Planning and Zoning and City Council. Attendance at these meetings also included City staff and elected officials.

The work has also included extensive coordination with the City Hall and Museum Relocation Study, completed by RNL Design and approved by the Mayor and Council. This study recommended a site, which was chosen by City Council, for the relocation of City Hall and a nearby site in the Corridor for the relocated History Museum.

The Vision

South Arizona Avenue will be a revitalized, lively, urban sector of Chandler, built on a foundation of high-density residential blocks of 30-40 units/acre. They will have some ground floor retail, neighborhood services such as dry cleaners and small offices to serve the residents living in downtown. The single-family neighborhoods on either side of South Arizona Avenue are well maintained and revitalized, consisting of small bungalow style homes.

Just to the north of the neighborhoods, the new City Hall and History Museum and cultural complex transitions into the historic Downtown square, enriched with some entertainment uses. For example, a new art theatre or performing arts complex. A new look for South Arizona Avenue will create a safer street to walk along, and a great streetscape as the major entry to a revitalized South Arizona Avenue Corridor.

The Goals

The major goals of this plan for the South Arizona Avenue Corridor are:

- To take advantage of the new accessibility from the region created by the Santan Freeway
- Creation of a new "front door" for Chandler
- Involve and get the buy-in of the residents and business owners in the area
- Create an economically feasible plan that capitalizes on the strength of the market
- To position Chandler's downtown as a unique regional center

CHAPTER 2 - THE OPPORTUNITY

Assets

The corridor has a number of assets that bode well for activation of South Arizona Avenue, the downtown and the neighborhoods:

Santan Freeway Development

• **Wal-Mart:** The new shopping centers at the Loop 202 and Arizona Avenue can only have a positive effect on the Arizona Avenue Corridor, primarily due to increased traffic that will be brought to the southern end of the Corridor.

Wal-Mart will generate traffic along Arizona Avenue and increase exposure for other retailers on the street. Wal-Mart is not a competitor with these stores. Since Wal-Mart will be constructing Super centers in this region of Phoenix, the trade area for the Arizona Avenue Wal-Mart will likely be very large, stretching as far south as Hunt Highway. Wal-Mart and Sam's Club will be destinations that will bring a large consumer population to the southern end of the Arizona Avenue Corridor.

As a result, Wal-Mart and the related retail centers at the Loop 202 will increase traffic along Arizona Avenue and provide more traffic for Corridor retailers. It will also change the image and perception of the area in the minds of many consumers.

• **Historic Downtown Square:** The northern portion of the Arizona Avenue Corridor (north of Boston Street) is attractive and possesses the historic character that should translate into a successful downtown. While still in its infancy and needing to mature, with additional redevelopment efforts by the City, the northern Corridor should be a success that can be grown to the south.

San Marcos Resort / Hotel

• **Competition:** Retail uses currently existing along Arizona Avenue do not, for the most part, compete with the types of retail uses found in the Loop 202 shopping centers. Most of Arizona Avenue retailers provide services to the immediate neighborhood or ¬¬target a different trade area for retail or restaurant services.

• **Trade Area Demographics:** As the Metro Phoenix Market Report states, the trade area (3 mile and 5 mile radius) surrounding the Arizona Avenue Corridor is very large with high incomes. Both Gilbert and Chandler have some of the highest household incomes in the County. Disposable incomes in this part of the Valley will attract a wide variety of retail uses. There is much potential for retail development throughout the trade area and Loop 202 corridor, but not for the Arizona Avenue corridor itself.

Dr. A.J. Chandler Park

Site 6

• **Other Current Redevelopment:** Construction is moving ahead on the first phases of the residential development at Chandler Boulevard and Arizona Avenue. When complete, this will be a sizeable mixed use residential and commercial development encompassing several blocks at that location.

• **The Chandler Civic Center and City Hall Relocation:** The civic uses of Chandler and the new county courts bring in people and activities during the day. More people and activities are expected when the new courts building opens. The site for both the City Hall relocation and the History Museum, as approved by the Council, is south of Chicago Street. The presence of both these facilities will improve the prospects for redevelopment efforts in the middle and southern half of the corridor.

• **Chandler Park and Walkways:** This historic park and the walkway system with its overhead trellises–plus the historic buildings surrounding the park–create a unique and positive image in the Downtown. This environment or other means of shade can be extended throughout the district to create positive pedestrian conditions and an enhanced sense of place to an area that already has some identity.

• **Neighborhoods:** A mix of residential areas is key to success of the retail stores on South Arizona Avenue. While the neighborhoods on either side of South Arizona Avenue need improvement, there are many houses on both sides of the Avenue that could be reinforced by addition of other residential units on vacant parcels.

• **Developable Land Parcels:** The City has assembled land parcels into a consolidated vacant block (Site 6) just south of Downtown. There are other vacant and under utilized parcels which may be assembled as development sites, particularly on the east side of South Arizona Avenue.

• **Urban Living Lifestyle:** Downtown Chandler is in a unique position to fill this lifestyle niche that has risen in popularity nationwide, by creating new downtown housing and providing pedestrian-oriented amenities and services.

• **Urban Form:** From a retailing perspective, the Arizona Avenue Corridor is taking on the shape of a bookend from the perspective of retail activity. On the north are the City Hall Complex and San Marcos Resort. To the south are the new shopping centers at the Loop 202. The retail uses and restaurants in the A. J. Chandler Park area will not compete with the national chain retail and restaurant uses located in the southern shopping centers. With these two destinations at either end of the Corridor, particular attention must be focused on intervening uses between Boston Street and Pecos Road.

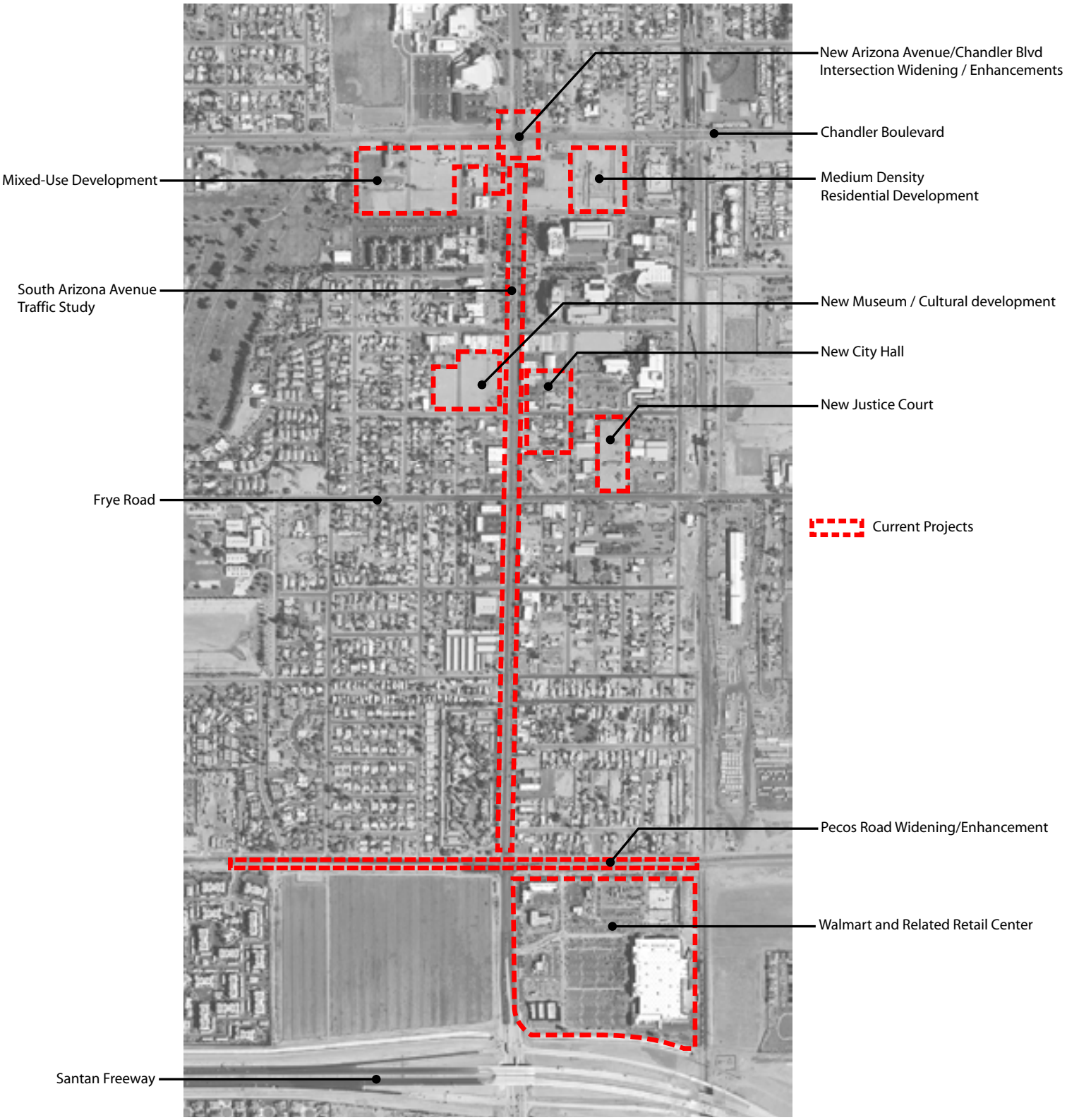


FIGURE 2 Recent and Current Projects

Issues and Problems

To maximize the benefits of the Corridor, several issues will have to be addressed and a coordinated program of action initiated. The major factors present in today's Corridor are based on analysis of the demographic characteristics of the surrounding neighborhood and the mix of retail and business uses along Arizona Avenue.

Looking north on S. Arizona Avenue from Pecos Road

• **Public Perception:** The greatest deterrent facing redevelopment of the Corridor is the perception of the area as a low to moderate income area that is not attractive to most of the residents of the City of Chandler. There is a lack of property maintenance, numerous obsolete buildings, and a lack of onsite parking. The presence of day laborers at street corners adds to this image and will continue to deter any significant retail development in the area.

• **Safety:** Consumers shop where they feel comfortable and secure. The typical Chandler consumer does not feel comfortable in the environment found along Arizona Avenue south of Boston Street. North of Boston Street, the civic facilities, the San Marcos Hotel and historic buildings provide a comfortable environment with varied retail and restaurant uses.

Typical corridor businesses

• **Street Character:** Arizona Avenue is a very wide street that is designed to carry traffic. There is no center raised median to break up the expansive asphalt, and sidewalks are located directly adjacent to the curb. This design is not conducive to a retail environment and, in fact, the number of curb cuts along Arizona Avenue makes for a large number of traffic movements that curtail retail activity.

• **Land Uses:** Land uses along the Corridor south of Boston Street include a combination of retail businesses catering to the local trade area, quasi-industrial uses, and some uses that would attract a larger trade area beyond the immediate neighborhood. Services catering to the local market include dollar stores, Hispanic groceries, self-service laundries and similar uses. Most of these are contained within older buildings. There are also auto body, auto repair and tire shops that likely provide services to the immediate neighborhood. The mixture and type of uses are not cohesive and do not contribute to a strong retailing environment.

Some of the newer buildings in the area include a Pep Boys auto parts store, mini-storage, and some small office buildings. These types of uses may attract consumers from outside the immediate neighborhood. There are also some specialty businesses that can be classified as commercial uses requiring outside storage (such as an electrical contracting company and an architectural stone company).

Typical corridor businesses

Typical corridor businesses

In many respects the land uses along the southern portion of Arizona Avenue are responding to existing market conditions of the adjacent neighborhood. North of Boston Street, uses are clearly oriented toward the San Marcos Hotel and the government complex.

• **Gateway:** The immediate gateway into the southern portion of the Arizona Avenue Corridor is very weak, particularly on the east side of Arizona Avenue. That situation, however, is changing and getting better with the construction of the new shopping centers at the intersection of Arizona Avenue and the Loop 202. The gateway could be much improved by making a seamless transition from the shopping centers at the Loop 202 to the southern part of the Corridor.

• **Parcel Size:** Lots are generally not conducive to modern development practices due to shallow depths and narrow widths. Assembly of small lots is a task that is necessary to facilitate redevelopment efforts. More assembly of land has occurred on the west side of Arizona Avenue. Several new complexes and buildings have been constructed on the West resulting in an improved appearance. Assembly of parcels and extending the depth of lots along Arizona Avenue, especially the east side, is critical to changing the character of the area.

CHAPTER 3 - THE STRATEGY

The strategy for improving South Arizona Avenue is a multi-faceted, coordinated approach that begins with a basic premise:

High density residential housing

- **Residential is the Key to Everything Else**

The key to downtown redevelopment is the construction of new, dense housing projects rather than encouraging more retail development. Retail development by itself does not create retail sales. People create retail sales and people living in the downtown area are a necessity for a successful redevelopment effort.

Based on the study of many comparable urban downtowns' success factors and the consultants' experience and research, it is recommended that the primary effort of the City of Chandler in redeveloping its downtown be focused on housing rather than refocusing or expanding the current retail environment.

Housing will provide the support and foundation for changing the character of the retail uses along the Arizona Avenue Corridor and strengthening the existing retail businesses that already exist there. More housing–not more or different retail uses–is the key ingredient that, over the long term, will lead to a healthy retail and urban environment in the Corridor.

High density residential housing

The Strategy

Following are the primary elements that should be adopted by the City of Chandler for Downtown redevelopment to implement The Vision.

• **Housing:** The primary strategy for reinvigorating and changing the retail market along Arizona Avenue is to introduce medium to high density housing to the area. A combination of housing types and densities should be considered including high density ownership units (condos) at 30 to 40 units per acre, rental units at similar densities, and medium density single family attached or detached units at 6 to 18 units per acre. This part of Chandler should contain the most urbanized and densest development in the community. Residential uses should be introduced directly onto Arizona Avenue to promote new retail uses.

As recommended by the Elliott D. Pollack Market Study (see Appendix A), the City should establish a goal of construction of 1,000 new housing units in the Arizona Avenue Corridor over the next 10 years.

Mixed use development with high density residential

While mixed-use projects are promoted today as the way to incorporate live and work environments within a single building, they have not been successful everywhere and can be highly risky from an investment perspective, particularly in a suburban setting. The inclusion of commercial space within a residential condo project on South Arizona Avenue should be limited and only where it makes sense from the perspective of foot traffic. Chandler should take small steps in redeveloping its Downtown and not overburden private developers in the early stages of the process.

Mixed use development with high density residential

• **Branding:** The Arizona Avenue Corridor should be embellished with a new identity. This should be accomplished through marketing strategies that focus on Downtown Chandler's strengths and a revived character (like "Copper Square" in Downtown Phoenix). Marketing materials should focus on a "live, work, and play" environment, emphasizing a combination of higher residential density mixed with some retail and office.

• **Retail Theming:** While housing is the focus of this strategic vision, opportunities exist for new retail development at the northeast corner of Arizona and Pecos Avenues. This commercial corner should develop a unique theme that will transition from high density residential to the north and commercial to the south while at the same time creating a gateway into downtown Chandler from the freeway.

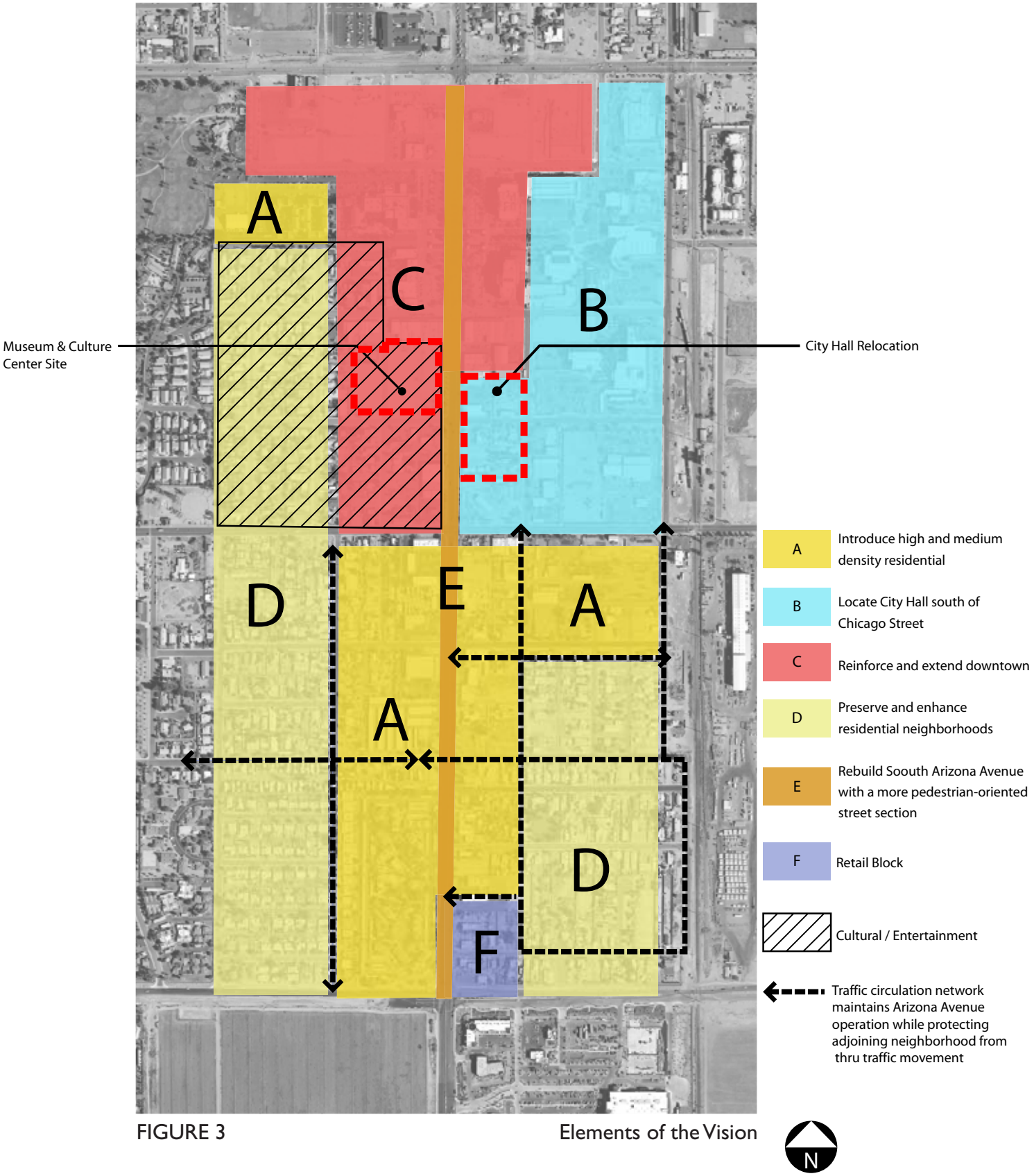


FIGURE 3 Elements of the Vision

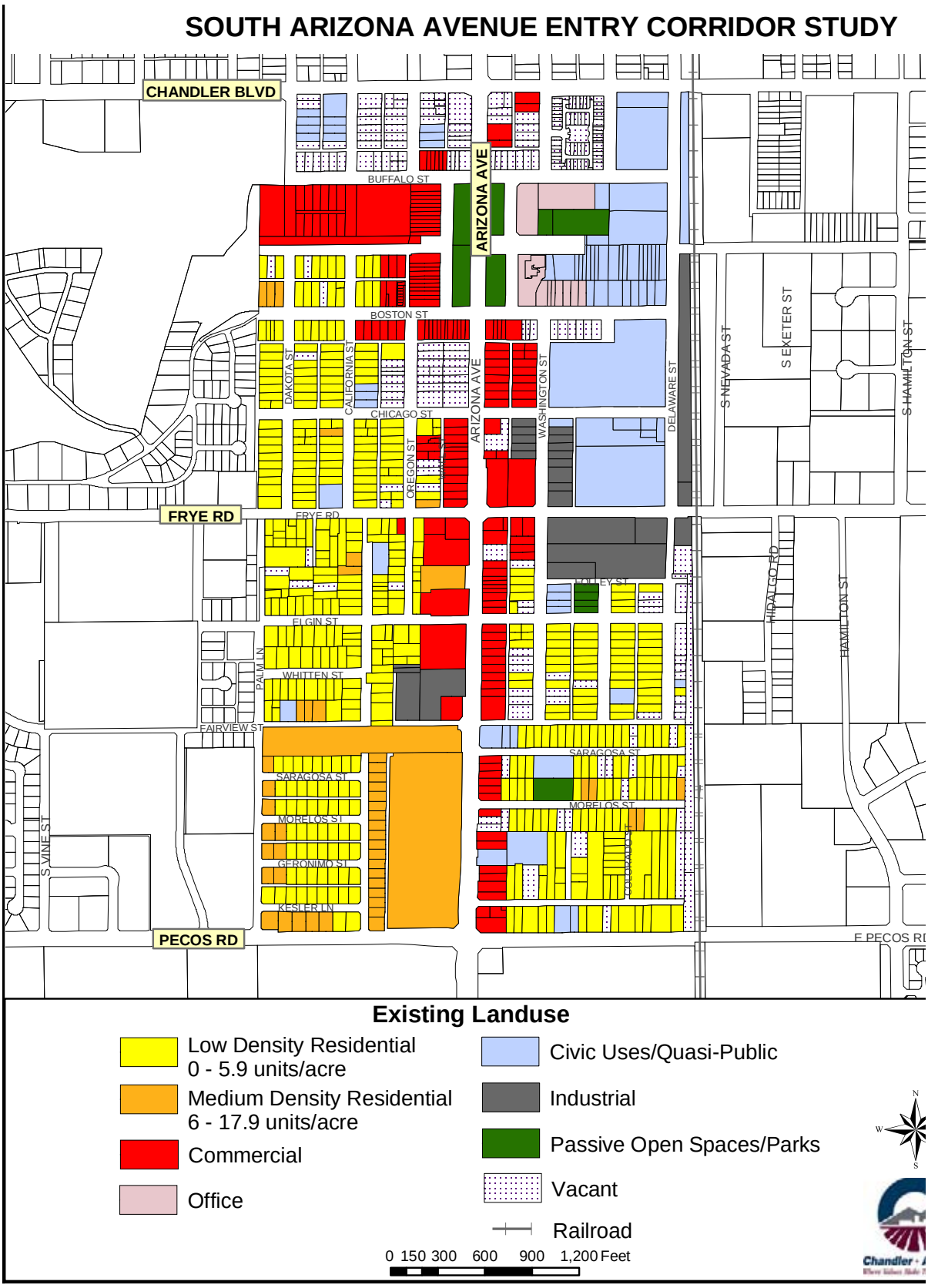


FIGURE 4 Existing Land Use

CHAPTER 4 - LAND USE CONCEPT

To implement the Vision for the Corridor, a clear land use strategy should be articulated which will guide decision-making on zoning and development review during the next several years of Corridor revitalization.

High density residential housing

Residential Land Use

The primary move that must be made is to bring more residential units into the area. Commercial redevelopment of the type that will thrive in the corridor requires more residential units and people, which will accomplish three goals:

• It will attract a population with a higher disposable income to support the retail stores and restaurants in the area.
• It will show that new investment is taking place, and that the area is undergoing a positive turnaround. This will attract both new residents and residential developers into the area.
• It will create a strong sense of place at the core of Chandler that will address a unique urban living lifestyle image.

The market for residential development is strong at this time, particularly for two residential product types: The first is a 6-18/acre single-family attached unit type (town houses), the second type is 30-40/acre high density condo ownership units over parking. The higher density should be related to South Arizona Avenue, and the medium density should be oriented to the existing neighborhoods.

A third type, composed of small single-family detached units, can be developed on the vacant sites that are found throughout the neighborhood, particularly on the east side.

The way to encourage the two primary types of single and multi-family units is to:
• Change the C-3 zone district to a new category that allows higher density residential along Arizona Avenue, in a full block depth to Washington Street. This is discussed in Chapter 6—Implementation.
• Provide sites for higher density residential projects along Arizona Avenue. Residential development will stimulate a change in retail uses along the corridor and support those in Downtown. It will also send a visible signal that new development is taking place in the corridor.

As discussed in the Vision, residential development is the key to Corridor and Downtown revitalization. A variety of housing types are being planned and are under construction at the north end of the Corridor, and sites can be assembled for residential development in the southern part.

Residential Development Sites

Several blocks in the corridor have the potential to play a positive role in the revitalization of Downtown and South Arizona Avenue. These are the potential redevelopment sites. They include (in order from north to south):

• **Sites 1, 2 and 3:** Three blocks being proposed for development by Desert Viking at SW corner Arizona Avenue at Chandler Boulevard, for mixed town homes with retail along Chandler and Arizona Avenue. This project has city approvals, and the sites are cleared.

• **East of Site 7:** Medium density attached residential town home development by Benton-Robb. These units are now under construction.

• **Site 6:** This is a cleared site, owned by the City of Chandler, west side of South Arizona Avenue, south of historic buildings on Boston Street. The full development site includes land

on both sides of S. Oregon Street. The development concept is a mixed use multicultural site with a city museum, specialty retail, and restaurants backed by single family attached residential on both sides of S. Oregon Street. An open space and parking would face South Arizona Avenue. The block extends the pedestrian walkway and trellis system south from A.J. Chandler Park.

• **Steel Yard:** The existing steel yard on Frye Road occupies the largest part of this potential site. Adjacent parcels on the north side of Elgin Street are potentially part of this assembly, including the existing park, which is proposed to be retained and upgraded. Higher density housing is envisioned along Frye Road, with lower density attached town homes oriented to the neighborhood south of the site. Portions of this site may be developed in phases, or as parts of a separate development project.

• **East Side Residential Blocks:** These three blocks are south of Frye Road, extending south, a block short of Pecos Road. They are intended to be residential blocks, with higher density residential on South Arizona Avenue, and low-density town homes facing the neighborhood. They would be developed the full block depth back from South Arizona Avenue to the newly-extended Washington Street. The three sites can have variable densities and can include incidental retail space. However, they are intended to bolster the amount of residential development, so high and medium density residential is appropriate.

• **Self Storage Block:** Self-storage, as with automotive service and repair, is not consistent with the residential and retail concept for South Arizona Avenue. Over time, the Corridor concept includes residential and commercial uses for this site. In a later stage, this site could be redeveloped to a density consistent with the redevelopment concept.

• **Fairview:** The trailer park on Fairview west of Arizona Avenue should be removed and redeveloped with residential densities that are appropriate for the location: multi-family near South Arizona Avenue and single-family detached west of South California Street. The site west of South California Street would be subdivided into lot sizes that are comparable with the existing lot sizes in the neighborhood. California Street would be connected across the site from Fairview south, with appropriate traffic calming improvements. Fairview is recommended to be made a full width street across the trailer park site.

• **Residential Neighborhood Infill:** Numerous opportunities for single-family infill exist in the residential neighborhood on the east side of South Arizona Avenue. In addition to the Habitat for Humanity program, whose goal is to produce five houses a year, there are other vacant properties that could be developed on a selective basis with single family housing that is compatible with the scale of the neighborhood. The City may be able to assist developers or private owners with planning and building these homes. The focus of such a program should be on clusters of sites that are well-located so that they have the maximum positive effect on the surrounding neighborhood.

Furthermore, the single-family area bounded by Delaware St., Pecos Rd., Washington St. extended, and the line 150 ft. south of Morelos St., should be considered eligible for re-platting to achieve lot sizes and shapes more attractive to new single-family development.

Along with new construction, property improvement such as the Neighborhood Program should be a focus. Assistance should be provided to individual families who want to improve their own homes and bring properties into compliance with codes and ordinances. In line with this type of program, non-conforming uses that are not compatible with the future of the neighborhood should be encouraged to relocate. In addition, the city should work with the neighborhood to create a strong sense of identity and pride to further encourage improvement of private properties. This may be accomplished by creating unique street signs for the downtown neighborhoods, encourage and assist with designating key neighborhood buildings (i.e. churches, schools) as historic, and creating new parks/open space.

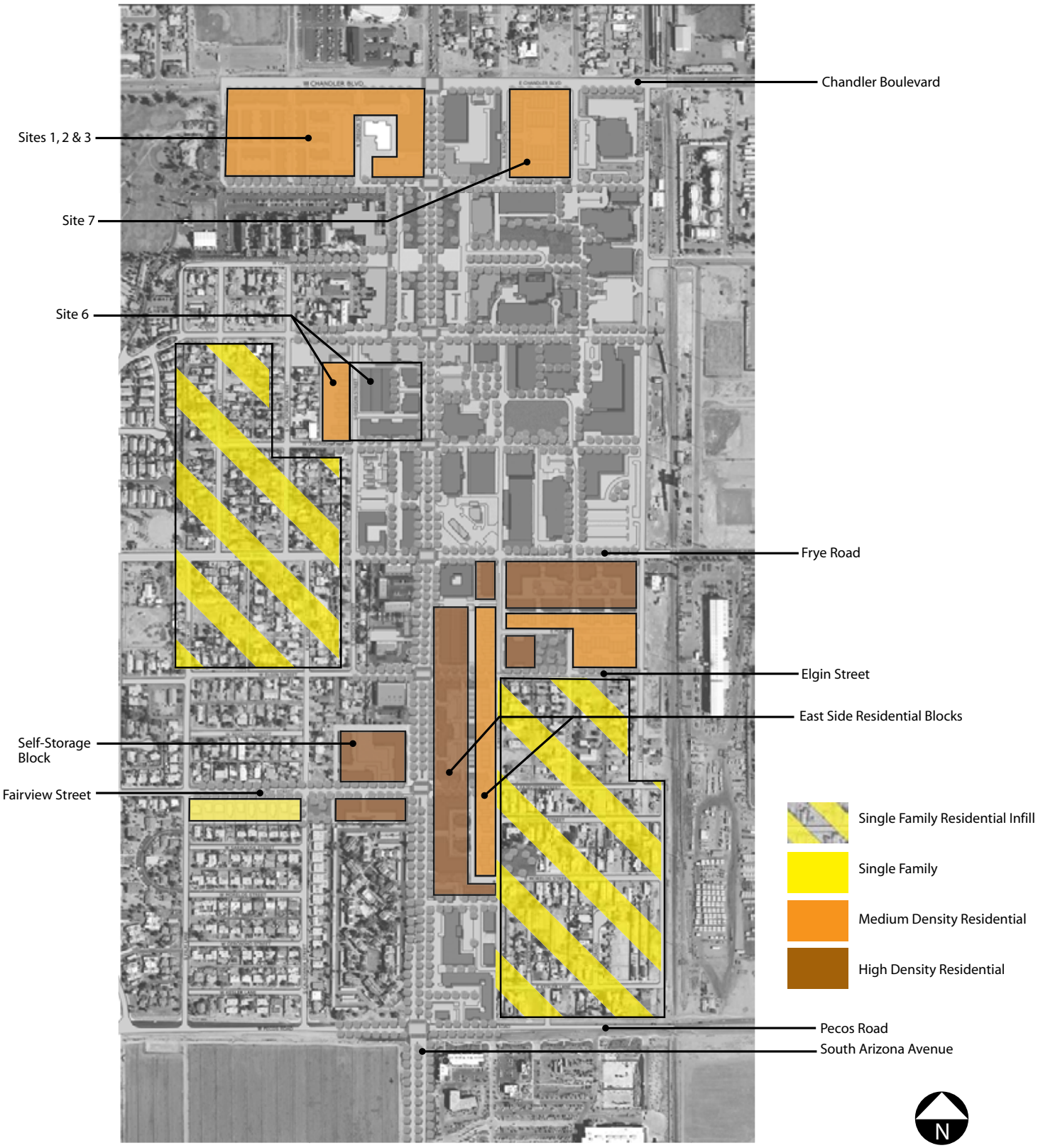


FIGURE 7 Residential Development Sites

Retail and Restaurant Uses

Residential development is the key to South Arizona Avenue's future, but there may be some commercial development potential in the area serving new and existing residential neighborhoods. The mixed residential and retail strategy will strengthen Downtown–with a strong gateway of commercial space at Chandler Boulevard (Desert Viking mixed-use development), continuing around A.J. Chandler Park with the existing retail on the west side. Between Boston Street and Elgin, more retail possibilities exist on the west side of South Arizona Avenue. This could create a very strong continuity of retail frontages from Chandler Boulevard south to Elgin, interspersed with civic uses and open space.

South of that, residential development will prevail, with the exception of a large retail project at Pecos Road and South Arizona Avenue. Finally, the Corridor is anchored by the major retail centers at the Santan Freeway. Commercial uses at the northeast corner of Arizona and Pecos may be themed to take advantage of the proximity of these centers by focusing on home improvements, decorating, building or other home-oriented uses, in proximity to the regional centers at Pecos.

Downtown Chandler restaurant

The primary retail opportunities shown along with the existing retail in the illustrative plan are the following; note that several of these opportunities require assemblage of existing parcels to create sites large enough for commercial development:

• **Site 7:** Across from Sites 1-3, there is an opportunity to create a very strong retail gateway as an entry into Downtown Chandler. Relocating Jack-in-the-Box would be a significant first step in the direction of a great mixed-use gateway. Aside from Jack-in-the-Box, this site is assembled.

• **Boston Street:** The last building site on the south side of Boston Street can complete the retail row on the south end of A.J. Chandler Park. It is an infill site, continuing the historic covered walkway.

Downtown Chandler restaurant

• **Site 6:** This is a mixed-use site across the street from the approved City Hall site. Retail uses, a mix of cultural buildings, and the History Museum will front on South Arizona Avenue, with structured parking behind the retail center. The site is large enough to create a pedestrian space connecting to Boston Street with a pedestrian walkway.

• **South of Site 6:** The west side of South Arizona Avenue has potential retail sites between Chicago Street and Frye.

• **South of Frye Road:** Just west of the Steelyard site, a corner retail site can work with residential and potentially retail/mixed use.

• **Mixed Use on Arizona Avenue:** Other retail opportunities may be possible south of Elgin on the east side of South Arizona Avenue, as these sites become locations for residential and – if feasible for these developers - mixed-use projects.

Downtown Chandler retail

• **NE Corner S. Arizona Avenue and Pecos:** This would be the largest single retail site in the corridor if existing commercial properties were assembled. It could also be phased.

Open Space

Open space, courtyards, parks, civic commons, trellised walkways and shaded streets will create an identity for the residential, retail and civic uses that will make this an attractive place to live, work and play. Public open space and private landscaped open space will, together, create this green public framework. The features of the open space are the following:

• **A. J. Chandler Park:** Consider improving the historic value of the park to Downtown by opening up the sight lines into the park from Arizona Avenue and evaluating the parking

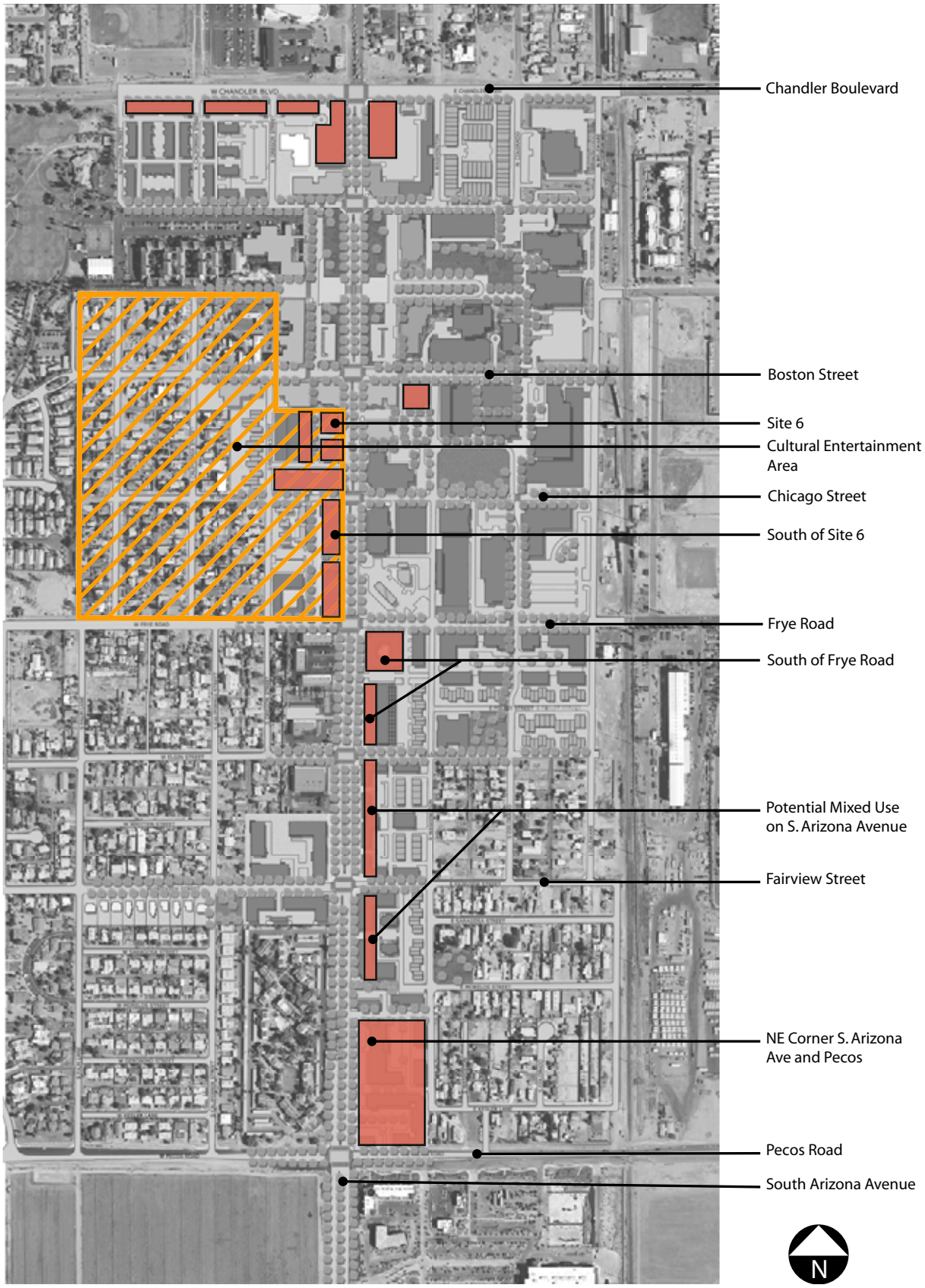


FIGURE 8 Retail Diagram

layout, to create a more aesthetic setting without losing the functionality of the parking and circulation.

• **South Arizona Avenue:** Entry gateways at Chandler Boulevard and Pecos will introduce visitors to the Corridor and Downtown, branding the area. These are envisioned as tasteful signage and landscape features that identify Chandler, and prevent the area from being overshadowed by the shopping centers south of Pecos.

• **North and South Civic Commons:** The relocation of City Hall provides an opportunity for a major focal town green just east of City Hall, as a focus for a number of other municipal and county buildings south of the existing civic center.

• **Trellised Walkways:** Trellises shading sidewalks will be extended into the surrounding retail and civic neighborhoods from their present location in Downtown. Putting these on major pedestrian routes will extend an historic look and feel farther south in the Corridor.

• **Street Tree Planting:** A consistent, persistent street-tree planting program for both City and private development according to a plan will result in a delightful green neighborhood in the corridor. The most important pedestrian paths should be prioritized in the City's Capital improvement Program. Other streets, more oriented toward existing neighborhoods, should have planned, phased planting programs to improve them incrementally over the next several years.

Dr. A.J. Chandler Park

• **Open Space in Private Development:** Design Guidelines will specify open space requirements for new commercial or residential projects. These open spaces will provide for the immediate needs of residents and other users of these spaces and will tie into the public open space system.

Cultural and Entertainment

The blocks bounded by Arizona Avenue, Frye Rd., Oregon St., and the alley south of Boston St., along with the half block on the west side of Oregon St. between Chicago St. and the alley south of Boston, feature specialty retail, restaurants/cafes, offices, museum, entertainment, and other cultural uses as primary uses, with ancillary residential (medium to high density) to achieve appropriate land use transitions and patron support base.

As redevelopment activities begin to materialize along Arizona Avenue itself, the area generally bounded by Arizona Avenue, Frye Rd., the Palm Lane alignment (alley west of Dakota St.), and Boston St., together with Sites 4 and 5 would all be considered eligible for assembly of existing small lots to achieve new building sites for redevelopment projects related to hotel, business conference and support uses, restaurants or restaurant conversions, offices, and other cultural uses such as historic arts, visual arts, or performing arts. Chicago St. would then be envisioned as providing a pedestrian walkway that links the various entertainment/cultural uses west of Arizona Avenue with the civic campus uses to the east of Arizona Avenue.

Trellised walkway in downtown Chandler

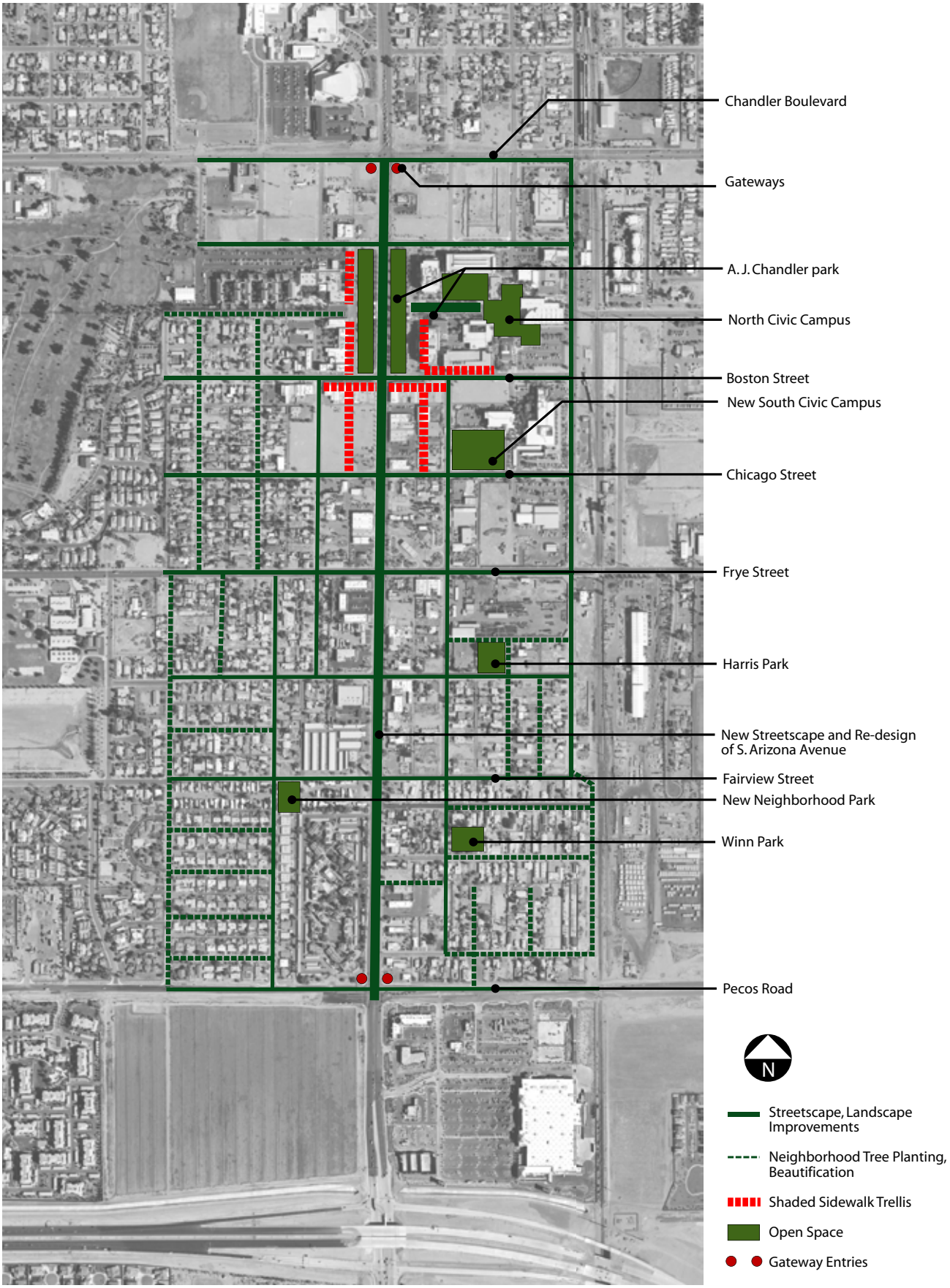


FIGURE 9 Open Space and Streetscape

SOUTH ARIZONA AVENUE ENTRY CORRIDOR STUDY

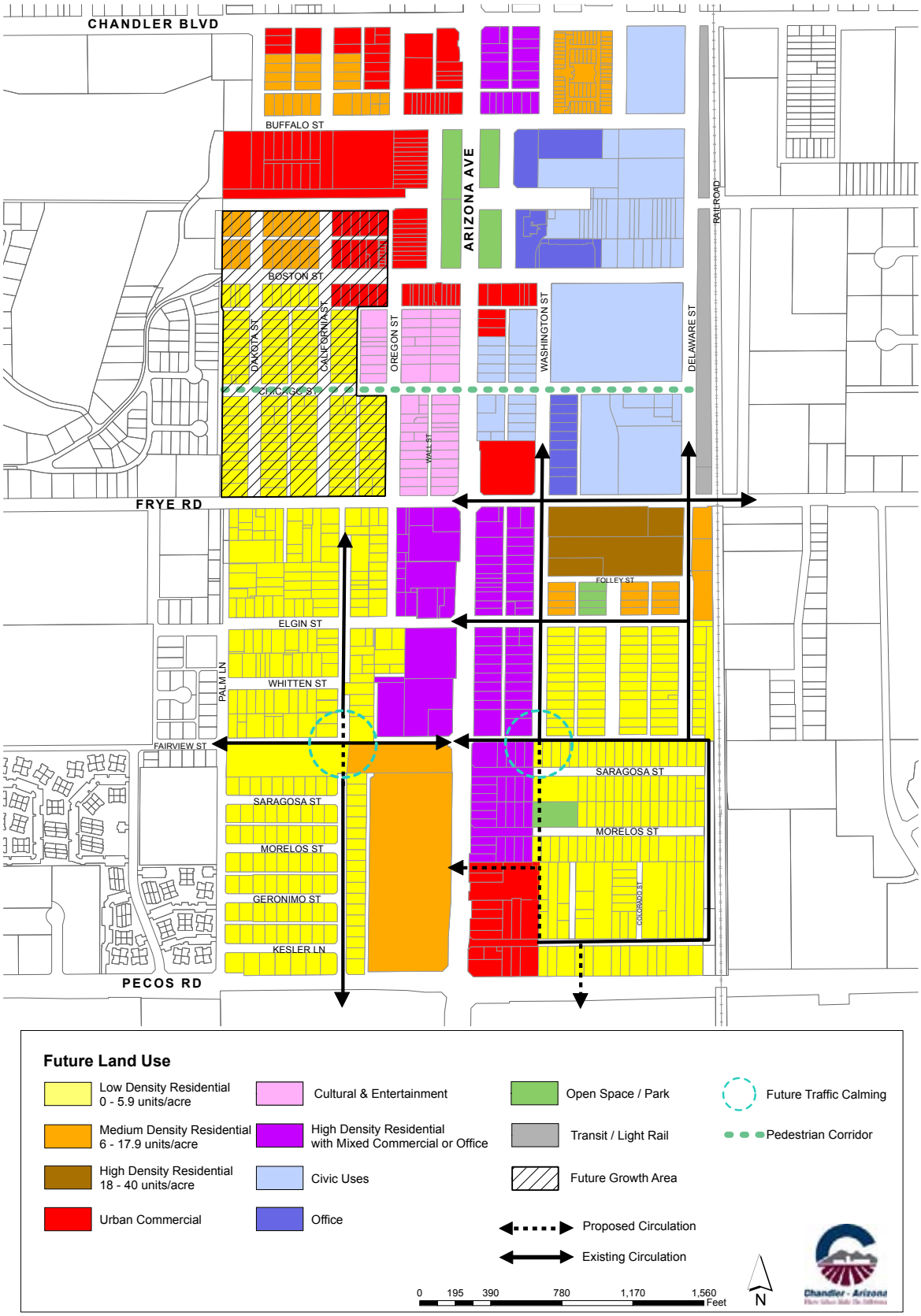


FIGURE 5 Future Land Use

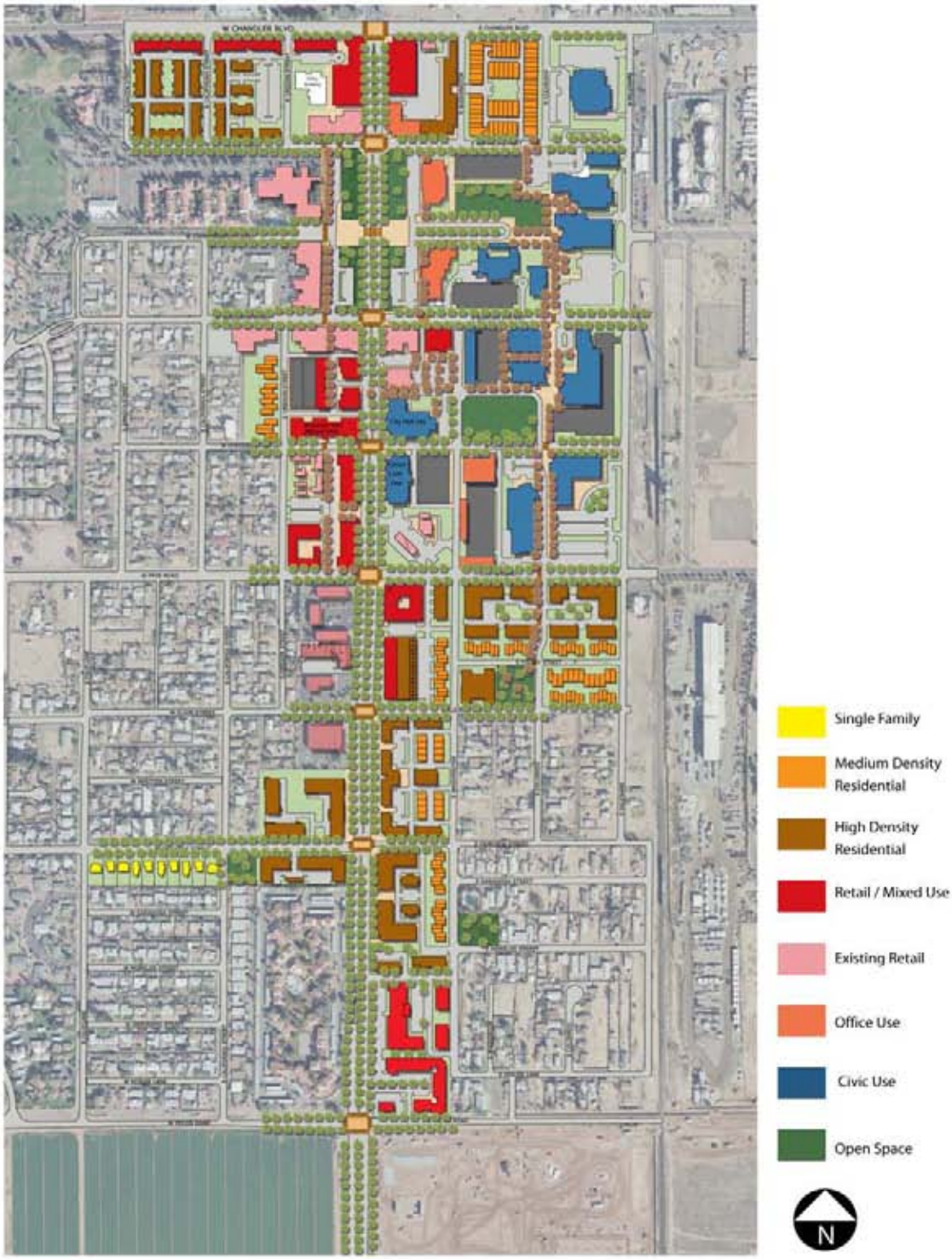


FIGURE 6 Illustrative Site Plan

* Physical form is shown for illustrative purpose only. The corridor can take on many different forms.

Future Land Use Category Descriptions

1. Low Density Residential (0 – 5.9 dwelling units/acre)

Low Density Residential denotes areas where single-family residential development can be accommodated within a range of 0 to 5.9 dwelling units per acre. The use of single-family subdivision design concepts may be applied and are encouraged particularly in areas that were previously parceled rather than subdivided to meet city standards. This plan recommends that areas designated for Low Density Residential south of Frye Road be rezoned where necessary to allow a single-family home as permitted use in order to encourage the development of vacant single-family lots. Densities higher than 5.9 dwelling units per acres can be considered on a case-by-case basis upon demonstrating compatibility with surrounding land uses and receiving approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council.

2. Medium Density Residential (6 – 17.9 dwelling units/acre)

This designation allows alternative designs in various non-traditional detached and attached homes for a variety of housing types including patio homes, town homes, condominiums, and other products built at similar intensities. The residential density in this category ranges from 6 to 17.9 dwelling units per acre.

3. High Density Residential (18 – 40 dwelling units/acre)

High Density Residential denotes areas where multi-family residential development can be accommodated within a range of 18 to 40 dwelling units per acre. Design quality, property size, and infrastructure capability will be the primary determinants of the density achieved. This category, which is unique to the downtown corridor, is intended to create a strong sense of place while at the same time provide an urban living lifestyle that will attract people and support downtown commercial.

4. High Density Residential / Mixed Use (18 – 40 dwelling units/acres)

This category, which is unique to the downtown corridor, is intended to create a strong sense of place while at the same time provide an urban living lifestyle with opportunities to live, work and play in the downtown area. This category denotes areas appropriate for mixed use development consisting of high-density residential, selected commercial and office. High density residential in this category can be accommodated within a range of 18 to 40 dwelling units per acre. Design quality, property size, open space and infrastructure capability will be the primary determinants of density achieved. Lower densities can be considered and are encouraged as land use transitions when located next to properties that are planned for Low Density Residential.

Commercial uses in this category are limited to pedestrian oriented uses that serve the population residing or working in the same development or in the immediate area. Examples of appropriate commercial uses in this category include, but are not limited to, cafes, bakeries, restaurants, delicatessen, food specialty stores or other stores carrying a variety of food and related goods, yoga/dance studios, florists, Laundromats, dry cleaners, and personal services such as barbershops and beauty salons. Prohibited uses in this category include automotive service, automotive repair, automobile sales and fast-turnover establishments defined as businesses that include in their design and function the use of drive-through lanes, drive-up windows, or other features that facilitate the rapid delivery of goods or services to vehicular customers.

Office uses in this category are intended to serve the needs of the immediate area and provide additional employment opportunities for downtown residents. Examples of appropriate office uses in this category include, but are not limited to, law offices, real estate offices, financial institutions, computer service/repair, and other general office.

5. Cultural and Entertainment

Cultural and Entertainment denotes where the most intense types of cultural, commercial, entertainment and office development may take place. Examples of appropriate uses in this designation include museums, art galleries, performing art center/theater, hotels, retail, restaurants, business conference and support uses, dance clubs, cinemas, art studios, and amusement arcades. This category may also accommodate a compatible mix of general offices as well as ancillary residential of a density determined by design quality, property size, infrastructure capacity, and compatibility with adjoining land uses. The intent of this category is to create a vibrant, mixed-use, pedestrian oriented, urban environment that is linked to the historic downtown square with shaded pedestrian walkways.

6. Future Growth Area

This category denotes the area that is intended to become a future expansion of the Cultural and Entertainment category. This area is to be considered eligible for assembly of existing small lots to achieve new building sites for redevelopment projects related to hotel, business conference and support uses, restaurants or restaurant conversions, offices, and other cultural uses such as historic arts, visual arts, or performing arts as identified in the Cultural and Entertainment category. Chicago Street is envisioned as becoming a major pedestrian walkway that links the various entertainment/cultural uses west of Arizona Avenue with the civic campus uses to the east of Arizona Avenue.

7. Urban Commercial

Urban Commercial denotes areas that are appropriate for commercial development that are intended to serve a market that is larger than the immediately surrounding area. Development in this category is intended to transition from the conventional shopping center design to a more urban pedestrian oriented commercial design, thus placing more emphasis on pedestrian connections, shade and urban streetscape, while at the same time accommodating for vehicular access.

Development in this category may take the form of retail, restaurant, personal services such as beauty salons and day spas, bank, preschool/childcare, general office and medical office. Prohibited uses in this category include automotive service, automotive repair, automobile sales and fast-turnover establishments defined as businesses that include in their design and function the use of drive-through lanes, drive-up windows, or other features that facilitate the rapid delivery of goods or services to vehicular customers.

8. Civic Uses

Civic Uses denotes areas that are designated for government offices and services.

9. Office

Office denotes areas that can accommodate general office development including but not limited to law offices, real estate offices, financial institutions, non-profit organizations, and professional training/post-high school education.

10. Parks and Open Space

Parks and Open Space depicts areas set aside for recreation or as passive open space either through City, State or Federal ownership or by designations in the Chandler General Plan.

11. Transit / Light Rail

This category denotes areas that are considered appropriate for a bus and/or light rail transit center, and related support uses. Development in this category should provide sufficient shade and be designed to connect to the pedestrian corridor along Chicago Street.

CHAPTER 5 - CIRCULATION

As the City of Chandler plans and redevelops South Arizona Avenue, careful attention will be needed to balance current resident and business needs, mobility, circulation, parking, economic vitality, land use, and pedestrian needs. To better facilitate new development and revitalization, the following transportation improvements will be needed along South Arizona Avenue.

The main factors driving the circulation plan are:
• Creating developable sites
• Preserving and protecting the single family neighborhood from cut-through traffic
• Providing safe access to and from Arizona Avenue to the single family neighborhoods and the high density residential residents.
• Creating a more pedestrian-oriented – intimate street cross section along Arizona Avenue

Each of these issues will need to be complemented by the other elements (economic, land use, and design) to be a part of a successful revitalized South Arizona Avenue Corridor.

This transportation overview is not intended to fully examine each of the issues nor provide comprehensive solutions but rather identify potential improvement opportunities associated with redevelopment approaches proposed by RNL, the City of Chandler, adjacent neighborhoods and others. Where needed, this overview suggests where further study may be warranted to better understand the implications and effects a particular redevelopment approach may have on the adjacent transportation network.

Circulation and Roadway Capacity

The paramount issue with downtown transportation is circulation and mobility. The ability to easily get to a destination in an activity center or downtown is primarily due to the network of streets and their ability to accommodate the traffic loads. Arizona Avenue between Chandler Boulevard and Pecos Road is currently classified as a Major Arterial street in the City's General Plan. The plan calls for Arizona Avenue to have six lanes (three lanes in each direction). However, this classification will need to be redefined as discussed in this chapter to better reflect the City's redevelopment efforts, incorporation of other modes of transportation and an overall vision for South Arizona Avenue.

Circulation

One of the benefits of the downtown area is its street grid. The grid provides site access to area land uses and provides alternative means of traveling the area without using Arizona Avenue. Having motorists use the collector and local streets of Downtown for local trips helps in two ways: first, it helps traffic capacity on Arizona Avenue by reducing the number of vehicles that use the major street. Second, it reduces the number of turning movements on and off of Arizona Avenue, thus reducing the number of conflicts between other motorists and pedestrians.
Evaluation of the current network and discussions of circulation with area neighborhoods revealed that the following connections should occur to promote better circulation within South Arizona Avenue neighborhoods for their convenience and protection.

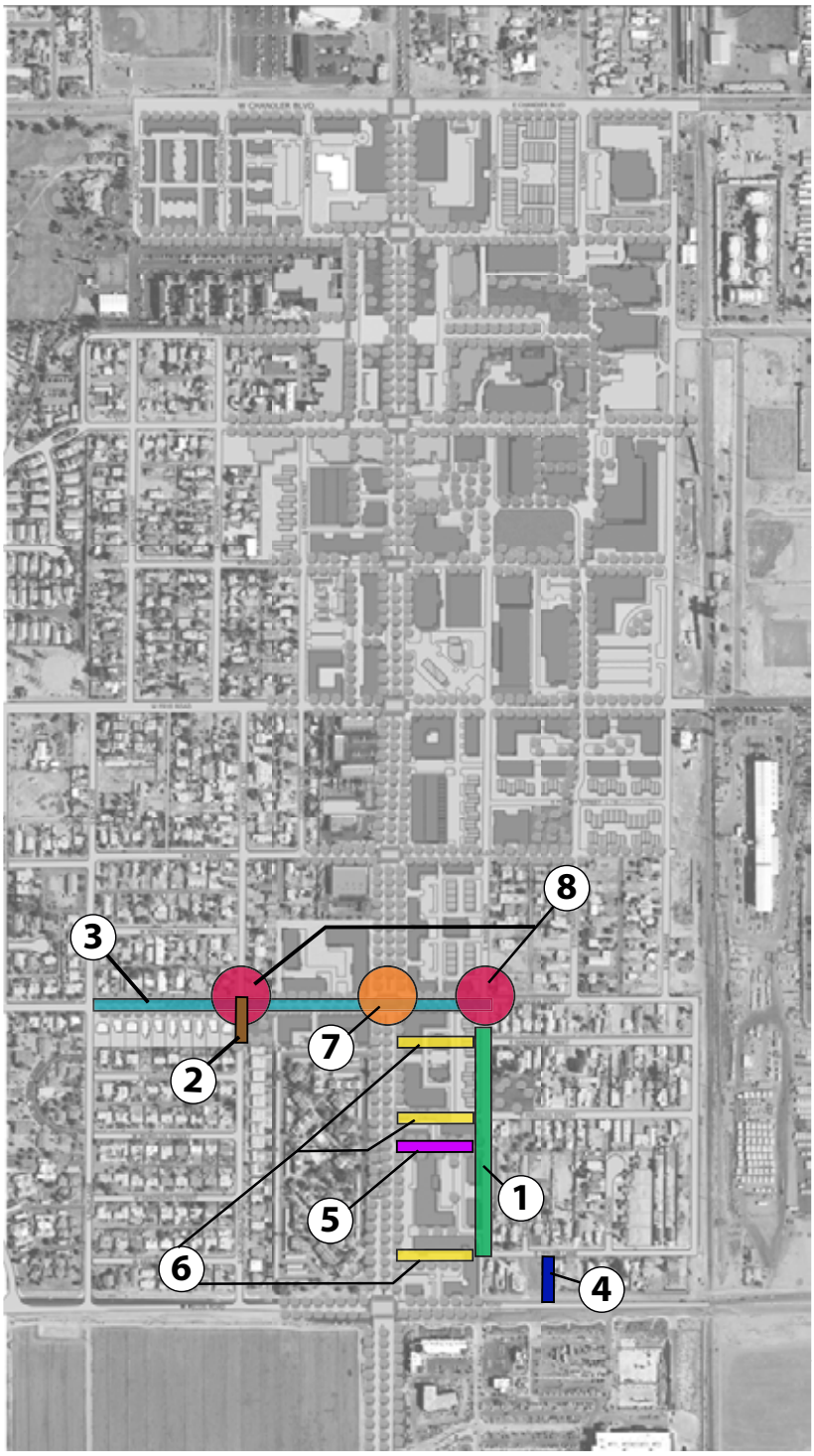


FIGURE 10 Circulation Improvements

1. Extend Washington Street south from Fairview Street to Kessler Street.

2. Extend California Street south from Fairview Street through mobile home park.

3. Acquire southern half of R.O.W. on Fairview from Palm Lane on west side of South Arizona Avenue to Washington Street on east side of Arizona Avenue.

4. Create new street connection form Kessler Street to Pecos Road.

5. Create new street connection from new Washington Street to South Arizona Avenue south of existing Morelos Street.

6. Abandon segments of Saragosa Street, Morelos Street, and Kessler Street located between Washington and South Arizona Avenue.

7. New traffic signal at Fairview Street and South Arizona Avenue.

8. Traffic calming at Fairview Street and California Street and at Fairview Street and Washington Street.

• Widen Fairview Street from Palm Lane to Washington at a minimum.
• Connect California Street to Fairview Street south of Saragosa. The new connection will not include any widening of California Street.
• Provide traffic calming devices along California Street, Palm Lane and others as necessary to discourage speeding and cut-through traffic. The City will work with neighborhoods to select the appropriate traffic calming treatments for each street. Consider installing a roundabout at California Street and Fairview Street when California Street is connected through to Fairview Street.
• Extend Washington Street south to Kessler with a knuckle intersection.
• Do not connect Delaware Street with Pecos Road. A Delaware connection to Pecos Road is too close to the railroad tracks.
• Keep the connection of Delaware Street with Kessler Lane.
• Provide a new connection (Morelos Street) midway between Fairview Road and Pecos Road to Arizona Avenue, from Washington Street.
• Vacate Saragosa, Morelos, and Kessler between Arizona Avenue and Washington.

The City of Chandler has made it clear that any street extensions or alignment changes to existing streets will be made only with the consultation and consideration of the affected property owners. The City of Chandler will take great care to minimize property, business and residential disruption and relocation. All improvements will be made for the safety and convenience of the neighborhood.

Alternatives Evaluated

Street Connections: During the course of this study, several street alignment and connection alternatives were evaluated in the neighborhood east of South Arizona Avenue. They were considered because they were thought to create more convenient access for the neighborhood and in some cases better access and site definition for new projects on South Arizona Avenue. However, some of these alternatives would potentially create more traffic through the neighborhood and disrupt the quiet of the residential streets.

Alternative Circulation Route: During meetings with the public regarding this study, an observer inquired about the feasibility for a new route or connection to Delaware Street from South Arizona Avenue. This new connection would divert off of Arizona Avenue around Fairview Street and proceed in a northeasterly direction to Delaware Street. The idea was intended to divert some traffic from Arizona Avenue, but in doing so it would present problems.

One of the potential problems is that the new road would have required acquisition of several residential properties and doing so would have created a significant disruption to the existing neighborhood. It would have also bisected the existing rectangular blocks and parcels; thereby creating triangular lots that are more difficult to develop and more difficult to assemble into larger developable pieces. The roadway would have also funneled more traffic to one location rather than dispersing it over many intersections, thus causing poorer levels of service at the intersections. Further, a bigger intersection would have become a barrier to pedestrians by deterring them from crossing due to its size and the wait time between crossing cycles.

Connections to Pecos and Washington: The options evaluated by the consultants included a connection of Delaware from Kessler to Pecos. The concept was to create a transition for traffic from Pecos to the neighborhood, and north to the civic buildings. Meetings with the neighborhoods brought forth criticism of this connection because of a potential increase in traffic through the neighborhood as people began to use this "shortcut". Therefore, this option was rejected, in favor of new street connection to Pecos farther west of the railroad tracks, at the location of the new entrance to the regional shopping center south of Pecos.

Options for street connections to South Arizona Avenue were also investigated. The purpose of these was to create safe, convenient travel options for the neighborhood, while providing logical lot sizes for new development on the east side of South Arizona Avenue. Along with this, a new Washington connection between Kessler and Fairview was evaluated and adopted, because of the added convenience for the neighborhood and continuity of Washington, facilitating the new development between Washington and South Arizona Avenue. A new street between Washington and South Arizona Avenue, south of the vacated Morelos, was proposed to provide the neighborhood a safer place to enter South Arizona Avenue.

Roadway Capacity

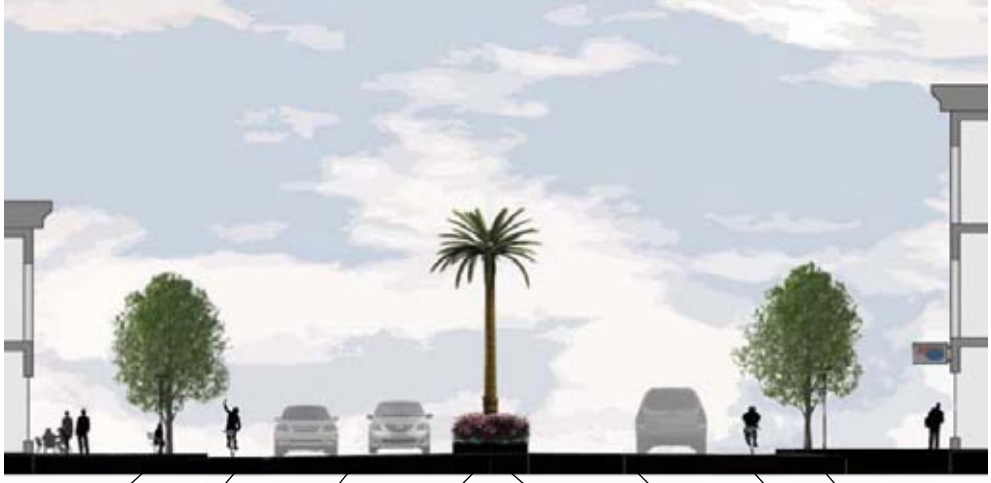
The current policy and plan for Arizona Avenue in the Corridor is to maintain the Major Arterial classification and improve the roadway to three lanes in each direction. However, this size facility does not accommodate the current goals and vision of the City for the revitalization and redevelopment of South Arizona Avenue. A four lane configuration (two travel lanes in each direction) of South Arizona Avenue between Chandler Boulevard and Pecos Road, somewhat modified from its cross section today, is recommended to promote the type of development the City needs to revitalize the corridor.

To this end, the City of Chandler retained Parsons Brinckerhoff to further evaluate a four lane cross-section with on street parking and subsequently determined that such a cross-section would function at acceptable levels of service.

The recommended configuration of South Arizona Avenue is shown in Figure 11.

The Parsons Brinckerhoff Study (Appendix D) also includes two alternative street cross sections.

Conceptual Section



Conceptual Plan

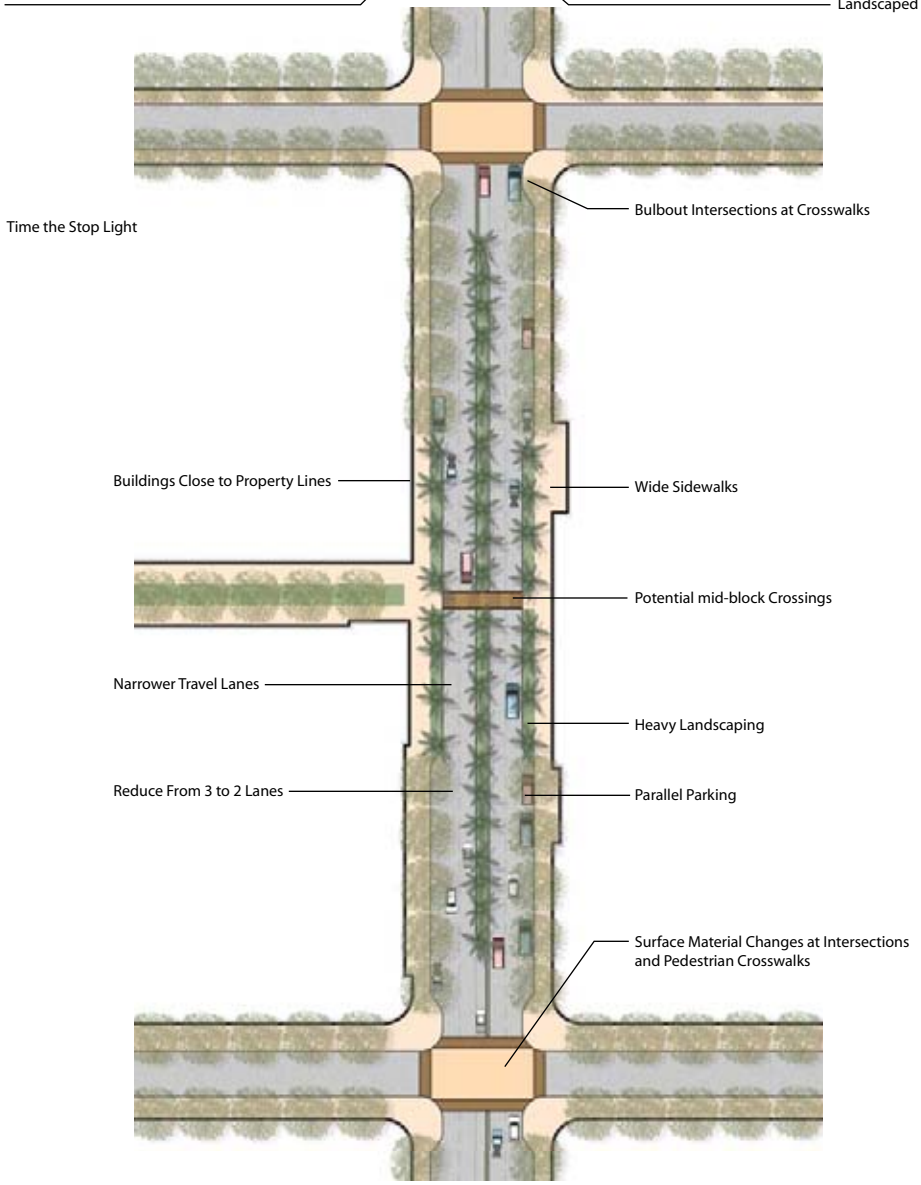


FIGURE 11 South Arizona Avenue Conceptual Section and Plan

Walkability

With the exception of the area around the shops on San Marcos Place and A. J. Chandler Park in front of the Chandler Office Center, Arizona Avenue's pedestrian realm is deficient for promoting Downtown revitalization. However, the City of Chandler recognizes that through their revitalization efforts, South Arizona Avenue's walkability will be an integral part of the area's overall transportation system. Chicago Street has the potential to become a pedestrian corridor connecting cultural and entertainment venues with City Hall and a possible bus transit center/light rail depot to the east. The plan is to create a vibrant, pedestrian oriented, urban environment in the Cultural and Entertainment area that should become a hub for pedestrian oriented events such as arts festivals and other events that would require temporary closure of streets in that area.

Every trip begins and ends with walking. Walking remains the cheapest form of transport for all people, and the construction of a walkable community provides the most affordable transportation system any community can plan, design, construct and maintain. Walkable communities are more sustainable, and lead to more social interaction, physical fitness and diminished crime and other social problems. Walkable communities are more livable communities. Strategies that can be implemented on Arizona Avenue to improve walkability include:

Walkability Recommendations:

• **Provide consistent streetscape treatments** – Proper lighting, landscaping, street furniture, and shelters help provide a sense of place and define the pedestrian's realm. For example, the city should continue to cover or provide other means of shade for sidewalks much like those at San Marcos Place. This traditional shelter treatment will enhance the comfort and put pedestrians at ease as they walk the Arizona Avenue corridor. The Arizona Avenue right-of-way is not recommended for the overhead trellis treatment.

• **Provide signalized crossings at high pedestrian locations** – Concentrating pedestrian crossing activities at key locations (mid-block or at intersections) will help warrant the need of a traffic signal and provide a safer means to cross the street. Signals should be spaced properly to allow for coordination and good progression of traffic on Arizona Avenue.

Mid-block crossings should only be used when adjacent signalized intersections provide a substantially circuitous route for pedestrians. Unsignalized mid-block crossings should not be provided where traffic volumes do not create adequate gaps for pedestrians to cross safely.

• **Shorten the distance to cross Arizona Avenue -** Providing curb extensions or bulb outs at intersections will shorten the distance pedestrians will have to cross and provides areas to improve the streetscape.

• **Minimize curb cuts -** Minimizing curb cuts will flatten out the sidewalk making the surface more comfortable to cross. Further, it eliminates a potential vehicle/pedestrian conflict, thereby improving safety.

• **Maintain sidewalk/path continuity -** Ensure that sidewalks are interconnected between public areas, land uses, parking, and transit stops. In other words, provide pedestrian corridors that serve the same destinations as automobiles.

• **Maintain an open and well-lighted space -** Avoid creating narrow and "dark" places

to walk in order to improve safety. Dark areas promote crime, vandalism, and a sense of unease for pedestrians. A good streetscape should incorporate design elements such as wide sidewalks to make the pedestrian feel safe, secure, and better related in the abutting use.

• **Scale signing and lighting to pedestrians.**

Parking

Arizona Avenue has on street parking available south of Boston Street on both sides. Additional public parking is available in the parking garages on the municipal campus, surface lots by the Library and in temporary unimproved lots south of the shops on San Marcos Place. Parking is allowed on most of the side streets directly off Arizona Avenue.

Discussions with existing Arizona Avenue business owners during the open houses conducted for this project revealed that their customers like the convenience of on street parking ; but the business owners acknowledge that these parking spaces are limited. One business owner stated that she provides additional parking in the rear of her store, but finds that her customers rarely utilize it because it is difficult to get to and that the surrounding neighborhoods cause their customers "concern."

As new developments occur along the South Chandler Avenue corridor, the city should carefully evaluate the parking needs for the variety of land uses it wants to encourage along South Arizona Avenue. The South Arizona Avenue area will need to be treated differently than areas in the more suburban areas of Chandler. Each land use will demand varying parking needs.

Since the new retail along Arizona Avenue south of Frye Road is expected to be incidental to a primarily residential neighborhood, parking is not expected to be an issue. These new high density residential/mixed-use developments may need one or two spaces at most for drop-off, delivery, or fifteen minute parking spaces. On street parking should be kept to a minimum. Sufficient off street parking will be required for each development.

• **Develop Additional Off street Parking –** On street parking will not be enough to handle future development. Therefore, additional off street parking will need to be integrated into future developments. The key to successful off-street parking is to maximize shared use parking. Place complementary land uses together to take full advantage of differing peak parking demands, clustering land use components together that have parking peaks at different day(s) of the week or hour(s) of the day. For example, an office building operating essentially from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. during the week can be located closely to entertainment businesses (theaters, nightclubs, restaurants, etc…) that are active in the evenings and on week ends.

• **Maintain On street Parking –** Providing parking on Arizona Avenue maintains the look and feel of a traditional "Main Street" and adds an additional buffer between pedestrians and the travel way while providing a convenient method of parking. However, on street parking reduces vehicular capacity caused by parking maneuvers. In addition, the space used for on street parking is preserved for the City's future transportation needs. For example, the parking might be converted to provide exclusive rapid transit lanes or used for additional roadway capacity.

Parking Recommendations

• Develop a South Arizona Avenue parking plan with specific area requirements and policies.

- Require development to provide additional off street parking.
- Minimize on street parking where feasible.

Transit

As land uses and developments are considered for the revitalization of Arizona Avenue, transit needs to be considered in their planning. Traditionally, access to development has been solely by the single occupant vehicle. Transit should be in the forefront of land use decisions for South Arizona Avenue.

Currently, regular bus service is limited along Arizona Avenue. The following is a list of existing routes that occur along the study area:

- Route 104 – Alma School
- Route 112 – Country Club/Arizona Avenue
- Route 156 – Chandler Boulevard
- Route 540 – Chandler
- Route 541 – Chandler

Most of these routes are tailored to take people out of Chandler and transport them to other places to work and shop. As Chandler's South Arizona Avenue transforms, new routes need to be considered to bring workers and shoppers in from other areas as well.

The primary challenge for the City will be how to treat transit in the downtown area. As rapid transit comes to Chandler (2010) considerations will need to be given to connecting the system to the land use mix to both serve and enhance the downtown areas. At a minimum, Chandler should:

- **Provide bus pullouts and shelters** at key locations along both sides of Arizona Avenue. Major signalized intersections along the corridor should provide far-side bus pull-outs as illustrated in Figure 6.2.

- **Incorporate transit stops at highly visible public spaces** that are directly connected to the pedestrian environment.

This study has identified the area east of Delaware St. between Chandler Blvd and Frye Rd as a potential location for a bus transit center. Furthermore, the railroad corridor has been identified as a potential alignment for a future light rail extension to Chandler. As such, this area along Delaware St. should be considered for future bus and/or light rail transit stations, ideally to take best advantage of the pedestrian links envisioned along Chicago St. that would connect the civic campus on the east side of Arizona Ave. to the cultural/entertainment uses to the west of Arizona Ave.

CHAPTER 6 – STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Putting this plan into place will require an intensive and focused effort over the next several years and close cooperation between the City of Chandler and the private sector developers, owners and tenants who will create the projects that make up this plan. This chapter addresses an organized implementation program—a road map for public action over the next several years that will create momentum and visible results, encouraging further investment in the corridor.

Public and Private Roles

A creative and dynamic relationship between the public and private sectors and the community of residents, property and business owners and tenants will be needed to fully implement the proposals in this plan. A summary of the responsibilities of the City and private entities is as follows:

City Responsibilities

Re-zoning and other regulatory actions
Developer outreach for the Corridor and specific projects
Purchase of properties needed for street improvements
Relocation, where necessary, of residential and commercial owners and tenants
Design review and approval of projects in the Corridor
Street and other infrastructure improvements in the public rights-of-way (see recommendations in Chapter 5.)
Street trees, streetscape improvements and sidewalk trellises
Assistance through programs available to the City of Chandler, such as with residential development and neighborhood improvement
Park and open space development
City Hall relocation
Community outreach and communication
Museum and cultural center development
Website to keep public updated on revitalization news
Marketing and promoting South Arizona Avenue Corridor to the development community

Private Sector Responsibilities

Land Assembly for Development Projects
Project Development
Street trees and streetscape improvements adjacent to their own developments
On-site infrastructure improvements

Recommended Zoning Actions

The first step after adoption of this plan is to prepare the regulatory framework that will encourage new development. Re-zoning that is recommended is based on a very few simple, flexible, mixed-use zone districts; zoning at present consists of several small single-use individual zone districts. It is not the purpose of this report to re-zone the corridor through drafting of new zone ordinances.

Instead, Figure 10 shows the recommended approach to re-zoning, with brief descriptions of the objectives for each broad district. Specific zoning language should be drafted by legal counsel and Planning staff, to address the objectives sought by the City in this report. Furthermore, the conceptual design standards discussed in later sections will provide a framework for more detailed design guidelines to be developed together with the new zoning district.

The CCD Zoning for the area immediately adjoining the Downtown Square is already in place and functioning together with project specific (PAD) zoning for Benton Robb and Desert Viking.

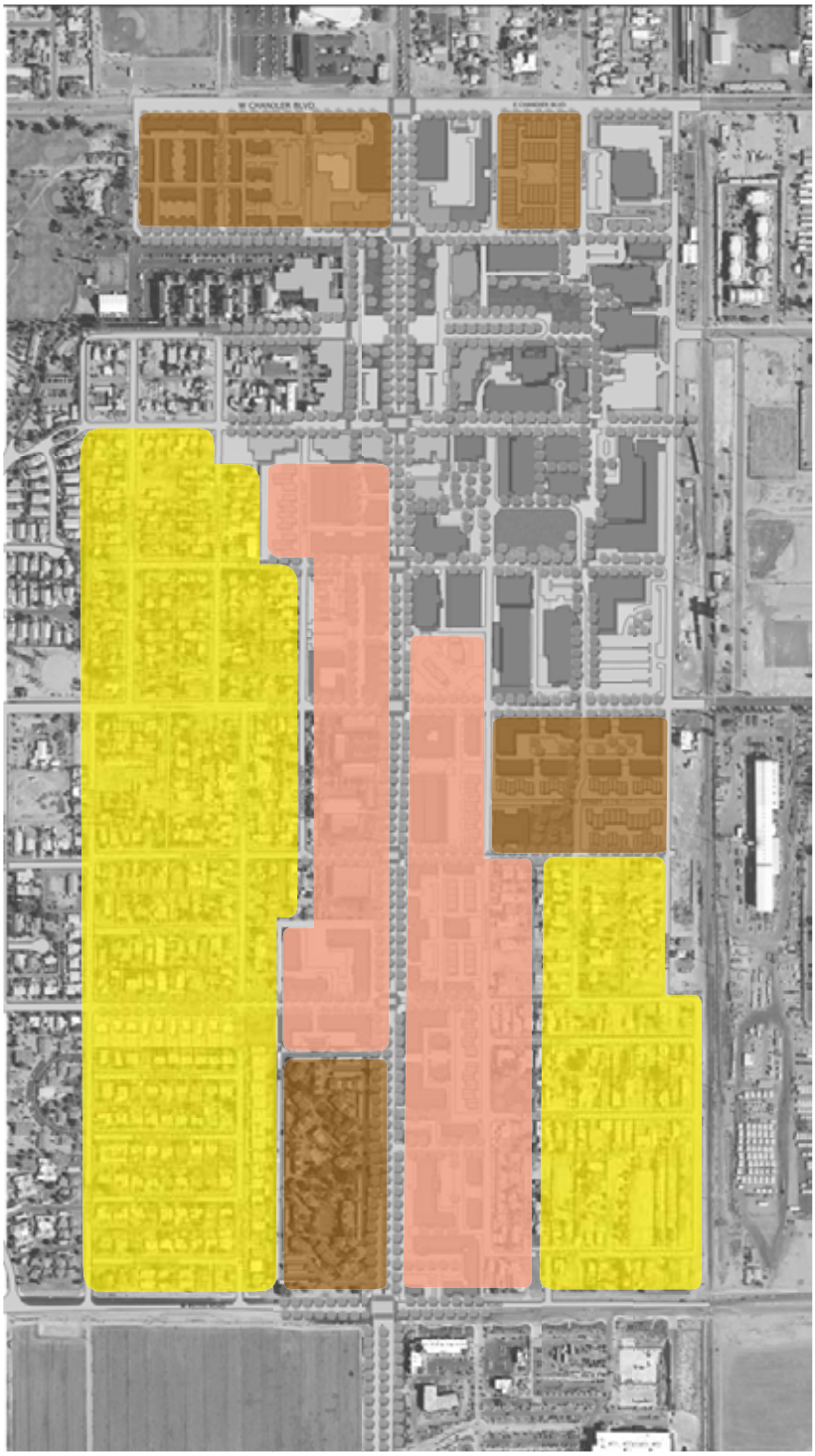
High density mixed uses

• **High Density Mixed-Use Along Arizona Avenue:** This is the most critical zoning declaration of the entire Corridor. On one hand, the plan recommends high density residential development along Arizona Avenue to support retail in the Corridor; that is a clear objective. On the other hand, a developer may perceive that market demand exists for some service or other retail as part of the mixed-use development—that market demand should be acknowledged and permitted in the zoning. The common denominator in the area should be new residential development.

At the south end of the Corridor, the properties at the northeast corner of Pecos and Arizona Avenue should be permitted to go all retail because of their proximity to the centers, and the district should reflect that distinction. On the other end of the corridor in the Steelyard site, medium to high density residential development is the objective. The only non-residential use that might find a place along Frye Road is small scale office space— related to the Civic Center—and that should be limited, relative to the residential units.

The Design Standards for this district should orient commercial uses, whether retail or office, to Arizona Avenue or Frye Road. Where commercial uses contact the residential neighborhood, as along Washington, their access and orientation should be toward Arizona Avenue or Frye Road.

• **Single Family Residential Neighborhoods:** Certain portions of the neighborhoods are currently zoned for multi-family uses, thus requiring a separate zoning action such as a permit, in order to build a single family home. Zoning in the neighborhoods should preserve and enhance the single family character of these districts as well as encourage infill development of new single family residential units, along with renovation and rehabilitation of existing single family homes. All that should be permitted in the neighborhoods are single family and, in special cases, duplex units of a scale and density compatible with the existing development. There are many vacant properties—especially on the east side of South Arizona Avenue—to present opportunities for this type of infill development.



*Areas are general, not specific parcels.

Mixed Use / High Density Residential

Medium / High Density Residential

Single Family Residential

N

FIGURE 12

Zoning Recommendation

Phasing

Public action will create the environment for private investment in the South Arizona Avenue Corridor. The most critical actions will take place over the next three to five years, as the stage is set and the first visible projects come on line. With a coordinated program targeted to high priority projects, the City of Chandler can create a setting for the right kind of development that will re-create the corridor, making it a much stronger front door for the city.

Public sector and private sector projects are illustrated in the Implementation Schedule at the end of this chapter. There is a great deal of flexibility in this schedule. Each project should be broken down into its components and related to the totality of the corridor and its future. Beyond the three year span of this schedule, additional residential, commercial and public works projects are envisioned. Some projects such as neighborhood residential infill and improvement may be ongoing over a period of several years.

This schedule prioritizes projects that will set up the environment for subsequent projects. Each project is discussed individually, but should be viewed in terms of its relationships to all other activities in the Corridor.

• The Area Plan

The first logical step that is a pre-requisite to everything else is approval of this Area Plan and amending the General Plan to accommodate it. This step will enable the City to re-zone the corridor as recommended above, creating the regulatory climate that will encourage developers to create new projects. Assuming the Area Plan is adopted in Fall 2006, re-zoning should be able to be put in place during 2007.

Public Improvements

• South Arizona Avenue R.O.W.

The City is now studying the feasibility of altering the configuration of South Arizona Avenue to create a more attractive and safe pedestrian-oriented main street leading to Chandler's downtown. There will likely be many discussions of the findings with the stakeholders up and down the street, and discussion about the possibilities of funding the project, possibly in phases. Getting widespread agreement and then designing the new street, curb and gutter and the urban streetscape that will make it an attractive front door to Chandler will consume most if not all of 2007.

By 2008, the City could be prepared to undertake an orderly process of street improvement. Rebuilding the street can proceed without completion of all the streetscape on each block. Developers could be made responsible for building the streetscape as they complete their projects.

• Washington Avenue and Morelos Improvements

Completion of these streets is needed to create the residential and commercial projects along South Arizona Avenue. Since these projects depend on acquisition of property to create rights–of–way, some time will be spent discussing land acquisition with the property owners and arranging relocation assistance as needed through the City. Design and bidding may go into late 2007. Construction of these streets could extend through most of 2008. The abandonment of the segments of Saragosa, Morelos, and Kessler Streets located between Arizona Avenue and the extended Washington Street will not occur as along as there are properties that require those segments for access.

• City Hall Relocation

The City Council has determined that the new City Hall location will be at Chicago and South Arizona Avenue. This public investment is a very significant boost for the Corridor. The implementation schedule envisions site remediation and land acquisition projecting into mid-2007. Design of the new City Hall is scheduled for mid-2007 into early 2008, with construction of City Hall beginning in mid-2008 and move-in projected for the end of 2009.

Private Development

• High Density Residential and Mixed-Use Development

While no-one knows which of the blocks along South Arizona Avenue will be developed first, the Implementation Schedule illustrates a typical development schedule that can be anticipated for a first project. A developer identification and outreach program should be underway at the very beginning. Since the City does not control the properties along South Arizona Avenue, an interested developer could be involved with discussions with property owners possibly into mid-2007, with property acquisition and relocation projected to about mid-2008. Meanwhile, design can proceed, and construction could result in occupancy of the first project (probably residential) in mid-2009. Meanwhile, other projects can proceed and follow the first project.

• Neighborhood Infill and Improvements

This program consists of a multitude of small infill residential projects, coupled with City actions to implement neighborhood programs and services. This will likely be an ongoing project over several years, or until sufficient interest in the neighborhood makes its improvement self-sustaining. Individual building projects can be relatively short term, so several may be running simultaneously. The City will need to set up the overall program and make an effort to contact developers who can work on sites identified by the City. Developers will need to work, with the City's help, with individual property owners, Habitat, small builders, and other non-profit builders to work out agreements for sales of properties—especially vacant and neglected lots—which then become the sites for new infill homes.

CHAPTER 7 - PROPERTY ACQUISITION AND RELOCATION PROGRAM

Should the City Council direct staff to proceed with implementing the plan for this area, it is likely that property will need to be acquired for public rights-of-way to accommodate desired changes in traffic patterns for interior neighborhoods and/or to create certain redevelopment areas as described in Chapter 5.

Should this be necessary, the City has established procedures for acquiring property and for assisting in relocating occupants of the property—whether commercial or residential, owner occupied or tenant occupied. Following is an overview of some of the activities that would occur should staff be directed to acquire property for public use.

Overview

When the City acquires property, there are two major components that occur in the process:
1) acquisition of the real estate and 2) assistance related to relocation of the occupants, whether business or residential property.

Acquisition addresses ownership and valuation determination as well as steps to reach an agreement to acquire the property. At times—only after all other avenues have been exhausted— the City's power of eminent domain can be used to acquire the property.

Relocation is the way the qualified owners, businesses and tenants are reimbursed for eligible expenses related to moving their belongings and in establishing benefits that might be paid in finding and occupying a new place to live or operate their business. Generally, the City uses Federal guidelines in implementing relocation benefits.

Acquisition Process

Whether property is being acquired for a road or other type of project, a primary goal of the City of Chandler is to involve businesses and residents in the project development process, keep them informed, and assist them through a transition process that might be difficult.

The City's Real Estate Division, or consultants working for the Real Estate Division, would establish a dialogue with the owners and tenants of the affected properties, meet with them individually to apprise them of the project overall, give them information about how the project would affect their property, business or continued residence, and request information from the property owners and tenants that might be needed or help in valuing the property or planning the project. An assessment would also be performed regarding the businesses and residents occupying the properties in order to develop a relocation plan.

The Real Estate Division would also provide owners and tenants with information about the process by which the City acquires property and what the businesses and residents can expect in the relocation process.

Real Estate would then obtain title, appraisal, and environmental reports for the property that is needed for the project. This also is the time property owners can let the City and the appraiser know any information that should be considered in the appraisal.

Based on these reports, Real Estate prepares documentation to make a formal offer—at fair market value—to the property owners. Since, by this time, there has been substantial interaction between the Real Estate Division and the owner of the property, this phase concentrates primarily on reaching an agreement between the City and the owners. There are times that the owners submit other information that is analyzed by the appraiser and the City. A reasonable amount of time is allowed to negotiate with the property owners, and when an agreement is reached; an escrow is opened to handle the transaction. In the event the City is unable to reach an agreement with an owner, it may be necessary to use eminent domain to acquire the property. Although there are times that this is related to value issues, more frequently, it is related to schedule or title issues.

Relocation Process

Shortly after making the initial offer to the property owner, relocation assistance for the owners and tenants is addressed. This is a very interactive process that includes establishing details about the current occupant, business or residential, researching the current market for new locations and comparing those to the occupant's current situation. Resources are made available to assist the occupant in moving their personal property, in finding another property, and in certain special circumstances, in establishing eligibility to receive financial assistance to obtain a new place to live or conduct business, whichever is applicable. To the extent possible, the City will work to accommodate those who wish to remain in the same neighborhood or vicinity.

Property Assembly by Developers

The city will rely on developers to assemble properties along the South Arizona Avenue Corridor for redevelopment purposes. The city will create the following incentives to encourage property assembly:

- Properties will be zoned thus giving developers one less public hearing step.
- Off-site improvements will be done by the city.
- Some of the re-zoning will allow 30/40 dwelling units/acre - something that will not be enjoyed by any other property or area in the city.

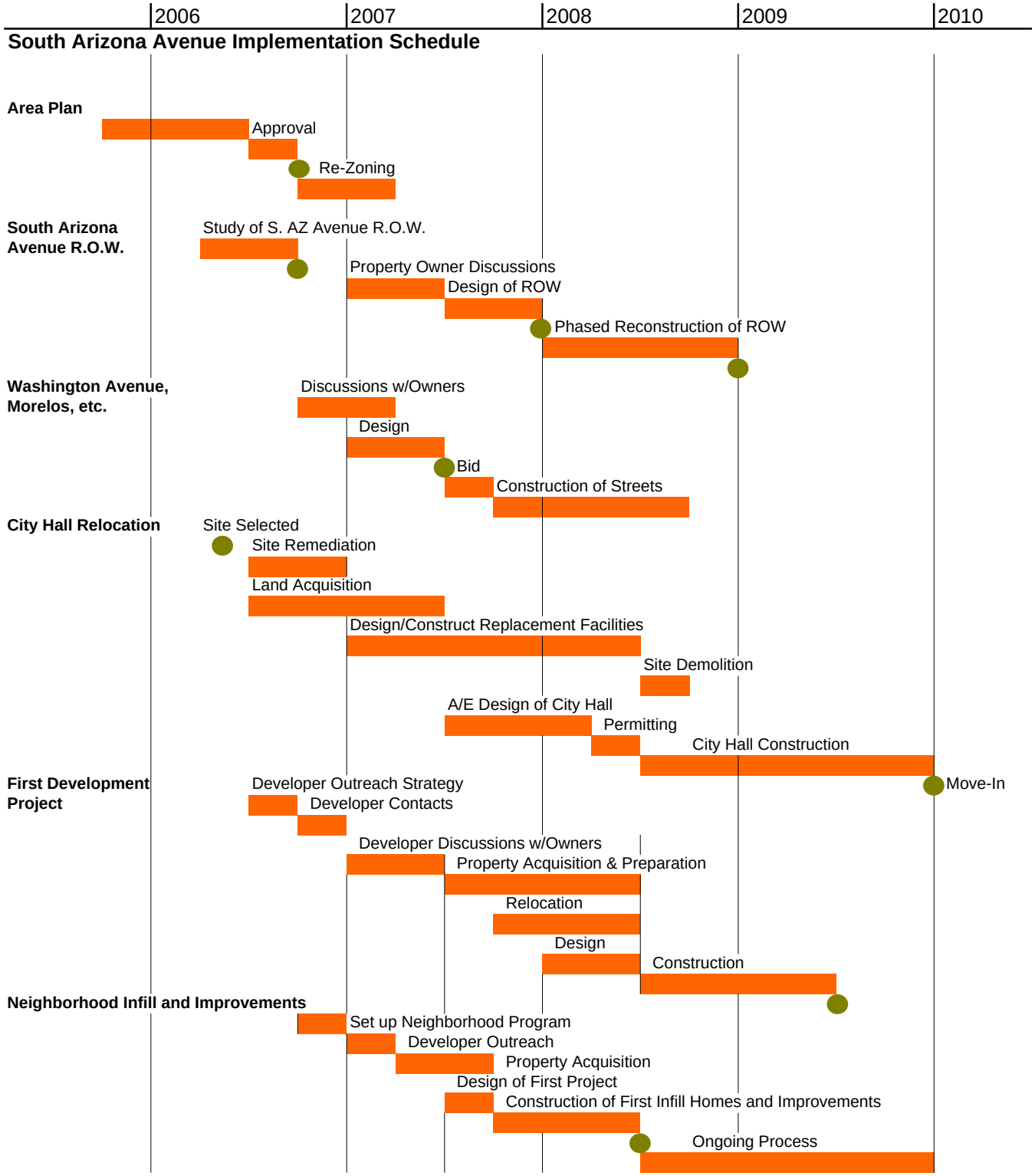


FIGURE 13 Implementation Schedule