

## Sec.3 Design Overlay Zone Background

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What is a *sense of place*? It is nothing less than the essence of a place, what makes it unique. The Isleta corridor's sense of place is found in its beautiful cottonwood trees, the colorful buildings that house lively local restaurants, the wooden fencing that surrounds farmland, and the Spanish-language signs painted right onto shops.

*"The South Valley doesn't look like any other community... There's no concrete sidewalks, there's older housing, there's ranching, there's just a whole mishmash of types of housing and a different feel. Once you cross that Barelvas bridge, you feel like you're in a whole other world. It's very much a rural community."*  
(NMEH South Valley Oral History Project)

But sense of place can also be something more, something intangible yet real. It remains a part of anyone who has lived in the South Valley. It is characterized by history:

*"[Growing up in the South Valley] was very much like Huck Finn. We would go fishing in the acequias. We'd hang out there, fish, camp, tell stories around the fire, hunt for frogs. We walked everywhere and played in the big alfalfa fields owned by the Armijos."* (NMEH South Valley Oral History Project)

Residents say this sense of place is something internal as well:

*"When you drive through the Valley, you feel a weight lifted off you"* (NMEH South Valley Oral History Project)

But what can be done to protect an area's sense of place when its very character is in jeopardy? In meeting after meeting during this planning process, community members voiced the importance of preserving the Isleta corridor's sense of place in the face of development pressures that could alter the area's character forever. For these residents, maintaining their community as a unique place unlike anywhere else is crucial; to do so, they stress a need to plan against "the geography of nowhere" and "Anywhere USA," patterns taking hold across the country and even in parts of the South Valley.

Protecting an area's sense of place involves first identifying what makes it unique, then prescribing tools to help preserve a certain character. This chapter addresses the following components of the Isleta corridor's sense of place: signage, lighting, walls and fences, parking, vegetation, residential subdivision development, and architectural design.



## i. Signage

Signs are an integral component of the complex built environment on Isleta Boulevard; they show us where things are, they draw us in, yet they can repel us, too. The use of traditional forms of signage on Isleta Boulevard will enhance the physical appearance of the corridor and help to maintain a strong connection to the South Valley's history and sense of place. These traditional forms of signage include wall signs, monument signs, and low-profile signs. Local businesses are encouraged to rehabilitate and reuse old signs or use models of older signage for newer businesses.

Signage principles for the Isleta Boulevard corridor are meant to:

- Enhance and protect the physical appearance of Isleta Boulevard and the Village Centers;
- Protect property values of both businesses and residences;
- Promote and maintain visually attractive residential, retail, and commercial districts within Village Centers;
- Provide an effective means of way-finding in the community;
- Afford the community an equal and fair way to advertise and promote products and services;
- Reduce sign clutter and the distractions and confusion that may be contributing factors in traffic congestion and accidents;
- Maintain a safe and orderly pedestrian and vehicular environment;
- Minimize the disruption of the scenic views that protect important community values; and,
- Afford businesses, individuals, and institutions a reasonable opportunity to use signs as an effective means of communication.

The following are examples of signs that are regulated in this Sector Plan. Specific policy for permissive, conditional and prohibited signs can be found in Section 3.1.1 of the Isleta Boulevard Design Overlay Zone chapter found in this Sector Plan.

- **Wall Signs:** A sign painted on or applied directly onto the outside wall of a building and which displays only one advertising surface.
- **Monument Signs:** A sign in which the bottom of the sign is flush with the ground and the horizontal dimension is greater than the vertical dimension.
- **Low Profile Signs:** A sign whose face is suspended from a support arm at a right angle from a ground-mounted pier, pillar, column, or pole.
- **Portable Sign:** An advertising sign that is not physically located on the premises to which the sign refers. Billboards are also called off-premises signs
- **Neon Signs:** Glass tube lighting in which a gas and phosphors are used in combination to create a colored light



Examples of signs that enhance the South Valley sense of place



Examples of signs that detract from the South Valley sense of place

## ii. Lighting

Lighting policy is integral to the Isleta Boulevard corridor's sense of place. Many residents in this planning process mentioned that living in the South Valley allows them to “appreciate the stars” and enjoy “a big, open sky.” However, these qualities are quickly becoming endangered by modern forms of lighting that create light pollution, which diminishes the night sky and the ability to see stars.

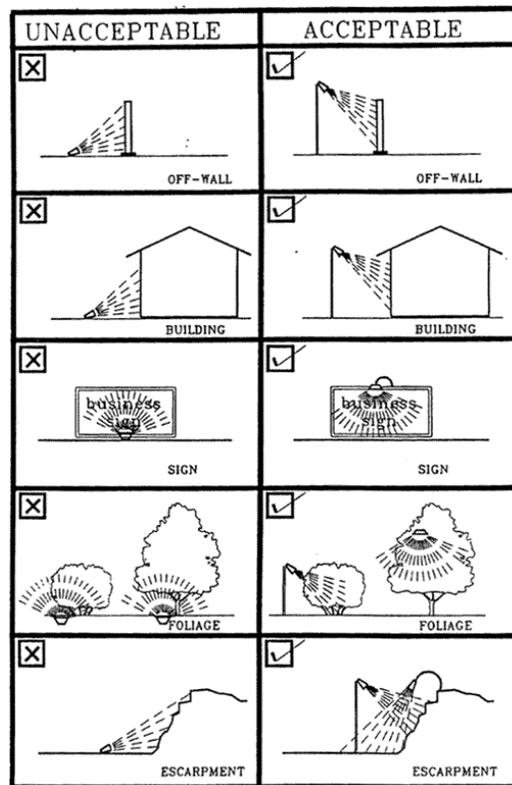
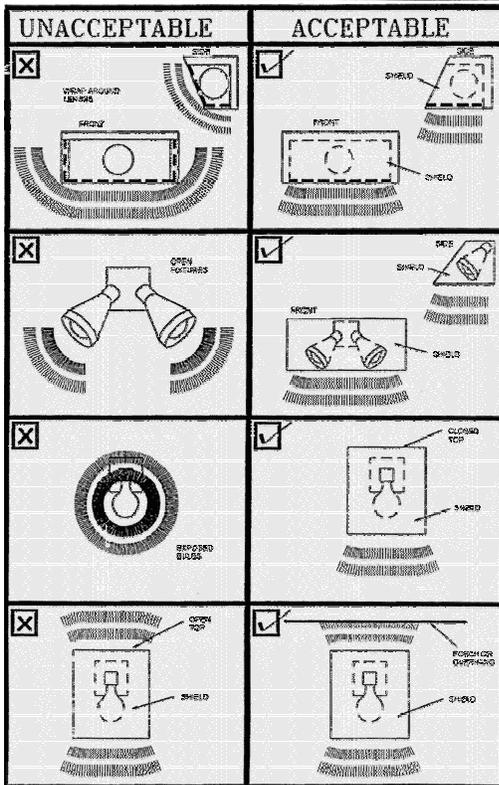
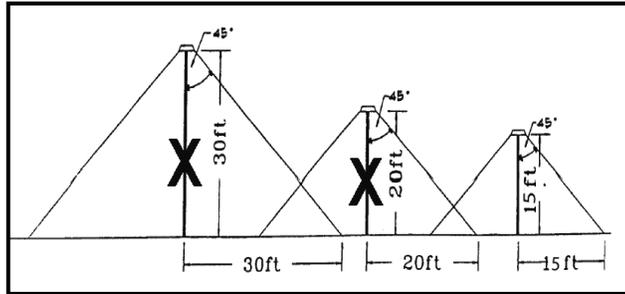
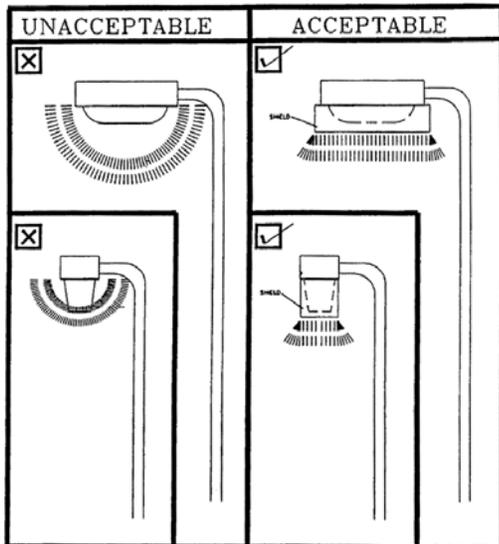
Lighting policy should preserve the unique character of the South Valley by minimizing light pollution. In accordance with the State of New Mexico Night Sky Protection Act, local lighting policy should help preserve the unique character of the South Valley, minimize light pollution, promote energy efficiency, respect historic character, and provide enjoyment of the night sky.

The Isleta Boulevard and Village Center Sector Development Plan will address misdirection of light and glare, excessive brightness of light, and the indiscriminant all-night usage of light. These are causes of dangerous and annoying glare, light trespass, and the unnatural brightness of the night sky.

The following strategies can be used in order to deal with light pollution. Specific policy for lighting can be found in Section 3.1.2 of the Isleta Boulevard Design Overlay Zone chapter found in this Sector Plan.

**Directional Control:** Shielded, downwardly focused pedestrian-scale lighting is a simple strategy that can be applied in order to negate light pollution. Directional control can also be utilized for buildings and signs.

Height: The height of a stand-alone lighting fixture can make a big difference in the pedestrian-scale of light. A pedestrian friendly height is generally 10 to 15 feet.



### iii. Walls and Fences

The South Valley has long been characterized by its “openness” as a semi-rural community. The historic forms of low walls and unobstructed sightlines along Isleta Boulevard have helped shape this sense of place. However, with the increase in traffic intensity along Isleta Boulevard, many residents are quick to build a high wall or obstructive fence in order to deter noise and protect their privacy. High walls and obstructive fences around the perimeter of a development contribute to an unsafe and unsightly environment as the walls provide hiding spaces for intruders and surfaces for graffiti. Also, the use of long high walls creates a tunnel effect causing motorists to travel faster along Isleta Boulevard making it unsafe for pedestrians and other forms of transportation.

As with other physical features, carefully placed walls and fences can play an important role in defining community character and contributing to a sense of place in the South Valley. Minimizing walls and fences throughout the Sector Plan will maintain a greater sense of openness in the community. Wall and fence standards should ensure safe sight lines and minimize potential negative visual impacts/hazards of high, unsightly fences and walls. The Wall and Fence guidelines in this plan intend to:

- Maintain architectural compatibility throughout the Isleta corridor.
- Provide vehicular and pedestrian safety through safe fence placement and height that allows proper visibility standards.
- Create a more walkable and healthy community.

Specific policy for fences and walls can be found in Section 3.1.3 of the Isleta Boulevard Overlay Zone chapter found in this Sector Plan.



Example of a high wall with no shadow variations



Example of a low wall with good shadow variations

#### iv. Parking

For most of the South Valley's history, customers arrived at local stores by foot, horse, or carriage. Paved parking lots are a relatively recent phenomenon, and the large lots that have been built around businesses such as Lotaburger, Sonic, and Martin Brothers are even more recent. Parking for businesses is certainly needed, but too much parking will make Isleta Boulevard look like strip development. Current businesses frequently develop on larger lots than needed, and zoning codes can require overly large amounts of parking. The result is a suburban landscape that is designed primarily for the automobile that can be dangerous for pedestrians as cars zoom through large lots.

Many community members have stated that safety and a strong sense of place are crucial components for a high quality of life. With the current parking standards, Isleta corridor pedestrians must meander through automobiles and a sea of asphalt to get to their destination. Also, large slabs of impermeable asphalt do not allow water to filter back into the aquifer, potentially destroying local vegetation, and can substantially increase local temperatures, resulting in a "heat island" effect. Because of these issues, this plan has developed standards that allow business owners flexibility in deciding on the amount of parking they need, but prevent overly large asphalt lots from being created next to the street.

The purpose of these parking standards are to:

- Reduce impervious parking surface.
- Minimize the size of parking lots through the use of different tools such as maximum parking requirements and shared parking.
- Provide a more safe and walkable environment for local residents.
- Look toward future transportation solutions when building today.

Specific policy for parking can be found in Section 3.1.4 of the Isleta Boulevard Design Overlay Zone chapter found in this Sector Plan.



Large parking lot placed in front of a business



Small parking lot placed on the side of a business

## v. Vegetation and Landscaping

The traditional vegetation of the South Valley has helped define its character for generations. The large cottonwoods that line southern Isleta Boulevard, the grassy fields of alfalfa, and the patches of New Mexico sunflowers all play a role in the natural character and beauty of the South Valley. Without vegetation, Isleta Boulevard is dominated by vehicles and appears barren. Vegetation increases the appeal of walking and enhances the appearance of the street. Therefore, when thinking about space within this sector plan, it is important to allow sufficient room for tree planting and other forms of landscaping. Sensitive use of the wide variety of vegetation found in the South Valley can create spaces that are visually stimulating and reinforce the area's traditional rural character.

Specific policy for vegetation can be found in Section 3.1.5 of the Isleta Boulevard Design Overlay Zone chapter found in this Sector Plan.



Examples of how vegetation adds to the sense of place of Isleta Boulevard



Examples of how barren space detracts from the sense of place

## vii. Architectural Design

Architectural style is an integral part of a community's sense of place. While the South Valley has a rich architectural history, modern development has often lacked identifiable character and is threatening the uniqueness of the Isleta corridor. Residents of this planning process have expressed a desire to maintain the Isleta corridor's sense of place. Therefore, the architectural design policies in this plan are developed to:

- Maintain a traditional form of building structure design in the South Valley.
- Create a coherent architectural style throughout Isleta Boulevard.

Specific policy for architectural style can be found in Section 3.1.6 of the Isleta Boulevard Design Overlay Zone chapter in this sector plan.



Examples of historical architecture for Isleta Boulevard

## E. Infrastructure and Amenities

The varying character zones along the Isleta corridor come together to create the area's sense of place, and infrastructure and amenities are an inherent part of that character. From Bridge to approximately Lakeview Road, Isleta Boulevard is lined with commercial and residential structures close to the street, creating a semi-urban atmosphere along with a multi-lane roadway. Yet from Lakeview south to Isleta Pueblo, Isleta Boulevard becomes increasingly rural, with large lots of alfalfa fields and open space along the roadway, which is only two lanes and quite rural in its design. The same can be seen with water and sewer: whereas the northern portion of Isleta Boulevard has infrastructure like the more urban City of Albuquerque, with a high capacity central water and sewer system, the southern portion of Isleta Boulevard's infrastructure is much smaller in its capacity.

Infrastructure and amenities are the skeletal backbone components that serve South Valley residents. Because private development tends to follow the location, quantity, and quality of public services, deciding where and how a community invests in public services plays a large role in determining where and how commercial, residential, and industrial development occurs. In this planning process and others, South Valley residents have gone to great lengths to articulate their vision for local infrastructure, including where and how development should occur in the Valley.

But infrastructure is about more than what is happening on the street or underground in the water systems. For the Isleta corridor, its infrastructure connects it to the entire region, particularly in terms of traffic congestion



The corridor's varying character zones (above: Northern Isleta Blvd; below: Southern Isleta Blvd) are reflected in its varying infrastructure  
*Source: Geri Knoebel*



## Sec.3 Isleta Boulevard Design Overlay Zone Regulation and Guidelines.

### 3.1.0 Isleta Boulevard Sense of Place

The following design overlay standards will apply to all parcels located in the Isleta Boulevard and Village Center Sector Development Plan. The Isleta Boulevard Design Overlay Zone includes:

- Signage
- Lighting
- Walls and Fences
- Parking
- Vegetation/Landscaping
- Residential Subdivision Development
- Architectural Design
- Road Design
- Stormwater Drainage
- Trail Network

#### 3.1.1 Signage

A. The purpose of this section is to regulate the size and certain features of signs in order to increase safety to life and property, to reduce unnecessary distractions along public rights-of-way, and to assure the continued attractiveness and historic sense of Isleta Boulevard. These signage standards are developed to:

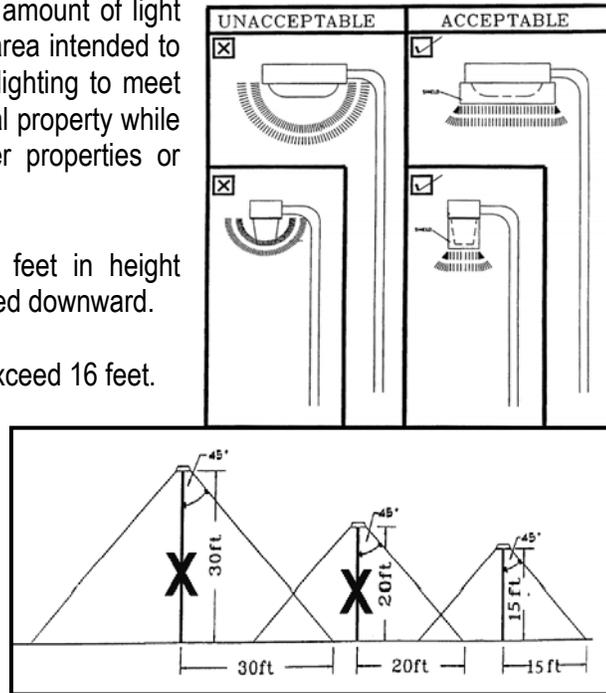
- Enhance and protect the physical appearance of Isleta Boulevard and the Village Centers;
- Protect property values of both businesses and residences;
- Promote and maintain visually attractive residential, retail, and commercial districts within Village Centers;
- Provide an effective means of way-finding in the community;
- Afford the community an equal and fair way to advertise and promote its products and services;
- Reduce sign clutter and the distractions and confusion that may be contributing factors in traffic congestion and accidents, and maintain a safe and orderly pedestrian and vehicular environment;
- Minimize the disruption of the scenic views that protect important community values when maintained; and,
- Afford businesses, individuals, and institutions a reasonable opportunity to use signs as an effective means of communication.

1. Prohibited Signage
  - a. The following signs are prohibited:
    - (1) Off-premise signs;
    - (2) Neon signs except in the Gateway Village Center, Armijo Commercial Center and the Rio Bravo Commercial Center.
  
2. Permissive Signage
  - a. On Premises Signs
    - b. Wall signs are any on-premise sign directly attached and flush-mounted to an exterior wall of a building with its exposed face parallel to the plane of the building on which it is placed. Signs cannot project more than 18 inches from the building wall on which it is attached, and cannot project above the roof of the building. This type of signage may include signs directly painted or printed on walls, windows, canopies, or awnings.
    - c. Monument signs are any on-premise sign attached or supported only from the ground, not attached to a building, in which the bottom of the sign is flush with the ground and the horizontal dimension is greater than the vertical dimension. All monument signs must be located at minimum of ten (10) feet from the public right-of-way.
    - d. Low-profile signs are any on-premise sign whose face is suspended from a support arm at a right angle from a ground-mounted pier, pillar, column, or pole. The bottom edge of a low-profile sign must be at least six (6) feet above grade. All low-profile signs must be located at minimum of ten (10) feet from the public right-of-way.
    - e. Neon signs are allowed only in the Gateway Village Center, Armijo Commercial Center and the Rio Bravo Commercial Center.

### 3.1.2 Lighting

A. The purpose of this section is to limit the amount of light that is allowed to be transmitted beyond the area intended to be illuminated. This will allow for adequate lighting to meet the security and other needs of each individual property while reducing glare and light trespass onto other properties or public spaces where they may be harmful.

1. Outdoor light fixtures exceeding 12 feet in height shall be shielded so that light is directed downward.
2. Free standing light fixtures shall not exceed 16 feet.
3. All existing overhead outdoor lighting fixtures shall be consistent with the New Mexico Dark Skies Legislation, converted to shielded, downward focused lighting by 2015.
4. Outdoor walkways on commercial use properties shall be lighted.



### 3.1.3 Walls and Fences

A. The purpose of this section is to ensure safe sight lines and to minimize the potential negative visual impact or hazards of high or unsightly fences, walls and/or retaining walls. The intent is to:

- Maintain architectural compatibility throughout the Isleta corridor;
- Provide vehicular and pedestrian safety through safe fence placement and height that allows proper visibility standards; and
- Create a more walkable and healthy community.

#### 1. Design regulations

a. Applicability. These design regulations shall apply to the following:

(1) The side of all walls, fences, retaining walls or a vertical combination of that face:

- (a) Arterial, collector and local street rights-of-way;
  - (b) Public park;
  - (c) Public open space; and,
  - (d) Designated public trails.
- (e) The public street side of all front, side, and rear yard walls that require a special exception.

b. Design standards. Walls shall contain variation in layout, façade surface, and/or pattern of openings, materials, texture and color.

(1) Layout.

- (b) The layout shall incorporate at least one of the following features to break the massing of the wall:

- I. Indentations at intervals that shall not exceed three lots and shall be the width of at least one lot in the following manner:
  - 1. Indented every other lot with minimum indentions of 16 inches in depth;
  - 2. Indented every second lot or two contiguous lots with minimum indentions of 32 inches in depth;
  - 3. Indented every third lot or three contiguous lots with minimum indentions of 48 inches in depth.
- II. Curvilinear alignments with a minimum distance of four feet between the outer surfaces of the wall. The outermost point of each curve shall have intervals no greater than 80 feet.
- III. Vertical pilasters with a minimum projection of two inches from the public side of the wall surface at intervals of no more than 20 feet in length.
- IV. Decorative features, such as columns with a minimum projection of four inches from the public side of the wall surface at intervals of no more than 60 feet in length.

- 1. Façade.
  - a. Façades adjacent to the public right-of-way shall comply with at least one of the following, and the façade design elements shall be distributed throughout the length of the wall:
    - (1) Openings, at least 5% of the wall façade surface, constructed into the façade or created by using see-through pattern blocks, tubular steel or wrought iron bars, wood or other grillwork;
    - (2) Variation in the top of the wall, such as stepping down and/or up vertically.
    - (3) A variety of materials, texture or color on at least 20% of the wall façade surface;
    - (4) A continuous overhang cap along the length of the wall projected at least two inches from the public side face of the wall.
- 2. Materials and texture
  - a. Acceptable materials include but are not limited to stucco over concrete masonry units (CMU) or other structural materials; stabilized adobe; split face blocks; slump blocks; bricks; stone; glass blocks; curved interlock blocks; wood; tubular steel; wrought iron bars; other grill work; or a combination of these materials. Exposed flat-faced CMU blocks may constitute no more than 50 percent of the wall façade.
  - b. Razor ribbon, concertina wire or similar materials are prohibited in and abutting residential zones, and shall not be visible from a public street right-of-way.

### 3.1.4 Off-Street Parking

A. The purpose of this section is to ensure that off-street parking areas are designed to be safe, accessible, convenient and attractive. The purposes of these parking standards are to:

- Reduce impervious parking surfaces;
- Minimize the size of the off-street parking areas through the use of different tools such as maximum parking requirements and shared parking; and;
- Provide a safer, walk-able environment for local residents.

1. Each required off-street parking area is limited to no more than 5,000 contiguous square feet, and is required to be separated from any other off-street parking area by a six (6) foot wide landscape buffer.
2. The use of shade-producing trees within all off-street parking areas is necessary. At tree maturity during the summer months, at least 50 percent of each designated off-street parking area must be covered by shade from the provided trees.
3. All other applicable parking standards which are outlined in the Zoning Ordinance will be met, with the exception of new development or additions to existing development which exceed 200 square feet in area, off-street parking spaces will be provided accordingly:
  - a. For buildings less than 2,000 square feet in area, at least one parking space for each 200 square feet of floor area is required, however; any extra off-street parking which is provided in addition to the total number of required spaces cannot exceed 10 percent of the number required.
  - b. For buildings between 2,000 – 5,000 square feet in area, at least one parking space for each 300 square feet of floor area is required, however; any extra off-street parking which is provided in addition to the total number of required spaces cannot exceed 10 percent of the number required.
  - c. For buildings greater than 5,000 square feet in area, at least one parking space for each 400 square feet of floor area is required, however; any extra off-street parking which is provided in addition to the total number of required spaces cannot exceed 10 percent of the number required.
  - d. Notwithstanding any of the other requirements of this section, for buildings used for a restaurant, bar, nightclub, cafe, dance hall, skating rink or similar recreation or amusement establishment, or an assembly or exhibition hall, at least one parking space for each 100 square feet of floor area is required; however, any extra off-street parking spaces which are provided in addition to the total number of required spaces cannot exceed 10 percent of the number required.

4. The use of impermeable surfaces, such as concrete or bituminous material, within required off-street parking areas may be limited to no more than 50 percent of the portion(s) of the site to be dedicated for parking.
  - a. The use of gravel, a layer at least two (2) inches thick of 3/8-inch minimum diameter to 1-inch maximum diameter, is required; or
  - b. Utilization of a permeable material meeting the coverage and serviceability considerations as determined by the Zoning Administrator.
  - c. Graveled portions of off-street parking areas which provide direct access to roadways are required to provide a 30-foot long concrete apron from the edge of the street for the width of the ingress/egress drive to prevent gravel from spilling into the right-of-way.
  - d. The required hard-surfacing of parking spaces for the use of disabled individuals as outlined within the Zoning Ordinance regarding accessibility, designation, and maintenance will be maintained.
  - e. All off-street parking areas are required to be maintained level and functional, and must be properly designated either by striping on impermeable surfaces or the use of parking barriers on gravel surfaces.
5. Shared parking arrangements are encouraged when used in conjunction with Special Use Permit applications, and is recommended in situations where two or more land uses in close proximity to one another have distinctly different hours of operation. Through authorization of a Special Use Permit, up to 60 percent of the required off-street parking spaces of any one use may be eligible for shared parking status related to another use on the same site or another property adjacent to the subject site, both of which are governed by a Special Use Permit.

### 3.1.5 Landscaping

- A. The purpose of this section is to establish criteria for planting design, landscaping within off-street parking areas, and vegetation preservation. It is the intent of this section to:
  - Create attractive visual character along Isleta Boulevard;
  - Utilize specific forms of native vegetation; and
  - Preserve existing vegetation that has already shaped the sense of place along Isleta Boulevard.
1. Provided landscaping will be consistent with the regulations outlined in the Zoning Ordinance for buffer width, mulched ground cover, vegetative cover, and screening. Required buffer areas will be landscaped with the plants,

shrubs and trees as outlined within the recommended plant list as listed below.

2. The use of shade-producing trees within all off-street parking areas is necessary. At tree maturity during the summer months, at least 50 percent of each designated off-street parking area must be covered by shade from the provided trees.
3. Existing cottonwood trees greater than 12 inches in caliper are to remain on the property. If it is determined by the Zoning Administrator that the removal or relocation of a cottonwood tree is necessary due to future development or other purposes on the subject site, a cottonwood or comparative cultivator must be planted in its place on the subject site within 12 months.
4. Recommended Plant List. All landscaping for new commercial development within the design overlay zone should be derived from the following list:
  - a. Large/Medium Trees
    - i. *Populus* spp. (Cottonwood)
    - ii. *Fraxinus velutina* (Arizona Ash)
    - iii. *Plantanus wrightii* (Arizona Sycamore)
    - iv. *Celtis reticulata* (Palo Blanco, Nettleleaf Hackberry)
    - v. *Quercus gambelii* (Gambel Oak)
  - b. Small Trees
    - i. *Chilopsis linearis* (Desert Willow)
    - ii. *Forestiera neomexicana* (New Mexico Olive)
    - iii. *Fraxinus* spp. (Fragrant Ash)
    - iv. *Prosopis* spp. (Honey Mesquite)
    - v. *Robinia neomexicana* (New Mexico Locust)
    - vi. *Alnus tenuifolia* (New Mexico Alder)
  - c. Shrubs
    - i. *Fallugia paradoxa* (Apache Plume)
    - ii. *Budleya* spp. (Butterfly Bush)
    - iii. *Ribes* spp. (Currant, Gooseberry)
    - iv. *Salvia* spp. (Sage)
    - v. *Artemesia* spp. (Sage)
    - vi. *Mahonia* spp., *Yucca* Spp., *Penstemon* spp. (Mountian Penstemon)
    - vii. *Sambucus caerulea neomexiana* (Mexican Elder)
    - viii. *Atriples canescens* (Fourwing Saltbush)
  - d. Grasses
    - i. *Nerissa tenuissima* (Needlegrass)
    - ii. *Muhlenbergia* spp. (Deergrass)
    - iii. *Boutelona* spp. (Gramma)
    - iv. *Buchloe dactyloides* (Buffalo Grass)
    - v. *Oryzopisi hymenoides* (Indian Ricegrass)
    - vi. *Hilaria jamesii* (Galleta)

- vii. *Arstida longiseta* (Purple Threeawn)
- viii. *Nolina microcarpa* (Beargrass)
- e. Annuals
  - i. *Helianthus annuus* (New Mexican Sunflower)
  - ii. *Ratibada columnifera* (Coneflower, Mexican Hat)
  - iii. *Castilleja integra* (Indian Paintbrush)
  - iv. *Datura meteloides* (Jimsonweed)
  - v. *Achillea* spp. (Wooly Yarrow)
  - vi. *Linum perenne* (Blue Flax)
  - vii. *Salvia* spp. (Sage)
  - viii. *Erysimum capitatum* (Western Wallflower)
  - ix. *Ipomopsis aggregate* (Red Rocket, Scarlet Gilia)
  - x. *Geranium richardsonii* (Geranium, Cranesbill)
  - xi. *Alcea rosea* (Hollyhock; not native, but traditional in New Mexico)

### 3.1.6 Architectural Design

A. The purpose of this section is to maintain an appropriate form of building structure design in the South Valley and to create a coherent architectural style throughout Isleta Boulevard.

1. All commercial structures visible from Isleta Boulevard in the SD-IMU, SD-IVC and SD-A-1 Zones constructed after the adoption of this Ordinance should incorporate one of the following architectural styles or a combination thereof. The architecture of new commercial structures should follow traditional precedents as shown by the following options (see table on following page):

**Building Design Options for the Isleta Corridor**

<p><b>Spanish Colonial</b>                  Flat roofed with low rounded parapets. Material is block adobe with stucco or mud plaster.                  Usually has only an outside door to each room and few very small windows. Wood details include projecting vigas, canales, and portales.</p>	
<p><b>Pueblo Revival</b>                  Based on, and a combination of, early New Mexican Pueblo and Spanish buildings; flat roofed with rounded parapets; earth toned sloping walls; one to two stories in height, upper story is usually set back. Portales have log posts and wood beams. Details also include vigas, canales and exposed wood lintels above the window.</p>	
<p><b>Northern New Mexico</b>                  Pitched or hipped roof (often of raised ridge metal roofs with a slope of 45 degrees); earth toned adobe or stucco façade. Details include porches with deep portales, decorative woodwork and posts and corbels.</p>	 <p>Northern NM Sw Style</p>
<p><b>Territorial</b>                  Flat roofed, sometimes with brick coping edging the parapet; multi-paned windows, and sometimes shutters; main entries feature sidelights and a top light. Details include pedimented lintels over windows and doors, and portales with squared posts.</p>	

### 3.1.7 Low-Impact Stormwater Drainage

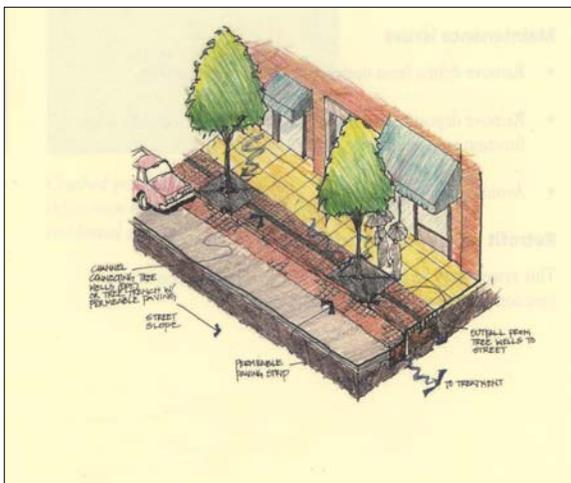
A. The purpose of local stormwater drainage policy is to improve the quality of life and protect the sense of place along the Isleta corridor by utilizing simple and effective low-impact stormwater drainage management techniques. All techniques shall comply with the County Code Chapter 38-Floods.

1. All new development and subdivisions should accommodate runoff as close as possible to where it is generated in an effort to minimize induced drainage costs and to maintain historic runoff patterns using one of the following:

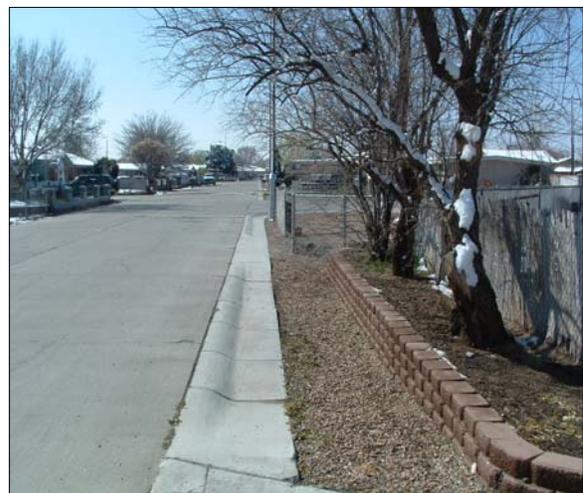
- a. Filter strips and swales: These can include vegetated landscape features with smooth surfaces and a gentle downhill gradient to drain water evenly off impermeable surfaces, mimicking natural drainage patterns.
- b. Filter drains and permeable porous permeable surfaces: These would allow rainwater and run-off to infiltrate into permeable material.
- c. Infiltration devices: Devices would include below-ground or surface structures to drain water directly into the ground.
- d. Detention or retention ponds: Allow for stormwater to be collected and infiltrate into the ground water.
- e. Storm drain system: If available, property owner shall discharge into a storm drain system.



Swales allow stormwater to gather and infiltrate into the ground



Street tree wells sending road runoff into swales



Crushed gravel allows stormwater infiltration

2. These regulations shall apply to the following:
  - a. All buildings erected, parking lots constructed, or alterations in lot coverage exceeding twenty percent (20%) of the lot area occurring after adoption of the Ordinance, in the SD-IVC, SD-IMU, or SD-IA zones.
  - b. Expansion of existing commercial development in which the square footage of a structure, lot coverage, or parking area is increased by twenty percent (20%) or more.

B. Maintain natural vegetation cover in order to enhance soil stability and health.

1. If proper drainage is met, a larger setback or additional parking may be increased by up to 10%.

### 3.1.8 Trails

A. The purposes of these standards are to promote trail networks in order to:

- Allow for safe pedestrian activity;
  - Promote the utilization of local amenities; and,
  - Encourage physical health of the community.
1. In order to maintain a healthy quality of life for area residents and to facilitate opportunities to promote a safe and healthy environment in the form of walking trails, Bernalillo County should promote a Network Plan that seeks connections between the Isleta Boulevard Village Centers and their services.
    - a. Bernalillo County should work with County and City Planning Departments, County and City Parks and Recreation Department, County Public Works Division and City Municipal Department, and the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority in order to locate design and construct a trail system around each of the Village Centers.
  2. A trail system should be constructed in a manner that is accessible and that preserves the historic character of the South Valley.

## Wireless Telecommunication

A. Wireless telecommunication facilities are allowable within the entire corridor provided that they meet the criteria for concealment described below. Wireless telecommunication facilities are allowed as described in the conditional use section of the Bernalillo County Ordinance.

1. *Criteria for Concealed Wireless Telecommunications Facilities.* Concealed wireless telecommunications facilities must be:
  - a. Architecturally integrated with existing buildings, structures, and landscaping, including height, color, style, massing, placement, design, and shape.
  - b. Located to avoid a dominant silhouette of a wireless telecommunications facility on escarpments and mesas, and to preserve view corridors.
  - c. Located on existing vertical infrastructure, such as utility poles or public utility structures, if possible.
  - d. Located in areas where the existing topography, vegetation, buildings, or other structures provide the greatest amount of screening.
  
2. *Exclusions.* Every wireless telecommunications facility located within the county, whether upon private or public lands, shall be subject to the provisions of the Bernalillo County Zoning Ordinance. The following facilities, however, shall be exempted from the regulations for wireless telecommunications facilities:
  - a. Amateur radio stations if owned and operated by a federally licensed amateur radio station operator;
  - b. Receive-only antennas if used exclusively as a receive-only facility;
  - c. Any existing tower and antenna provided a building permit was issued for the tower or antenna prior to adoption of this ordinance;
  - d. Wireless telecommunications facilities used exclusively for emergency services including sheriff, police, fire, EMS, and operation of a water utility system; and
  - e. Any antennas used for AM, FM or TV broadcasting, which are regulated under the Special Use Section of the Bernalillo County Zoning Ordinance.

## Sec.4 Isleta Boulevard Village Center Zone Background

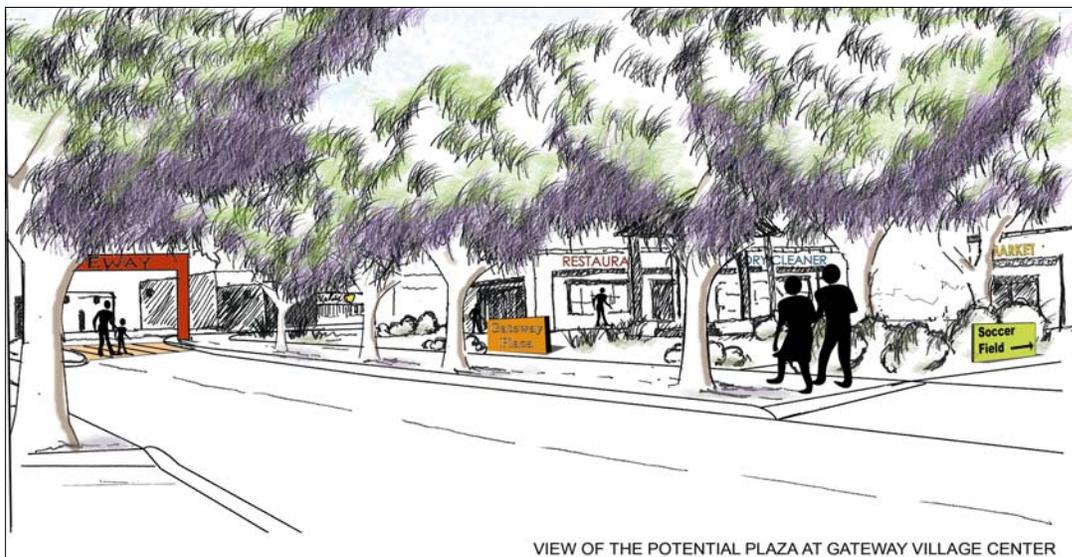
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In accordance with the Southwest Area Plan, the Isleta Boulevard and Village Centers Sector Development Plan supports the development of Village Centers along Isleta Boulevard. In the context of this sector plan, a Village Center is an area of specific historic or current focus along the Isleta corridor. These Village Centers range from relatively rural to relatively urban, but all are existing centers of activity with ample opportunity for new public amenities and design elements.

While some of the Village Centers are proposed for the purposes of this sector plan, other Village Centers are tied to early New Mexico history. The historic Village Centers typically contained an informal plaza surrounded by several homes and/or commercial buildings. Although few signs of these historic centers exist along Isleta Boulevard today, refocusing development on these sites, recreating small plazas and other civic spaces, and adding historic markers that celebrate the area's history can help renew a visible link between the Isleta corridor and its rich cultural past.

By designating Village Centers along Isleta Boulevard, the sector plan seeks to enhance these existing community focal points with zoning that features design, public space, and development strategies tailored to each center's unique character. New development within the designated Village Centers, with the exception of the Los Padillas and Pajarito Village Center, must follow the Isleta Boulevard Village Center Zone. This chapter provides an overview of the Village Center policy and includes site plan drawings that are meant to act as springboards for ideas about future Village Center development.

This sector plan strongly encourages additional community-based planning for each Village Center. Future community planning processes should develop more extensive design criteria, site plans, and guidance to developers, design professionals, and property owners for new development, streetscape, public space, and redevelopment projects.



*Artist: Natasha Needham*

The Isleta Boulevard Village Centers are meant to promote a more functional and attractive community by fostering identity and character that visually connects with the history of the corridor, facilitates pedestrian activity, increases synergy between land uses, and promotes appropriate economic development.

### **Common Strategies**

To increase synergy between Village Centers and create a visual impact when traveling along the Isleta corridor, there are several common strategies that pertain to every Village Center. The common strategies for each Village Center are:

- **Enhancing public amenities.** Village Centers should be a focal point for public amenities like plazas, sports fields, trails, community gardens, and open-air markets. Each Village Center conceptual site plan in this chapter includes opportunities for new public amenities. Future development should consider the Village Centers to be ideal locations for the placement of new public amenities.
- **Protecting traditional character.** The Isleta Boulevard Village Centers fall under the scope of the Isleta Boulevard Design Overlay Zone (Chapter 8, Section 7) and therefore will adhere to the same character regulations as the rest of the corridor with regard to signage, lighting, fencing, and vegetation.
- **Improving pedestrian safety.** As activity centers with a focus on public space and walkability, improving pedestrian safety was a major concern of area residents. To reflect this value, each Village Center conceptual site plan offered in the sector plan includes pedestrian improvements with regard to road design.
- **Siting of public buildings.** As noted in the Southwest Area Plan, government buildings such as County offices should locate in Village Centers, rather than in between them. Encouraging public buildings to locate in Village Centers would add to the synergy, public use, and activity in the Centers as well as enabling the County to be a good model for future development along the corridor.
- **Designating place through signage.** Each Village Center should have landmark signage at the entrance and exit of the Center that orients visitors and showcases the place's importance. Besides noting the entrance and exit of Village Centers, the signage should also note historical significance of the area. All Village Center landmark signage should match in design and scale and adhere to signage regulations in the Design Overlay Zone.

### **Varying Strategies**

The use of some common strategies throughout each Village Center is important for the cohesiveness of the corridor. Yet the Village Centers have been identified separately for a reason: each has distinctly unique character elements that make them special places. Each Village Center should be seen as a unique and identifiable place, a landmark and destination for residents, and should be well-connected with its surrounding neighborhood.

To reflect these unique character elements, the following strategies will vary from one Village Center to the next:

- **Maintaining existing scale.** Since the scale of each Village Center differs, so do the scale regulations. Village Centers with an existing small building scale reflect that smallness in the regulations; Centers with a large existing building scale have that reflected in their scale regulations as well.
- **Maintaining appropriate uses.** The character and uses in each Village Center are remarkably different from one to the next, from an eclectic small business area to a large shopping center area to a very rural area. The permissive and conditional uses differ in the Village Center regulations in order to reflect and enhance these character differences.

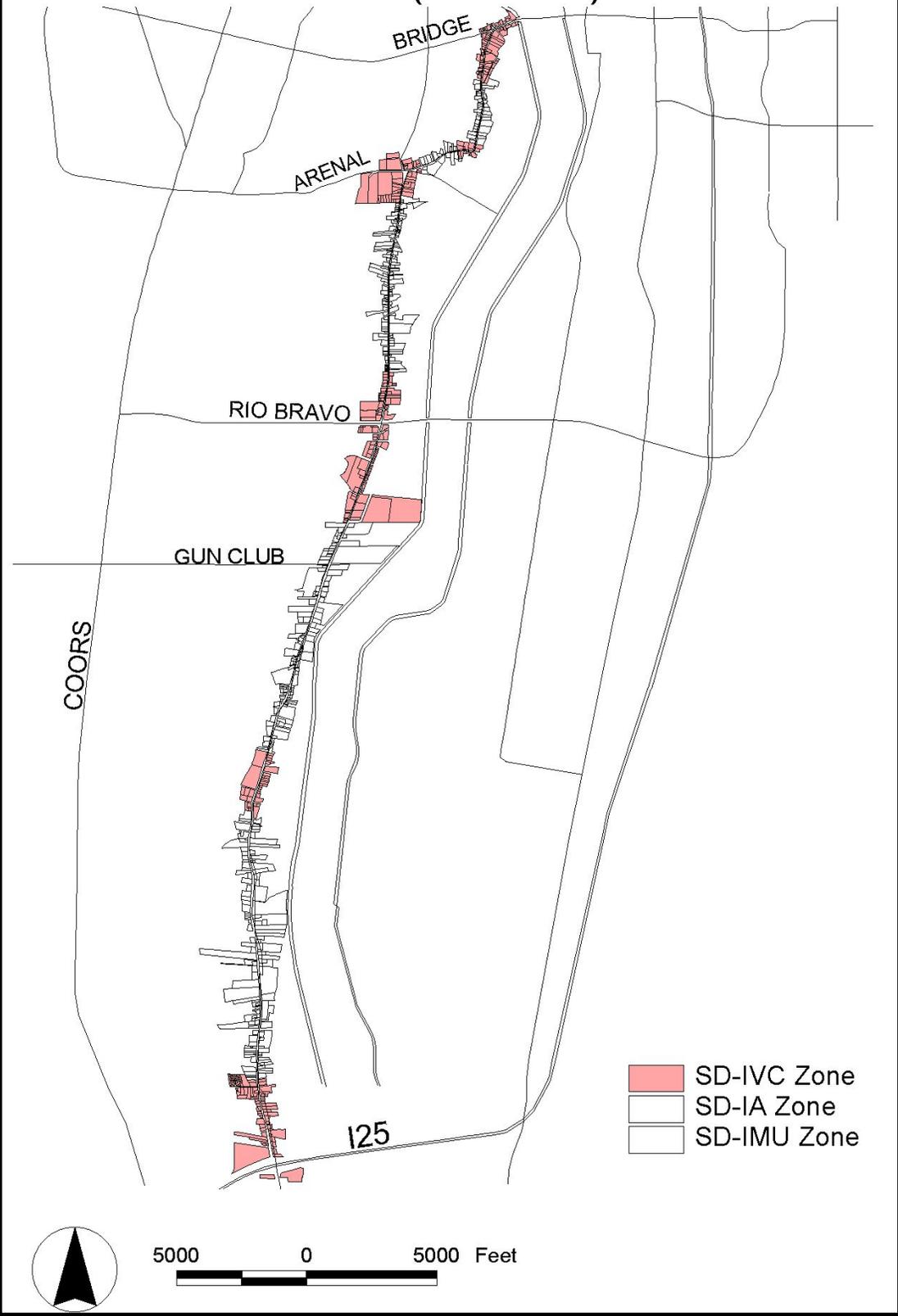
### **Identifying the Isleta Boulevard Village Centers**

This sector plan identifies five Village Centers and two Commercial Center along Isleta Boulevard. During the planning process, community members chose to designate the Rio Bravo area as a Commercial Center rather than a Village Center due to its more intense commercial uses. This Commercial Center is treated like a Village Center and falls under the Village Center Zone, but is designated differently simply to reflect its differing character.

As noted previously, each Village Center is distinct and identified uniquely by varying lot patterns, density, prevalent uses, street character, and historical significance. The Village and Commercial Centers defined by the Isleta Boulevard and Village Centers Sector Development Plan are:

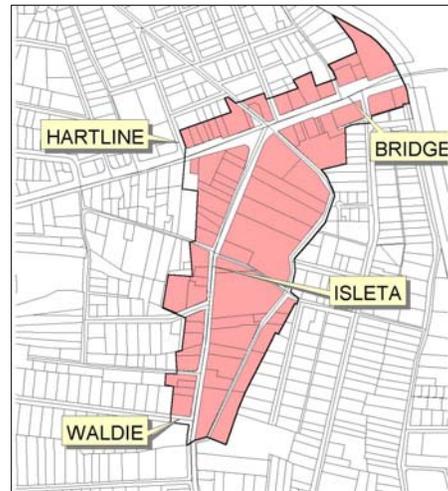
- Gateway Village Center;
- Armijo Village Center;
- Armijo Commercial Center;
- Rio Bravo Commercial Center;
- Adobe Acres Village Center;
- Pajarito Village Center; and,
- Los Padillas Village Center.

# Isleta Village Centers Boundary (SD-IVC)



### i. Gateway Village Center

**Boundaries:** The Gateway Village Center includes parcels from those bordering Bridge to the north, the Riverside Drain on the east, Hartline Road to the west, and Waldie Road to the south. See page Map.2.A on page 18.



**Character:** The Gateway Village Center is a lively small business corridor with a variety of retail, services, and restaurants. Businesses in the Gateway Village Center tend to be neighborhood-scale, are set close to the street, use vibrant colors, and have creative signage. Gateway Village Center zoning seeks to maintain these traditions and promote a continuation of this eclectic small business hub.

**Opportunities:** The Gateway Village Center acts as a distinctive entrance to the South Valley across the Rio Grande; future design elements and development should build upon this sense of entrance. The Gateway Village Center is one of the best examples along the corridor of a prime opportunity for public amenities. The current corner lot at Bridge and Isleta featuring the vacant McDonald’s and an AMAFCA drainage site would be a wonderful location for a public plaza and amenities such as a soccer field, a permanent farmers’ market structure, or small-scale local business.

Gateway village traditional scales:

Floorplate sizes in the Gateway Village Center:	
El Paisa:	1,800 square feet
Vacant McDonald’s bldg:	3,500 square feet
Blake’s Lotaburger:	1,800 square feet
La Parrilla:	1,125 square feet
Los Compadres:	2,400 square feet
Villalobos:	4,200 square feet
<i>* square footages are approximate</i>	



On Bridge Boulevard, businesses have small setbacks, use a variety of colors and types of signage, and have articulated facades that work together to create an interesting streetscape.

Gateway Village Center zoning maintains small setback and scale and promotes creative use of colors and signage.



Signage painted onto buildings is a unique element of many Gateway businesses that contributes to the area’s distinctive character.

Gateway Village Center zoning promotes signage choices such as this one.



This conceptual drawing features many elements that the community felt were important for the Gateway Village Center, including:

- A plaza
- A soccer field
- Gateway Signage
- Pedestrian improvements for better walkability
- Landscaping improvements

the Gateway Village Center. This design is meant to provide an idea of how this Village Center might be developed in the future and to spur residents' own ideas for the site. It is *not* intended to be a final site design.

## ii. Armijo Village Center

**Boundaries:** The Armijo Village Center includes the Armijo School, the Bernalillo County drainage site behind the school, Armijo Park, and parcels fronting Isleta within the noted borders. See Map.2.B on page 19.

**Character:** The Armijo Village Center is one of the corridor's historic Village Centers. It is the smallest Village Center featuring important public amenities, including the historic Armijo School as well Armijo Park. Structures in the Armijo Village Center are of traditional form and scale.

**Opportunities:** Given that many area residents are unhappy with the design of Armijo Park, opportunities exist for a public process to develop a new site plan with special attention to landscaping (especially adding shade elements to the park) and public art. In addition, vacant lots surrounding the park could be targeted for appropriate development or public use. This Village Center could be a central location for public amenities and county recreational facilities.

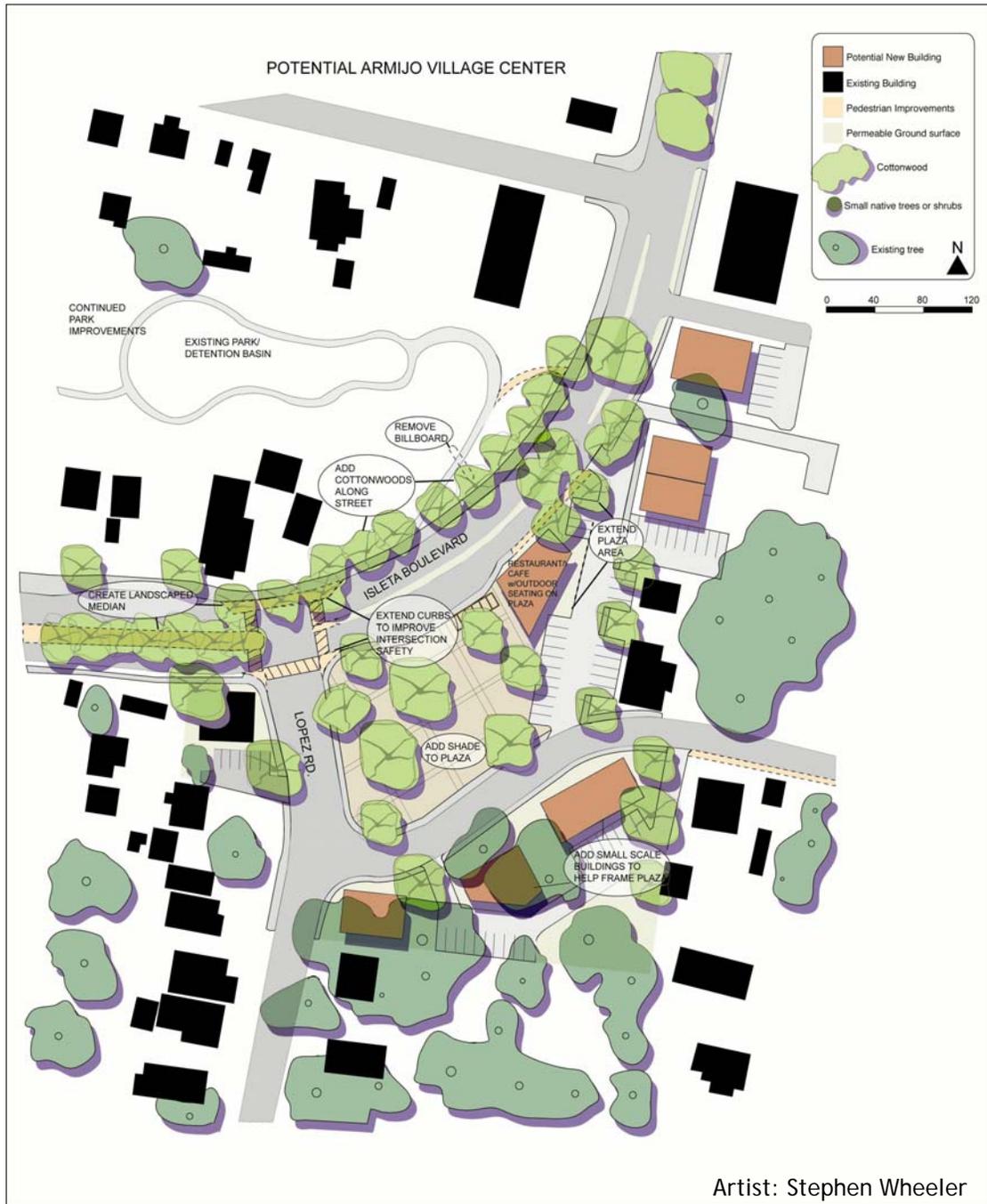


Armijo Park could be a central gathering place along Isleta Boulevard, yet the hard elements and lack of shade currently make it an undesirable focal point.

**Floorplate sizes in the Armijo Village Center:**  
Old Armijo School: 5,500 square feet

*\* square footages are approximate*

The following is a conceptual design for the Armijo Village Center. This design is meant to provide an idea of how this Village Center might be developed in the future and to spur residents' own ideas for the site. It is *not* intended to be a final site design.



This conceptual drawing features many elements that the community felt were important for the Armijo Village Center, including:

- Use of existing cottonwood trees
- More pedestrian friendly environment

### iii. Armijo Commercial Center

Boundaries: Includes parcels fronting the intersection of Isleta, Goff, and Arenal in addition to the land west to the Beckham Lateral. See Map.2.C on page 20.

Character: The Armijo Commercial Center contains a moderately high form of commercial businesses and residential development. Some businesses tend to be large-scale with very large setbacks and large front-facing parking lots. This Center is one of the most dangerous pedestrian areas along Isleta. Although residents live close to the Armijo Commercial Center stores, people rarely walk to them given the busyness of the intersection. The Armijo Commercial Center has a well-liked public art and seating element on one corner, yet the rest of the Center lacks landscaping, vegetation, and shade. ~~This Center is overwhelmingly asphalt with the exception of one important site: the old Sunset drive-in site, a large tract of open space behind the Martin Brothers Plumbing shopping center.~~



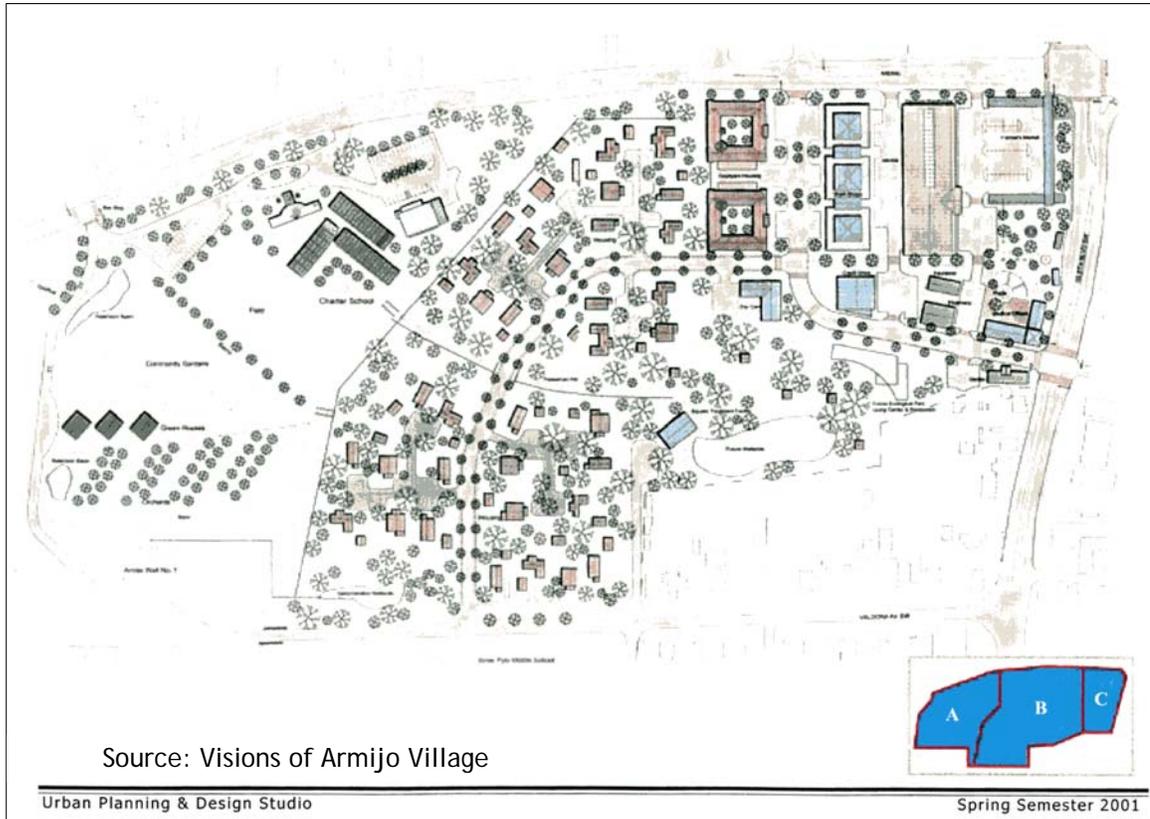
Opportunities: The Armijo Commercial Center offers some hopeful opportunities for developing public amenities and centers of synergy for local residents. The large parking lots could be used as gathering places, possibly with a plaza, where residents could have weekend fairs or farmers' markets, etc. ~~The existing Sunset Drive-In site is a major opportunity for the provision of public amenities and possibly cluster style residential development.~~

<p><b>Floorplate sizes in the Armijo Commercial Center :</b> Price Rite: 42,000 sq ft Martin Brothers strip mall: 38,000 sq ft Perico's strip mall: 5,100 sq ft</p>
---



These Arenal shopping centers both have massive parking lots that lack any landscaping or shade.

The following are conceptual designs for the Armijo Commercial Center. These designs are meant to provide an idea of how this Village Center might be developed in the future and to spur residents' own ideas for the site. It is *not* intended to be a final site design.



This conceptual drawing imagines possibilities for the Sunset Drive-in site and features:

- A Plaza
- New retail framing Isleta
- Cluster Development
- Landscaping improvements



This conceptual drawing of the Isleta/Arenal intersection features many elements that the community felt were important for the Armijo Commercial Center , including:

- A Plaza
- New retail framing Isleta
- Pedestrian improvements for better walkability
- Landscaping improvements

**iv. Rio Bravo Commercial Center**

**Boundaries:** Includes Isleta-fronting parcels south of Bonaguidi to the Pajarito Lateral. See Map.2.D on page 21.

**Character:** The Rio Bravo Commercial Center is a very heavily used commercial node with established shopping centers. Building floorplates are very large, as are parking lots and street setbacks. This commercial center is a destination for regional shopping and for commuters, given the very high amount of vehicular traffic along Rio Bravo. This Center contains minimal vegetation/landscaping and other features. These features would make this space more user-friendly for pedestrian traffic and local businesses.



**Opportunities:** Because of its high-intensity commercial nature, participants of this planning process preferred to label Rio Bravo a Commercial Center rather than a Village Center. Through additional design elements, landscaping, and pedestrian improvements, Rio Bravo Commercial Center could become a more attractive destination that was more user-friendly for local residents and other local businesses.

**Floorplate sizes in the Rio Bravo Commercial Center:**  
 Albertson's Shopping Center: 114,300 square feet  
 Presbyterian Medical Center: 22,500 square feet  
 Bank of America: 7,000 square feet  
 McDonald's: 4,500 square feet  
 Pizza Hut: 6,800 square feet  
*\* square footages are approximate*



Franchise architecture marks this Pizza Hut and Sonic (top), making these sites unusable by future businesses.

**Top:** This Pizza Hut sits in an island of unused asphalt parking.

**Left:** Instead of framing the street, this Presbyterian building sits behind rows of cars.

The following is a conceptual design for the Rio Bravo Commercial Center. This design is meant to provide an idea of how this Commercial Center might be developed in the future and to spur residents' own ideas for the site. It is *not* intended to be a final site design.

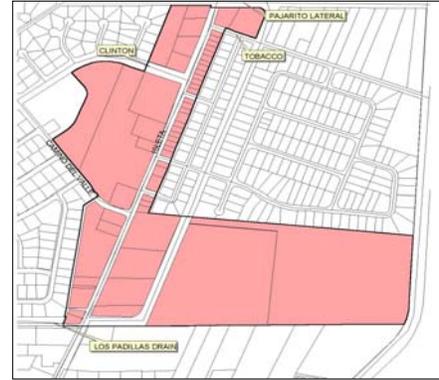


This conceptual drawing features many elements that the community felt were important for the Rio Bravo Commercial Centers, including:

- New small-scale retail framing Isleta
- Pedestrian improvements for better walkability
- Landscaping improvements to buffer pedestrians from heavy traffic

**V. ADOBE ACRES VILLAGE CENTER**

**Boundary:** Includes parcels from the Pajarito Lateral on the north to Los Padillas drain to the south. See Map.2.E on page 22.

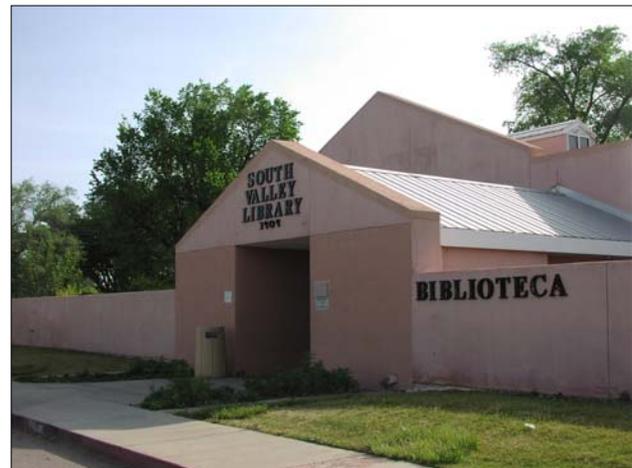


**Character:** The Adobe Acres Village Center acts as a transition area along Isleta Boulevard, separating the more urban portion of the corridor from the more rural portion. It also contains the biggest concentration of amenities along the Isleta corridor with the public fields, public schools, the public library, a public swimming pool, and access to the bosque.

**Opportunities:** Enhancing the area's walkable, traditional character could be done relatively easily by building upon the Center's existing amenities. A vacant parcel just south of Checker Auto on Isleta Boulevard contains a grove of cottonwood trees that if maintained and enhanced, could act as a buffer from the intense commercial uses to the north and a transition into the more rural character to the south. The South Valley Farmers' Market currently meets in the parking lot across from Harrison Middle School, where community events like Dia de las Semillas also take place. With enhanced landscaping and signage, this site could become a livelier meeting place. Finally, Harrison Middle School could be used as an access point to the walking trails of the bosque.



Above: Empty parcel with cottonwoods  
Below: South Valley Library



The following is a conceptual design for the Adobe Acres Village Center. This design is meant to provide an idea of how this Village Center might be developed in the future and to spur residents' own ideas for the site. It is *not* intended to be a final site design.



This conceptual drawing features many elements that the community felt were important for the Adobe Acres Village Center, including:

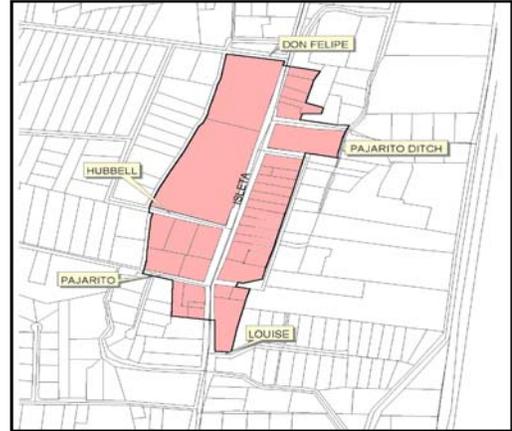
- A Plaza
- Parking improvements
- Mixed-Use structures
- Landscaping improvements

Artist: Stephen Wheeler

## vi. Pajarito Village Center

**Boundaries:** Fronting parcels on Isleta Boulevard from Don Felipe Road on the north to Louise Ave. on the south. See Map.2.F. on page 23.

**Uses:** The Pajarito Village Center is one of the corridor's historic Village Centers. The most rural village center, the Pajarito Village Center contains the Hubbell House, viable agricultural land, and two local businesses. Pajarito Village Center Zoning seeks to maintain, *not* increase, the area's existing low density and rural feel.



**Opportunities:** There is tremendous opportunity to make the Pajarito Village Center a showcase of the South Valley's agricultural heritage. In order to make this place a center of activity, the Pajarito Village Center could use landscaping improvements, historic markers, historic signage, and preservation techniques.



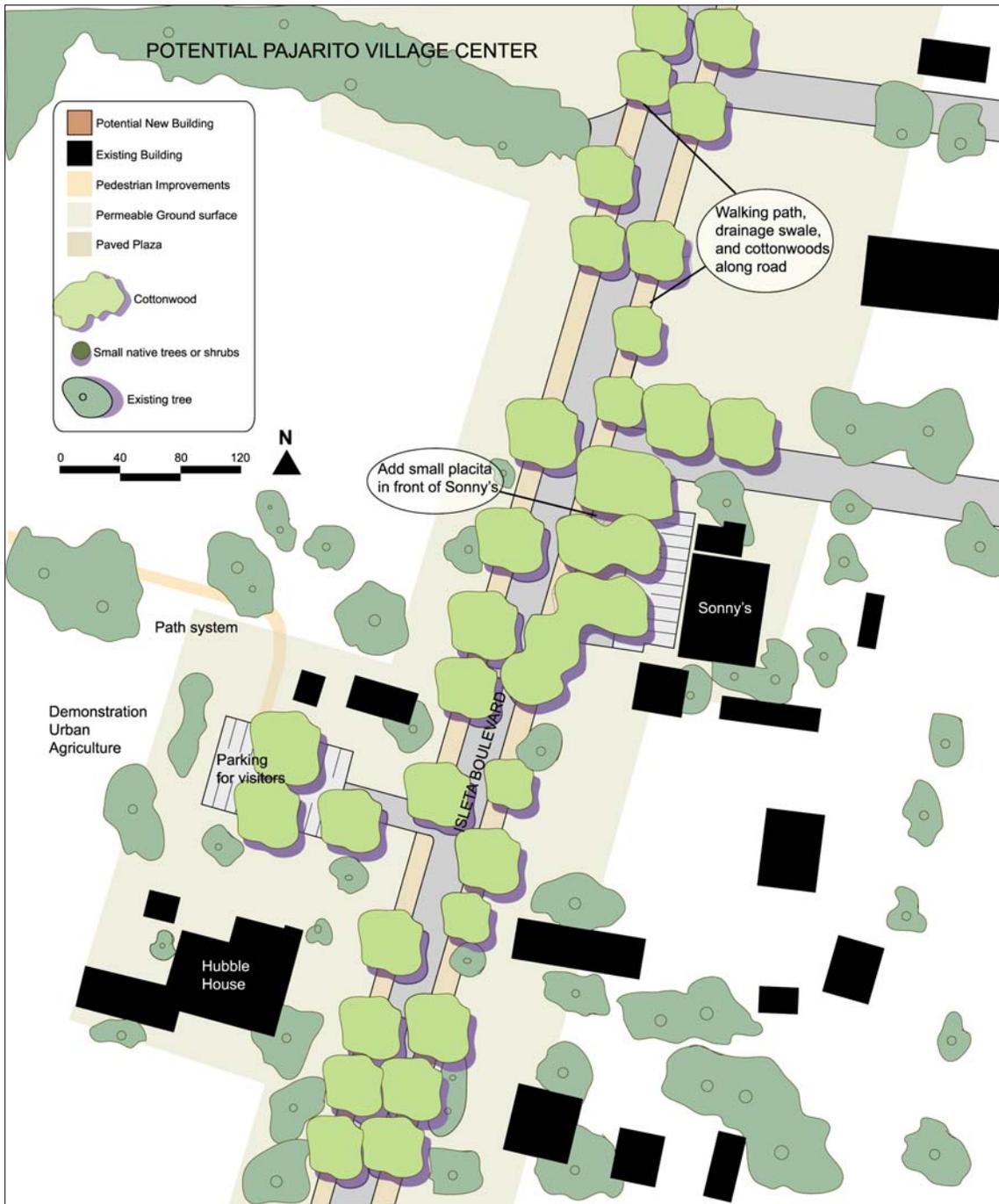
*Left:* The Hubbell House represents the rural, historic feel of this Village Center.

*Below:* A popular local restaurant, Abuelita's features traditional architecture that helps camouflage its 5,000 square foot size.



**Floorplate sizes in the Pajarito Village Center:**  
Hubbell House: 4,125 square feet  
Abuelita's: 5,000 square feet  
*\* square footages are approximate*

The following is a conceptual design for the Pajarito Village Center. This design is meant to provide an idea of how this Village Center might be developed in the future and to spur residents' own ideas for the site. It is *not* intended to be a final site design.



This conceptual drawing features many elements that the community felt were important for the Pajarito Village Center, including:

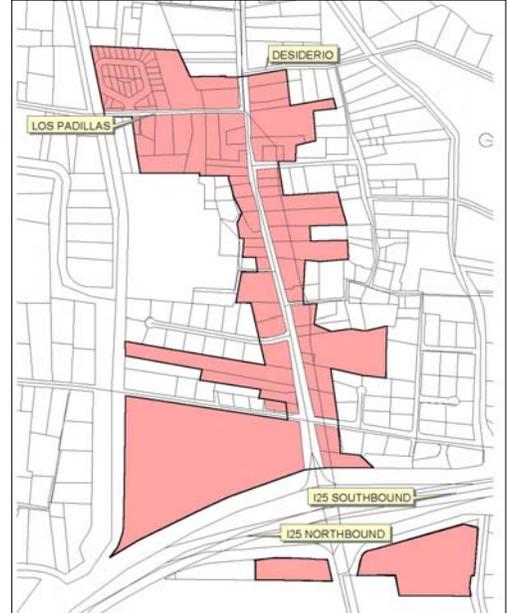
- A Placita
- Parking improvements
- Pedestrian improvements
- Landscaping improvements

**vii. Los Padillas Village Center**

**Boundaries:** Fronting parcels on Isleta Boulevard from Desiderio Raod on the north to I-25 on the south. See Map.2.G on page 24.

**Uses:** Los Padillas Village Center is one of the corridor's historic Village Centers. Los Padillas is characterized by agricultural and open space fields and small-scale commercial that serves the needs of this community. The social focus of the Center is Jerry's Market, where many residents do their grocery shopping and gather in the parking lot. Concerns include not enough landscaping along Isleta Boulevard and potential future development that might cater to semi-trucks from I-25 rather than the local community.

**Opportunities:** A major opportunity for Los Padillas Village Center is the recently emptied parcel across the street from Jerry's Market. A small-scale commercial development that serves additional needs of the community could be located on this parcel. Lanscaping and buffering along the roadway is also needed.



DeAnza Animal Clinic and Jerry's Market are great examples of small-scale neighborhood commercial development, offering valuable goods and services to the community.

DeAnza's also features traditional architecture and a non-asphalt parking lot.

**Floorplate sizes in the Los Padillas Village Center:**  
 Jerry's Market: 5,760 square feet  
 DeAnza Animal Clinic: 2,100 square feet  
*\* square footages are approximate*



The following is a conceptual design for the Los Padillos Village Center. This design is meant to provide an idea of how this Village Center might be developed in the future and to spur residents' own ideas for the site. It is *not* intended to be a final site design.



This conceptual drawing features many elements that the community felt were important for the Los Padillos Village Center, including:

- A Placita
- Landscaping improvements
- Parking improvements
- Pedestrian improvements

Artist: Stephen Wheeler