

Establishing

University Village

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments 3

Introduction: The Vision 4

University Avenue Today 5

University Village: Why Now? 6

Creating University Village 7

Improving Connectivity 7

Choosing Safer Intersection Treatments 8

University Avenue at 32nd Street 9

University Avenue at 28th Street and Broadmoor Drive 10

University Avenue at UALR Campus Drive 10

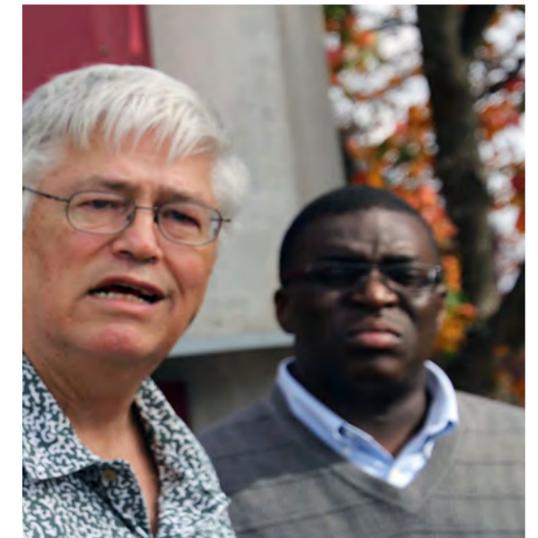
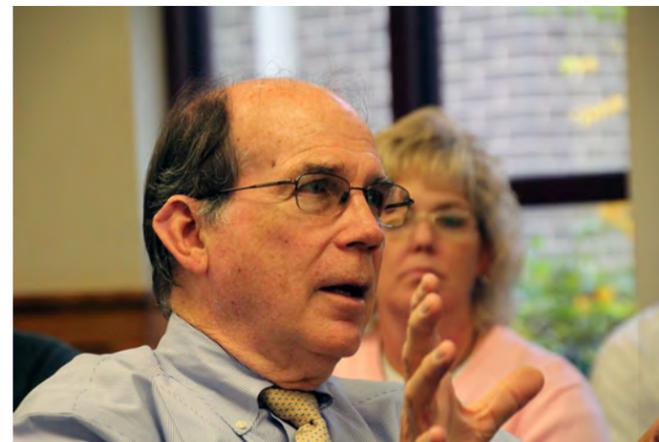
University Avenue at Highway 5/Asher Avenue 11

Envision A Healthier Street 12

Design Options #1 - 2 12

Design Option #3 13

Concluding Thoughts & Next Steps 14



Participants discuss their vision for University Avenue during the Conceptual Design Workshop held at UALR. The goal of the workshop was to discuss possible treatments for University Avenue and its major intersections in order to prime development of a true University Village. Participants included: Joel Anderson, Chancellor, UALR; Jim McKenzie, Executive Director, Metroplan; Mark Stodola, Mayor, City of Little Rock; Ron Copeland, Executive Director, University District Partnership; Lou Tobian, AARP; and Brooke Perkins, Staff Design Engineer, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following individuals took part in the Conceptual Design Workshop activities:

Joel Anderson, Chancellor, UALR
 Bill Walker, Vice Chancellor for Advancement, UALR
 David Millay, Associate Vice Chancellor Facilities Management, UALR
 Jim Carr, Professor, Department of Construction Management, UALR
 David Sink, Professor, Institute of Government, UALR
 Jesse Mason, Director, Cooperative Education Program, UALR
 Mark Stodola, Mayor, City of Little Rock
 Bryan Day, Assistant City Manager, City of Little Rock
 Steve Beck, Director, Public Works, City of Little Rock
 Bill Henry, Manager, Traffic Engineering Division, Department of Public Works, City of Little Rock
 Tony Bozynski, Director, Planning & Development Department, City of Little Rock
 Walter Malone, Planning Manager, Planning & Development Department, City of Little Rock
 Victor Turner, Assistant Director, Department of Housing & Neighborhood Programs, City of Little Rock
 Kevin Howard, NSP2 Program Administrator, City of Little Rock
 Tanya James, Branch Manager & Associate Vice President, Arvest Bank University Branch
 La'Twan Cheatem, Consumer Lender Assistant Vice President, Arvest Bank University Branch
 Carl Schultz, Owner, Big Country Chateau Apartments
 Ike McEntire, Owner, Murry's Dinner Playhouse
 Dickson Flake, Colliers International Commercial Real Estate Services
 Jim Hathaway, Hathaway Group
 Jim Irwin, Irwin Partners
 Hank Kelley, Flake & Kelly Commercial
 Sara Stephens, Richard Stephens & Associates
 Kim Sanders, Coordinator, Safe Routes to School, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department
 Brooke Perkins, Staff Design Engineer, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department
 Kim Romano, Senior Planning and Research Engineer, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department
 Norm Berner, Meadowcliff/Brookwood Neighborhood Association
 Marjorie Lacy, Meadowcliff/Brookwood Neighborhood Association
 Chuck Bomer, University District Resident
 William Saunders, Point O' Woods Residents Association
 Joe Busby, Chair, University District Neighborhoods Association & Vice Chair, UDDC
 Karen Walls, Treasurer, Broadmoor Property Owners Association
 Ed Swaim, Board of Directors, University District Development Corporation
 John Swaim, Resident, University District
 Jim McKenzie, Executive Director, Metroplan
 Joy Rockenbach, Co-Chair, Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention
 Leesa Freasier, Co-Chair, Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention

Josh Mayes, Governor's Council on Fitness
 Lou Tobian, Associate Director of State Outreach, AARP
 Lynn Rockenbach, Volunteer, AARP
 Ron Copeland, Executive Director, University District Development Corporation
 Barrett Allen, Program Officer, University District Development Corporation
 Michael Wallwork, Roundabout Expert, Alternate Street Design
 Ian Lockwood, Principal, AECOM
 Harrison Rue, Principal, ICF International
 Dan Burden, Executive Director, Walkable and Livable Communities Institute
 Sarah Bowman, Director of Education, Walkable and Livable Communities Institute

The Conceptual Design Workshop was sponsored by:



Report prepared by:

Dan Burden, Executive Director, Walkable and Livable Communities Institute
 Sarah Bowman, Director of Education, Walkable and Livable Communities Institute
 Lisl Coady, Graphic Design and Development, Walkable and Livable Communities Institute

INTRODUCTION: THE VISION

Creating University Village at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock

In 2007, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) and the University District Partnership issued a revised Strategic Plan, titled, *Partners for Progress: Shaping the Future of the University District*. This document made clear that strong neighborhoods would help UALR recruit and retain students, faculty, and staff, while protecting UALR's investment in programs and facilities.

UALR anchors the University District with more than 13,000 students, 2,500 employees and an annual operating budget of \$165 million. Its performing arts, cultural and sports events attract several thousand people to the area each year, making the campus the primary destination for the south mid-town area of Little Rock. Despite this, the 2007 *Strategic Plan Update* notes that no major public infrastructure investments have taken place in the area in two decades. Today, buildings are empty and space is underutilized across from the University.

The revised *Strategic Plan* correctly notes that redevelopment often entails public investment in physical infrastructure to create market demand to stimulate private investment. UALR did not need to look far for a prime example of this. As the *Strategic Plan* highlighted, the River Market Project area of downtown Little Rock had been declining for decades. Community leadership adopted a shared vision and goals to make the downtown areas adjacent to the Arkansas River a primary destination for entertainment and tourism. Little Rock, North Little Rock, and Pulaski County invested public funds in building Alltel Arena, expanding the Statehouse Convention Center, and implementing the River Rail Trolley system. They also cooperated to attract the William Jefferson Clinton Presidential Library. These major public facilities attract hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, creating a market demand for private investments in restaurants, shops, and hotels. Because of this, the Central Arkansas Library System chose to

locate its main branch in the River Market District. These public-private investments provided the stimuli for several nonprofit organizations to build major facilities in the area, including Heifer Project International, and Care Link. Demand followed the public investment and stimulated private investment in the area, exceeding \$1.2 billion.

Today, University Avenue at the UALR campus is one of the city's most overlooked streets. Unfortunately and very tragically, lives have been lost, including professor Rhonda Sue Lewis, who died crossing University Avenue. This is in sharp contrast to the Vision set forth by UALR in its *Strategic Plan*. UALR envisions itself as a good neighbor to the surrounding community, desiring to leverage its resources to provide technical assistance for small businesses, faculty research linked to emerging companies, programs and activities that support families, and green spaces created by the restoration of Coleman Creek. The Vision for the University District focuses on seven key themes which can be realized through the creation of the University Village:

- Distinctive district identity
- Commercial vitality
- Strong and diverse neighborhoods
- Safe and attractive streets
- Excellent schools
- Ample open space
- Clear pedestrian and transit links

This report captures the conceptual design workshop for University Avenue that occurred on December 3-4, 2012 at UALR. The following pages present existing conditions and design treatments that support a University Village. These designs are conceptual, but provide enough detail to allow the City of Little Rock, Metroplan, Pulaski County and the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department to undertake further analysis.

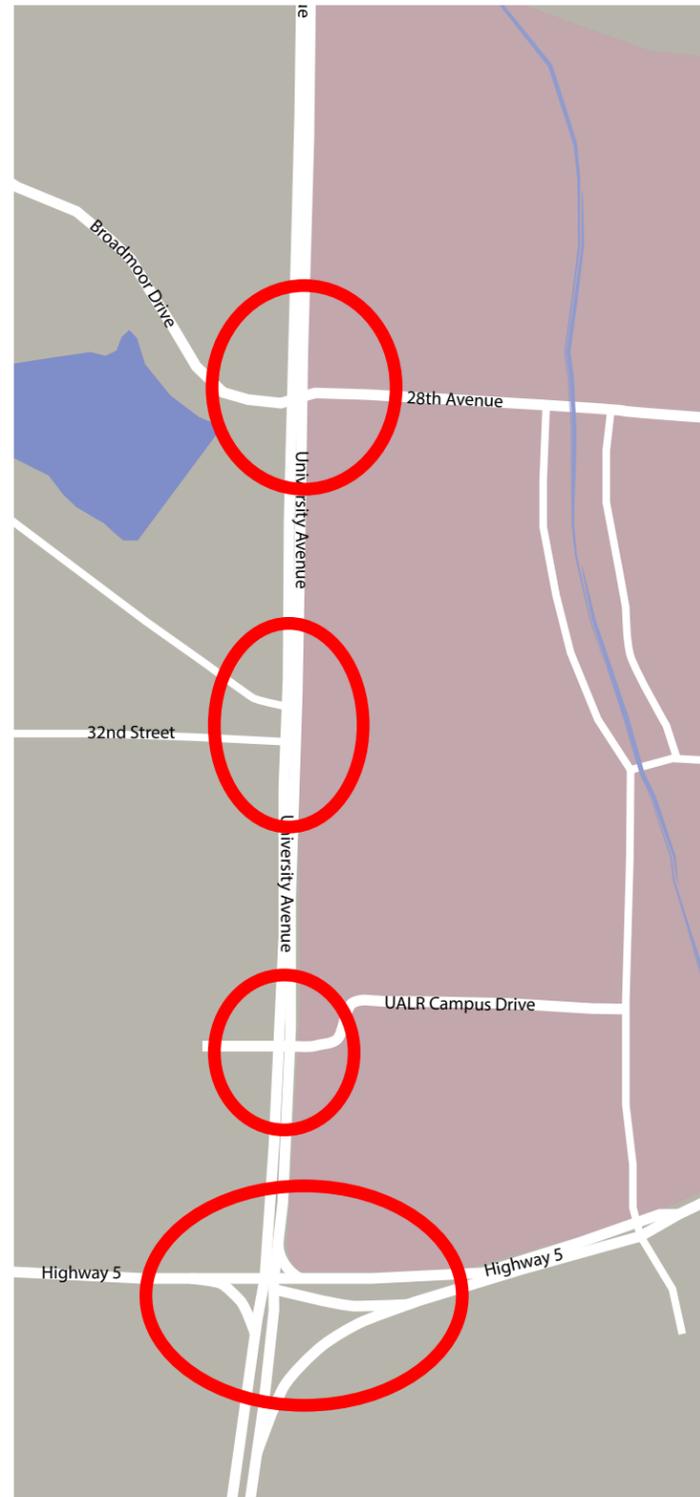
“The University District is a thriving cultural and entertainment destination, regarded throughout the city as a neighborhood of choice - a walkable, in-town district with excellent schools and services, vibrant commercial areas, rich cultural resources, and connections to open space and transit. A mix of single-family and higher-density housing attracts a diverse community, including many UALR faculty and staff who choose to live as well as work in the district.”

- 2004 Vision Statement to be Realized in 2014



Above: The rendering is a futuristic view of the University District from the revised Strategic Plan, *Partners for Progress: Shaping the Future of the University District* (2007)

UNIVERSITY AVENUE TODAY



Transitioning from placeless to place

University Avenue today is placeless. It is not a gateway to greatness, even though it is the front door to UALR. Instead, it is unattractive, uncomfortable and cannot prime the type of development desired unless new design treatments are utilized. The City of Little Rock, Pulaski County, UALR, Metroplan, the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, and the State of Arkansas can work together to transform this road into a gateway to a world-class living, learning research center - surrounded by a vibrant business, entrepreneurial, and cultural district with thriving neighborhoods. By leveraging transportation investments to add value and diversity to land uses, Arkansas will have more corridor transformations to celebrate.

As a world-class learning destination, UALR students, faculty, staff and visitors should not have to contend with blighted conditions, overly-wide streets, unsafe transportation corridors, speeding vehicles and a lack of amenities. The images on this page show how poorly designed University Avenue is and how it fails to meet the needs of both pedestrians and businesses. Establishing place means raising our standards when it comes to street design and leveraging transportation investments to prime the development desired.

The existing design of University Avenue creates inappropriate behaviors by motorists and pedestrians. During the conceptual design workshop at UALR, participants studied the following intersections along University Avenue: 28th Street and Broadmoor Drive; 32nd Street; UALR Campus Drive; and the Highway 5/Asher/University Avenue Intersection. The goal of the conceptual design workshop was to consider possible design treatments to support the University District partners in creating a true University Village. This report captures the findings from the design workshop and provides conceptual design treatments for consideration and evaluation, in order to transition from barely surviving to thriving along University Avenue.



UNIVERSITY VILLAGE: WHY NOW?

University Avenue does not support the community's vision

In 2011, the *National Center for Higher Education Management Systems* (NCHEMS) issued a report analyzing Arkansas' educational attainment, economy, and higher education. It found that Arkansas ranks 46th out of the 50 states in the percentage of adults, ages 25 to 64, with an Associate's degree; 49th in the percentage with a Bachelor's degree; and 50th in the percentage with a Graduate or professional degree. The report went on to find that Arkansans today are less educated than previous generations. Additionally, the report found that in order to increase Arkansas' competitiveness, the state must not only increase the number of graduates, but also develop an economy that will retain these graduates and attract other highly educated people.

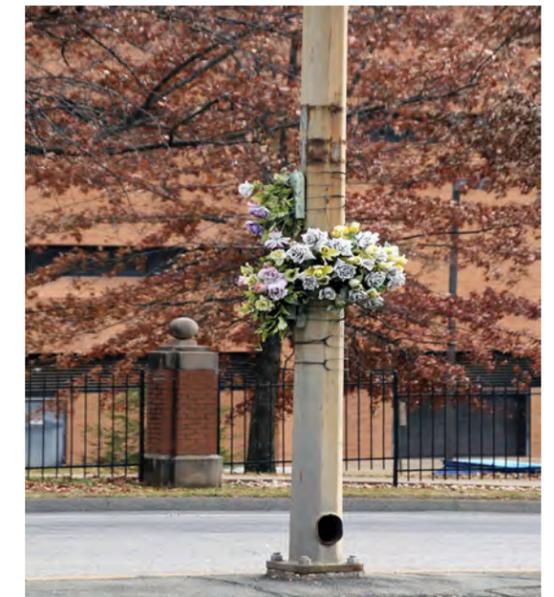
In 2010, UCLA released a survey of 201,818 students at 279 U.S. colleges and universities, titled, *The American Freshman: National Norms*, which listed the top five reasons for choosing a college or university as follows:

1. College has very good academic reputation - 62 percent
2. This college's graduates get good jobs - 53 percent
3. The student was offered financial assistance - 45 percent
4. A visit to the campus - 41 percent
5. The cost of attending this college - 41 percent

UALR has a strong academic reputation and competitive costs for students. However, the front door to UALR, University Avenue, is unattractive and dangerous. The death of UALR professor Rhonda Sue Lewis who was killed crossing University Avenue, and the homicide of UALR student Patricia Guardado, who disappeared from off-campus parking, sparked renewed focus on integrating the area's transportation and land uses to increase safety and transparency along University Avenue. Business and property owners also seek predictable development to support a major center of learning and the surrounding community.

On the Bureau of Legislative Research website for Arkansas Higher Education, Arkansas Senate President Pro Tempore Paul Bookout noted, "Education is among the most potent drivers of economic development, and it's critically important to Arkansas' fiscal vitality. Yet, in this state, the majority of adults' education stops at high school. Only about 19% have a bachelor's degree — well below the national rate. If we are to attract or develop thriving, 21st Century businesses to this state, we must be committed to producing highly educated workers."

The question becomes: how do we increase the number of graduates and attract highly educated people to Arkansas? We do this by creating accessible and inspiring centers of learning. A great first step is in focusing transportation investments where they can have maximum benefit to the community and state. Certainly, given the unified vision of the University District Partnership, the economic impact of UALR and the need to attract and retain educated residents, University Avenue can be a model demonstration project for the City of Little Rock and the State of Arkansas.



Above: University Avenue as it exists today is ugly, challenging for pedestrians, and does not feel like the front door of a major university. Students wait on medians and walk through travel lanes, though vehicles are regularly traveling at high speeds in the posted 25-mph zone. Despite the memorial to slain professor Rhonda Sue Lewis who died crossing University Avenue, a distasteful billboard advertises legal assistance for those "hit by a big rig." UALR is home to more than 13,000 students in 100-plus programs of study and prides itself on being a metropolitan university in the state's thriving capital city. In order to prime development of a true University Village around the UALR campus, University Avenue requires new intersection and corridor design treatments.

CREATING UNIVERSITY VILLAGE

Improving connectivity

The 1998 *Arkansas State Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan* references *Pedestrian Planning and Design* by John Fruin and the six attributes of walkability as: safety, security, convenience, continuity, system coherence, and comfort/attractiveness. The Plan specifically includes the following text on creating an appropriate pedestrian environment:

Safety - Sidewalks must be of adequate width to accommodate projected use and must be free of obstructions. Sidewalks have to be separated from adjacent motor vehicle lanes by either distance, landscape plantings, or by other means. Adequate crossing aids including signals and refuge islands have to be present.

Security - To provide users a sense of security against a possible criminal element, pedestrian facilities should be constructed in plain view of passers-by and law enforcement personnel. These facilities should be designed with no “hiding” places and adequate lighting should be installed. Lines of sight must be great enough so users can see ahead and avoid possible obstructions or threats to personal safety.

Convenience - Pedestrian facilities should provide users with linkages to other forms of transportation. Obstructions should be eliminated or minimized. An adequate number of well placed street crossings must be provided and pedestrian signal timing should allow ample time to cross without hurrying. Individuals with all types of physical impairments must be accommodated.

Continuity - All public facilities should be connected via the pedestrian transportation system, as should residential areas, recreation areas, places of employment, shopping areas, and business areas.

System Coherence - Pedestrian facilities must be designed at a human scale and must be integrated into the urban and suburban landscape. Walkways should follow logical routes and must be supported by adequate signing, signalization, and in certain cases, maps.

Comfort and Attractiveness - To encourage their use, pedestrian facilities should be aesthetically and physically pleasing; landscape plantings, surface texture, and rest areas can help accomplish this.

Unfortunately, University Avenue violates these six principles. Yet, the community desires redevelopment of the area to establish a true University Village. A first step in this direction is to improve the safety, security, convenience, continuity, system coherence and comfort of the area by focusing on connectivity. Improved connectivity will provide the following benefits to UALR and the City of Little Rock: more direct routes for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit; shorter travel distances; reduced vehicle miles traveled; reduced traffic congestion on arterials and collectors; greater emergency vehicle access with reduced response times; easier maintenance and delivery of services; and compact development in line with the vision of a University Village.

The red lines on the graphic at right show potential improvements to connectivity in and around the UALR campus. A more detailed study is needed to understand how floodplains and the campus master plan can accommodate greater connectivity in the area. Greater connectivity would take some load from the University Avenue/Asher Avenue/Highway 5 intersection, potentially allowing a double lane roundabout as the intersection treatment, rather than the three-lane roundabout shown on page 11.



Above: In order to create a University Village around UALR, street connectivity should be evaluated. The goal should be an interconnected street network to disperse traffic and encourage active transportation. A hierarchy of right-sized streets will support all modes, while amenities will make walking, bicycling and taking transit natural activities in the area. As a next step, analysis should be completed to determine whether connectivity can be improved in the UALR area to encourage walking and biking for shorter trips around the University District. This might take some of the load from the University Avenue/Highway 5/Asher Avenue intersection so that a double-lane roundabout would suffice. See page 11 of this report for more information on that intersection.

CREATING UNIVERSITY VILLAGE

Choosing safer intersection treatments: the modern roundabout

The Federal Highway Administration and many state departments of transportation, including the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, recognize the operational and safety benefits of utilizing modern roundabouts for intersections.

Studies show that roundabouts provide:

- 90% reduction in fatal crashes
- 75% reduction in injury crashes
- 30-40% reduction in pedestrian crashes
- 10% reduction in bicycle crashes

Increased Capacity & Reduced Delay:

- 30-50% increase in traffic capacity
- Because drivers can take advantage of any gaps in traffic flow, there is less overall delay

Lower maintenance costs:

- No signal equipment to install, repair and rebuild, which has a saving of \$13,000 to \$20,000 per year for every signalized intersection
- When storms or human error cause power outages, roundabouts still function



Environmental benefits:

- There is a reduction in pollution and fuel use
- There is less noise due to fewer stops and starts

Aesthetics:

- Roundabouts improve the visual quality and character through landscaping, sculptures and other gateway features that celebrate place

Vehicle speeds (under 25 mph):

- Drivers have more time to judge and react to other vehicles and pedestrians
- Conditions are easier for older and novice drivers
- Businesses have more exposure
- There is a reduction in the severity of accidents if they do occur
- All modes are safer and integrate better
- A gateway is formed which establishes place and provides traffic calming benefits

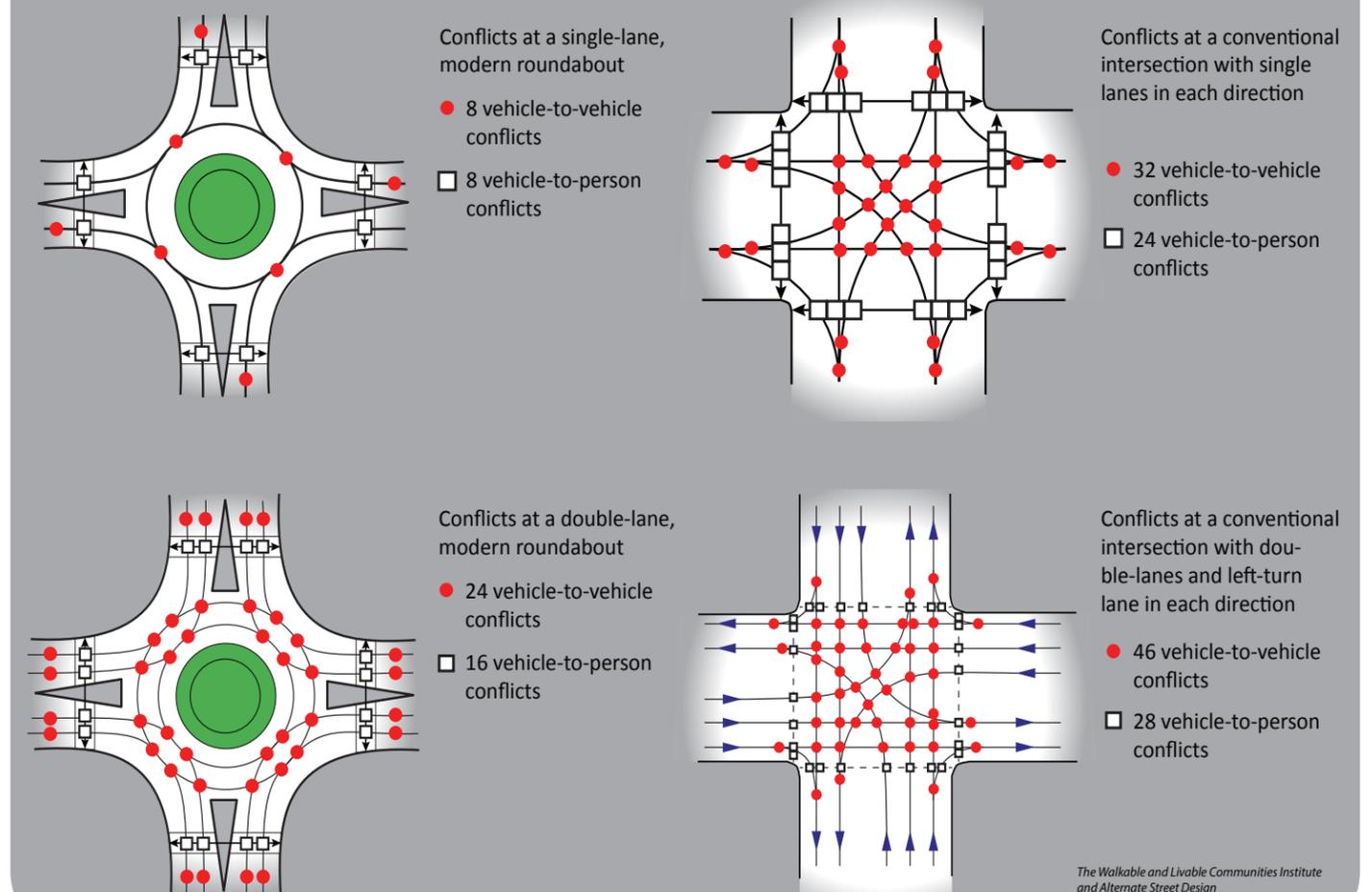
To learn more, visit the Federal Highway Administration's Proven Safety Countermeasures website at: http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/fhwa_sa_12_005.htm

The graphic to the left, shows a pedestrian's likely survival rate if hit by a vehicle traveling 20, 30, 40 miles per hour. Though speeds are posted at 25-mph near UALR, the design speed of the street is much higher and, therefore, motorists regularly drive much faster.

Data Source: *Killing Speed and Saving Lives*, UK Dept. of Transportation, London, England. See also Limpert, Rudolph. *Motor Vehicle Accident Reconstruction and Cause Analysis*. Fourth Edition. Charlottesville, VA. The Michie Company, 1994, p. 663. Graphic created by the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute.

Roundabout vs. Conventional Intersections

A comparison of conflict points between vehicles and pedestrians



CREATING UNIVERSITY VILLAGE

University Avenue at 32nd Street

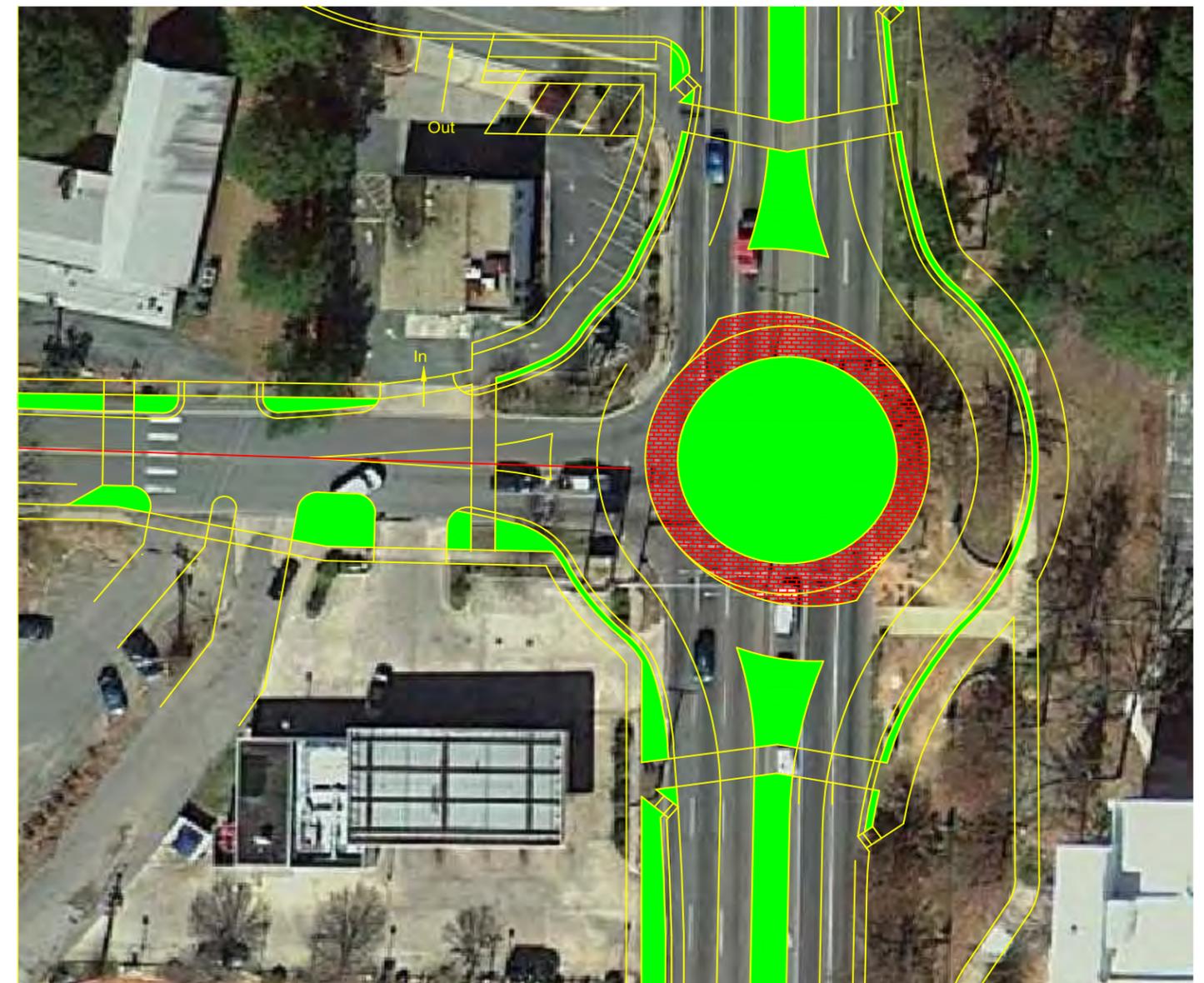
Choose safer intersection treatments that establish place

The key to a seamless mix of University Village with campus is to bring down speeds to 25-mph on the University Avenue corridor through four remade intersections, all based on the use of the modern roundabout. Traffic volumes can be better handled with roundabouts, and pedestrian flow across University Avenue can occur with minimal or no delay under conditions safer and more comfortable than today. Each of the intersection designs suggested will bring entering and exiting speeds on all legs of the roundabout down to an average of 15 to 20 mph. Conflicts points between motorists and pedestrians are greatly reduced, as is noise, pollutants, the severity of accidents if they do occur, and other negative factors.

Each roundabout features channelized islands that reduce crossings on side streets to a distance of 14-feet to a crossing island (splitter island) and then another 14-feet to the sidewalk. Crossings on University Avenue are held to 24 to 26 feet. Pedestrian crossings at roundabouts of two or more lanes will have pedestrian operated signal assistance.

A series of roundabouts help to lower overall corridor speeds since the roundabouts work in tandem, holding corridor speeds at or below 25-mph at all times, creating a gateway to the University District that allows a true University Village to develop. This is due both to the geometry of the deflection paths in the roundabouts and the appearance to the motorist coming out of each roundabout that the next roundabout is within clear view. There are no advantages to speeds above 25-mph for UALR or area businesses.

Roundabouts at 28th Street, 32nd Street, and UALR Campus Drive might have spare capacity based on 2005 traffic counts. The Highway 5 roundabout is a different situation. It took numerous analyses to find a workable solution and more detail on that intersection is provided on Page 11. The design of that roundabout can be reduced to a two-lane roundabout with additional connectivity in the area. Page 7 of this report shows some options for further investigation in order to improve connectivity in the area.

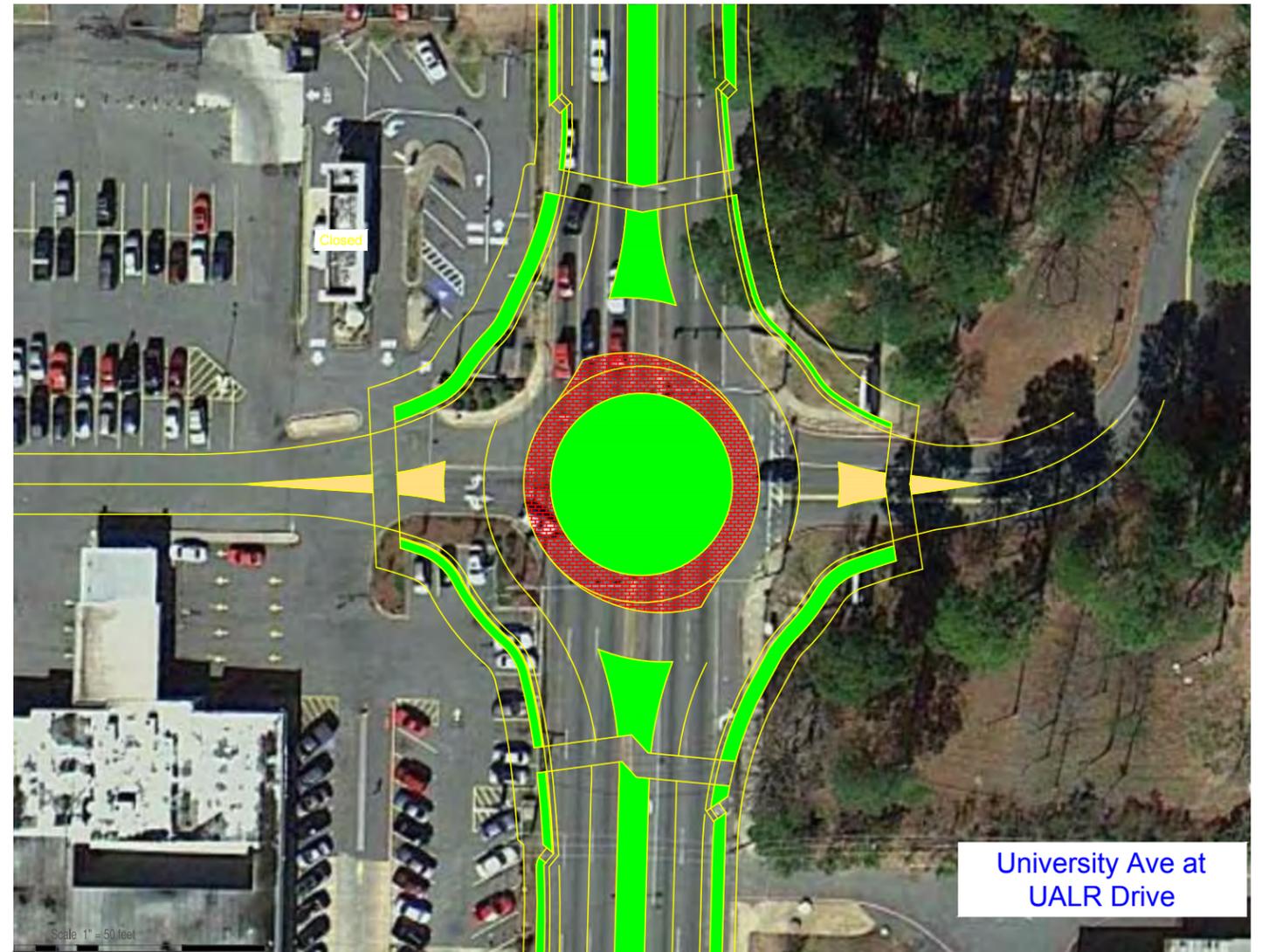
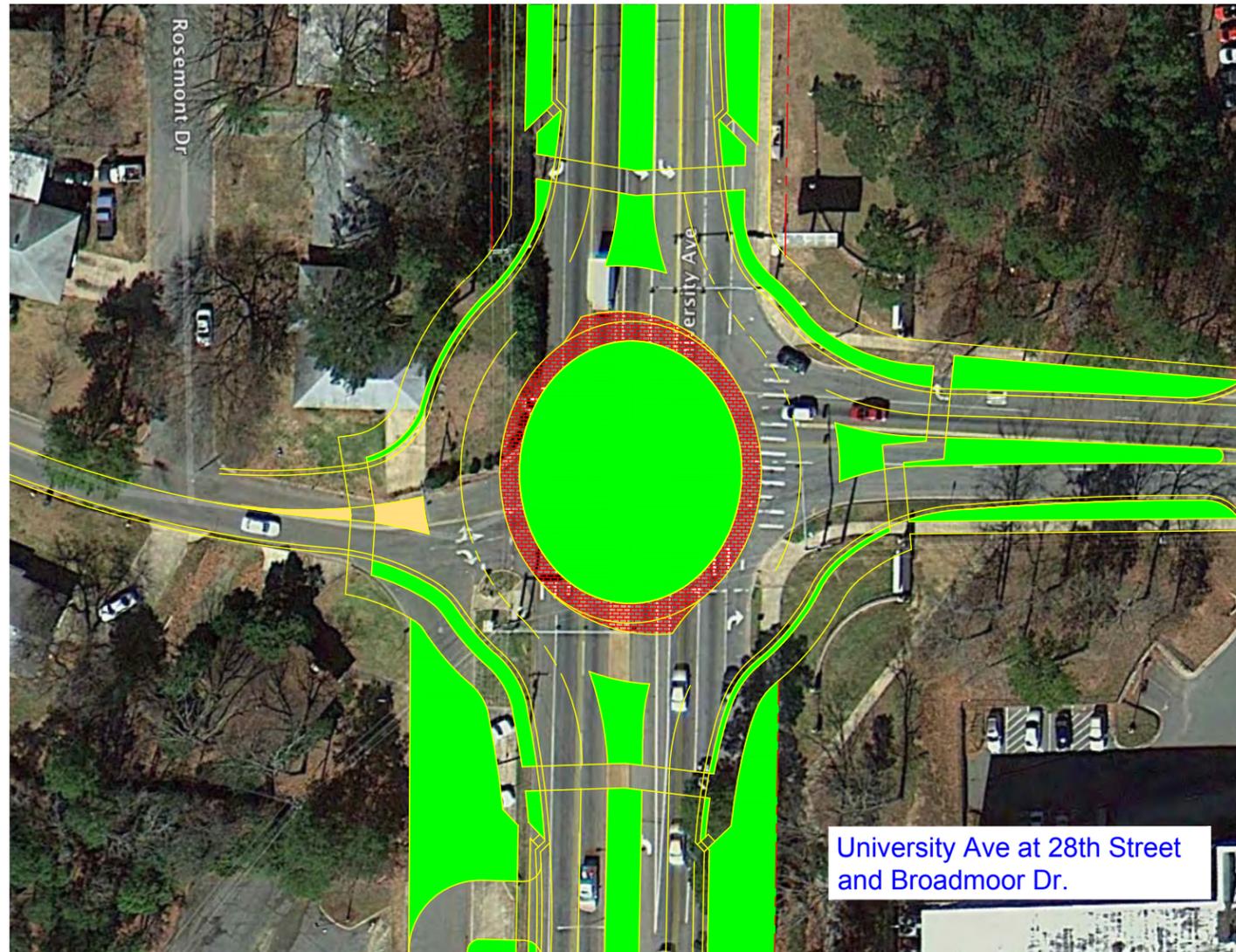


Above: This T-intersection dips 30 to 40 feet onto UALR property in order to perform its traffic movement and slowing function. The intersection provides the major walking connector to the center of the campus and features grand walkways from center to center. Note the roadway to the Northwest is realigned to solve existing safety and operational issues. Northwest, the abandoned Quick Lube property will need to be purchased, with the lot re-purposed for a more appropriate and valuable new use, which could include outdoor dining.

CREATING UNIVERSITY VILLAGE

University Avenue at 28th Street

University Avenue at UALR Campus Drive

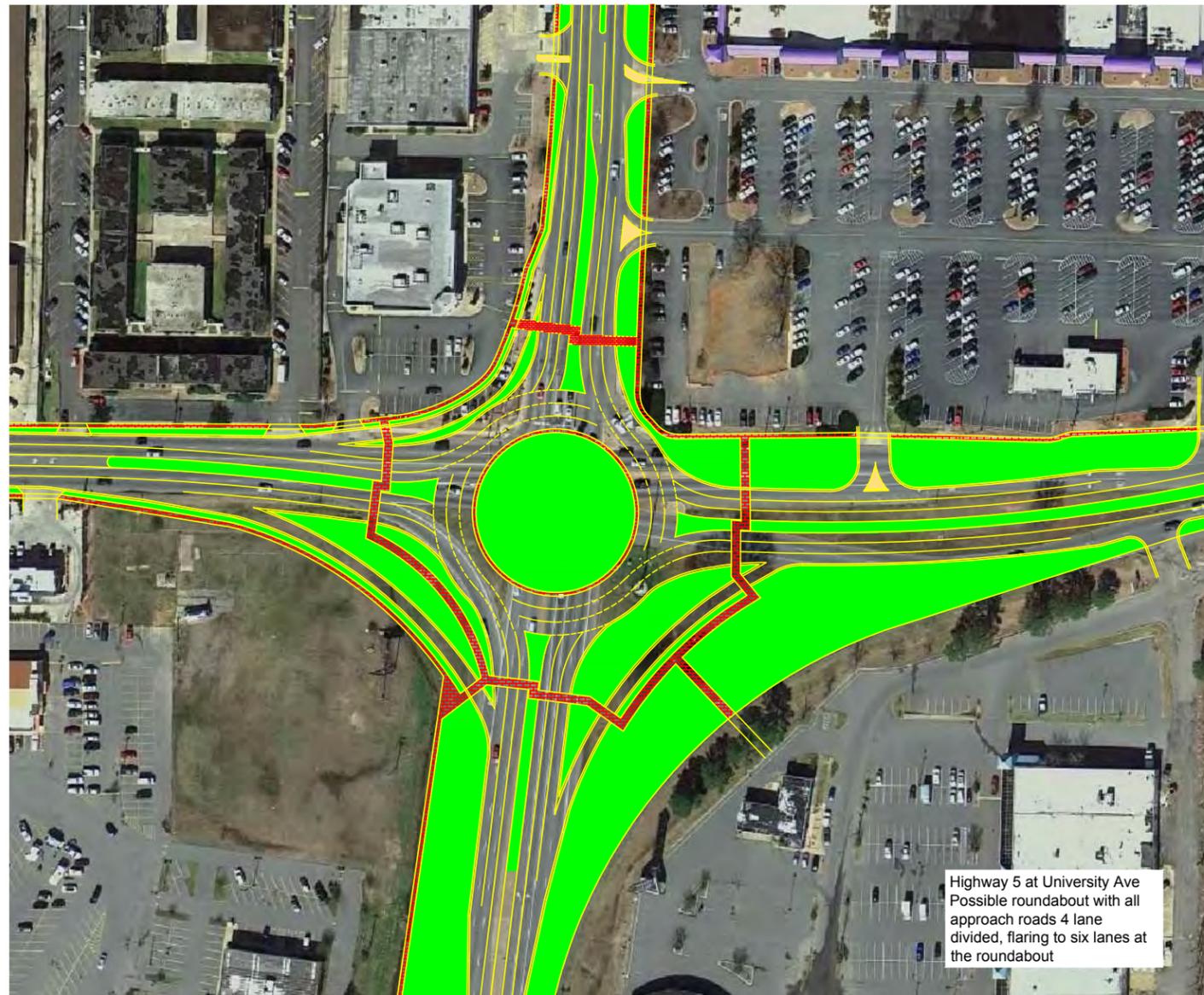


Above: The 28th Street intersection with University Avenue features an elliptical roundabout that stitches the offset entering side streets of Broadmoor and 28th. Also of high importance is the 28th Street gateway which is needed to slow traffic down to appropriate levels as motorists are transitioned in speed and their sensibilities for the area they are entering. The house lot at the corner will need to be acquired, but lower speeds, less noise and other changes will allow better transitions between commercial and residential land uses. Due to grade changes and the retention wall along University Avenue, the placement of this roundabout will need to be studied in more detail.

Above: The potential is high for this gateway to have strong alumni donor support as a major gateway to UALR. This new intersection allows important parts of the village to be planned, dedicated and built along a new roadway that brings buildings and students to the heart of an emerging village. Stores immediately next to this intersection could be built within a few years. This intersection may well be the first demonstration project along the corridor, given its significance. UALR deserves a grand entrance and this sets the stage for a 'town-gown' connection that values place.

CREATING UNIVERSITY VILLAGE

University Avenue at Highway 5/Asher Avenue



Highway 5 at University Ave
Possible roundabout with all
approach roads 4 lane
divided, flaring to six lanes at
the roundabout

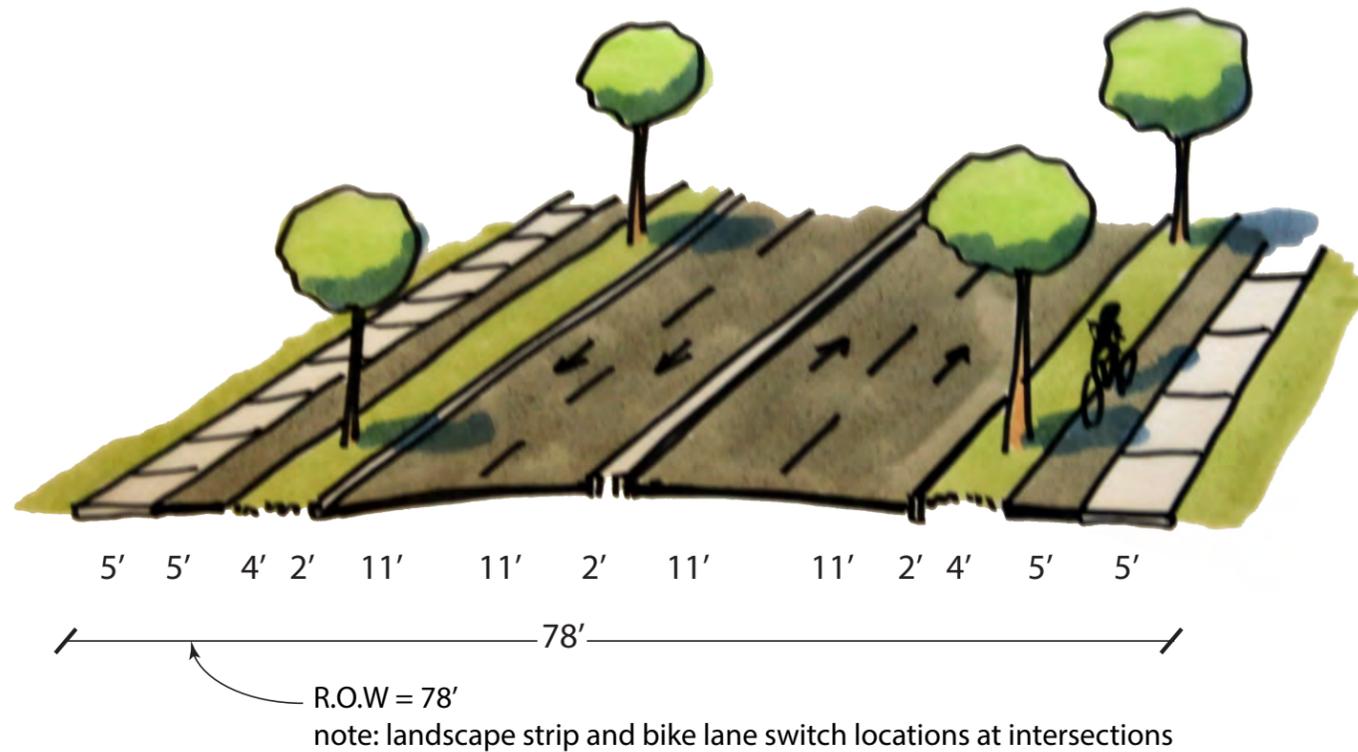
Due to low street connectivity in this district, this intersection must be designed for major traffic movement, and, therefore, calls for a three lane roundabout. Although it is possible to add new streets to the network that would improve connectivity and keep this as a two-lane roundabout, many partnerships and significant planning are required first. Since land was already identified for the signalized intersection plan, much of the work of a 3-lane roundabout can be found inside present intersection boundaries. This, too, will serve as an important gateway into the University Village.

The design for the University Avenue/Asher Avenue/Highway 5 intersection was based on 2011 traffic counts. It took numerous analyses to find a workable solution for this intersection. Using conservative analyses with an Environmental Factor of 1.2 that reduces roundabout capacity compared to international standards, AM and PM peak levels-of-service are expected to be B and C respectively. The worst approach is southbound, though, with average queues expected at 230 feet and 95th percentile queues around 700 feet. Expected average delays of approximately 90 seconds are anticipated. Using an Environmental factor of 1.0 improves the results.

One method of improving the southbound flow, but decreasing the eastbound flow, is to use Hawk signals on the east leg of Highway 5 with a queue loop about 200 feet north on University Avenue to stop westbound flows and to create gaps for the southbound vehicles. It is important to note that vehicle queues at signals are typically twice or three times the queue at roundabout intersections. By improving connectivity in the area (see Page 7), a two-lane roundabout could be considered here, but would require more in-depth evaluation.

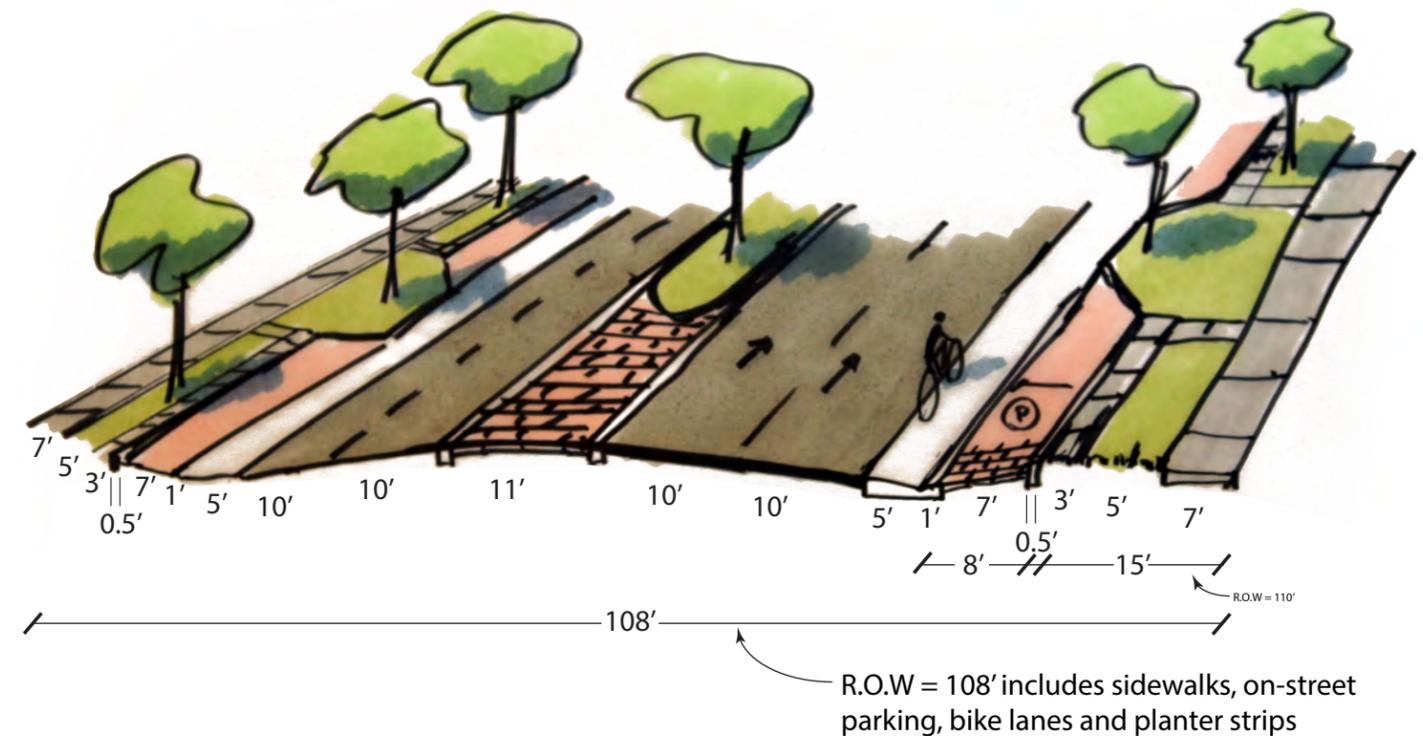
The Highway 5 roundabout can be moved in all directions but a roundabout on-center with University Avenue and offset to the south was chosen to minimize right-of-way impacts. It could be moved further south if needed. Three lane roundabouts exist in Vail, CO; Oakland County, WI; and Metro Detroit, MI. However, the design team recommends looking at the projected traffic volumes, environmental factor chosen, acceptable delays compared with current delays, and improved connectivity around the UALR campus, since these elements would allow for a two-lane roundabout instead. Workshop representatives from the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department were concerned about the feasibility of a three-lane roundabout since this treatment has not been used previously in the State of Arkansas.

ENVISION A HEALTHIER STREET



Design Option #1: Reduce Travel Lanes, Green the Street, and Buffer Bicyclists & Pedestrians

With the addition of roundabouts at the intersections, Option #1 reduces the travel lanes to two in each direction, adds in a separated bike lane and provides buffered sidewalks. This option stays within the existing right of way. Turning lanes can be removed because vehicles will use the roundabouts for left turns. Although the opportunity is missed to green the street with a landscaped island, this design tames the street. Channelized islands and modern roundabouts at the intersections reduce crossing distances for people and result in safer vehicle speeds.



Design Option #2: Complete the Street

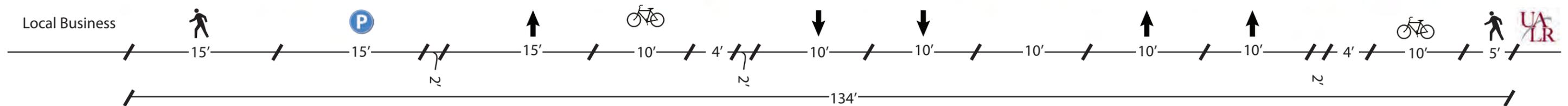
Rather than settle for ho-hum design, Option #2 requires UALR and other property owners to allocate land to create a better roadway edge. Easements should also be confirmed as the room is there. Additionally, area property owners seem willing to invest in placemaking. Roundabouts allow the turning lanes to be removed and provide channelized islands to assist pedestrians and reduce crossing distances. This design option would allow for pedestrian crossing islands, on-street parking, tree wells, bike lanes and protected sidewalks. Roundabouts and fewer travel lanes would improve efficiencies while slowing vehicle speeds - a win for businesses, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit and motorists.

From Speedway...

...to Village Center

ENVISION A HEALTHIER STREET

Design Option #3: A Prosperous University Village



To create a University Village, the dimensions for University Avenue change considerably with Design Option #3. Two 10-foot travel lanes in each direction are provided, with a four-foot planter strip to buffer bicyclists and pedestrians and tie the design to the forested campus. The shopping plaza and businesses across from UALR are provided with greater accessibility and visibility due to a reverse-flow frontage street. This allows motorists to note businesses as they are traveling on University Avenue and to easily turn around to visit stores that they have just driven past, increasing business exposure. Head-out angled parking, or safety parking, provides many benefits: the car doors

open to send children to the safety of a sidewalk, trunks are positioned at the sidewalk so shoppers can easily load packages, and driving out is simpler due to clear sight lines. The redesign of University Avenue with the reverse flow frontage street provides an ideal environment for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, freight, delivery, and transit, and ensures area businesses are visible and accessible. This design is a win for the entire community. While this design would require additional coordination between the University District Partnership and landowners, it recognizes the many needs and uses of the street and supports quality of life for the entire community. This is the preferred design option for the corridor.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS & NEXT STEPS

Let's Work Together to Capture the Power of this Place

By Joel Anderson, Chancellor
University of Arkansas at Little Rock

At the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, we have much to celebrate. Geographically speaking, we are at the center of Arkansas, which not only makes our university accessible to the state, but also makes the state accessible to the people who are part of our university community. We also are at the center of Arkansas culture, government, finance, health care, communications, and arts. These facts give our university a rich teaching and research environment, an environment that has helped spur us to excellence.

But for all that we have to celebrate, we also have challenges to ponder. University Avenue, in particular, is a challenge for the thousands of friends and peers who visit our campus, or who live and work in the area. One good friend, a member of our university family, was hit by a car and killed on University Avenue. I often reflect on Rhonda Sue Lewis, a talented professor, and how deeply wounded we are by the loss of her life and the preventable loss of any life along our streets. We wish to guard against tragedies like these and we know we can expect better from University Avenue.

Constructed more than 50 years ago over the gravel-paved Hayes Street, University Avenue has transitioned over time into a street that is not conducive to university life. Beyond the stark and very real safety issues it presents, University Avenue also does not provide the business-friendly or people-friendly environment a university campus should reflect.



Durham is a colorful, creative, and entrepreneurial community of 262,715 that welcomes 6.31 million visitors each year. Much like Little Rock, Durham occupies a prime location in the heart of its state and has developed into a nexus for learning, achievement, creativity, research, and industry by focusing on place.

Thus, we seek a different path. That is why we have partnered with the City of Little Rock, Pulaski County, the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, neighborhood associations, AARP, and resident advocates to redesign University Avenue to be a place that will enrich our daily experiences and serve the community better. As the backbone of our area, the avenue will stimulate growth, provide learning opportunities, and prime the development of University Village, a mixed-use community that emphasizes safety, continuity, system coherence, comfort, and attractiveness.

The preferred conceptual design presented herein calls for rethinking the purpose of streets, and understanding the immense power of place. As explained by our friends at the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute—an educational nonprofit led by national walkability specialist Dan Burden, who facilitated community discussions that generated this series of design treatments—we can design our community as a space for cars to simply pass through, or as a place for people to thrive – a place for living, for business prosperity, and for health. We opt for the latter, for a real place.

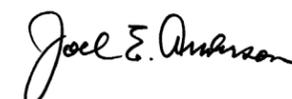
We want to move forward in a way that lays the foundation for the emergence of a vibrant “University Village,” a place that welcomes people walking and biking, that brings people to the street and that supports quality economic development. For example, replacing four existing intersections with modern, traffic-calming roundabouts will reduce the points of conflict between people and cars, and will help “calm” traffic so that cars travel at safer speeds, but all traffic moves more efficiently and smoothly. Safer, smoother traffic helps businesses grow. And transforming University Avenue into a walkable village will help turn existing strip malls into people-focused centers that are ideal locations for restaurants, retail shops, offices and multi-family housing, all within walking distance of the university.

We will not succeed in this effort alone, though. In my Inaugural Address here in 2003, I stated that I have an educator’s faith that people, particularly people of good will, with the benefit of good information and thoughtful discussion, stand a chance of addressing a problem successfully. That is why I am so pleased to be working collaboratively with key partners, and look forward to fully engaging other key stakeholders, including the health community, business leaders, bankers, churches, university faculty, staff, and students. We must all work together toward the final design of this important road.

The next time you drive, walk or bicycle to campus, take a look around. Reflect upon what you see—the resources in sight, the vacancies, the challenges—and think about what this area could become. We see a future for University Avenue that is teeming with life and full of economic success stories. We see a future in which this important street is supportive both of people safely getting to where they need to go and enjoying our community.

We look forward to working with you to get there.

With best wishes for a healthy 2013,



Joel E. Anderson, Chancellor
University of Arkansas at Little Rock