REVITALIZATION FRAMEWORK 3

FUTURE LAND USE

URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

OPEN SPACE

CIRCULATION

OPEN SPACE

Open Space in its various forms is a critical amenity and service necessary to support the creation, desirability, and sustainability of communities. Open space performs multiple functions from resource-based habitat protection and stormwater management areas; to heritage preservation; to passive and active recreation; to civic spaces such as plazas, commons, gardens and streetscape.

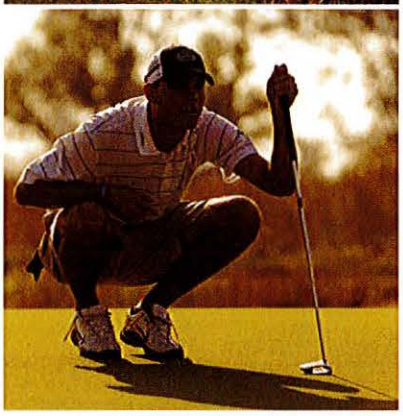
Throughout the University District there is an abundance of open space that belies its urban location—one that sits squarely within the heart of Arkansas' most heavily populated and developed region, the Little Rock Metropolitan Area. Fortunately, the district's open space does not exist as one isolated landscape, but is made up of numerous and different types of open spaces that create a rich "green" mosaic found throughout the area; from the neighborhood-focused Curran/Conway and University parks; to the large-scale regional resources such as First Tee, Fourche Creek Bottoms, and the historic Boyle Park. In addition, two regionally-significant creek corridors, Coleman and Rock creeks, pass through nearly every neighborhood and park within the district.

Despite this abundance, the various open spaces do not function as a district-wide interconnected network, but as isolated amenities. The City of Little Rock's 2002 Parks and Recreation Master Plan in recognition of this deficiency recommended the creation of links between community, city, and regional open space. The UDRP seeks to build upon this important goal with a series of additional open space recommendations focus on building a sustainable open space network through:

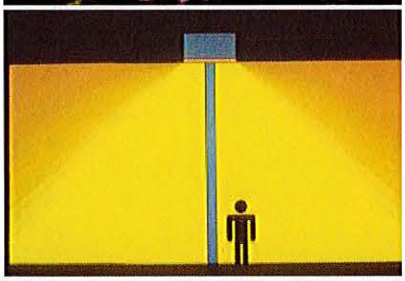
- Location efficiency
- Environmental protection
- Neighborhood connectivity, and
- Resource efficiency

Location efficiency

To promote a sense of UD community the plan recommends that all residential neighborhoods, institutions and commercial areas have an open space element—specifically designed passive and active parks, commons, and plazas—located no more than one-half mile away.



Boyle Park, First Tee, and Fourche Creek Bottoms



Environmental Protection

To protect imperiled native species and ecological communities the plan recommends that open space be designed to shelter critical habitat, act as buffers from development, and to preserve existing wetlands and water bodies. In addition, the plan recommends the following actions:

- Restoration of native habitat or wetlands using native plants and materials.
- Open Space should be designed to reduce stormwater runoff, as well as slow and treat stormwater flows.

Neighborhood Connectivity

To promote a district-wide sense of community the plan recommends that direct, attractive, and safe pedestrian and bicycle networks be created that connect district open space and to its schools, neighborhood centers, and destinations, which will help promote public health through increased physical activity.

Resource Efficiency

To promote environmental stewardship, the plan recommends the adoption of sustainable open space design, development, and management practices, such as:

- The reuse of material and resources,
- The use of regionally manufactured, extracted, harvested or recovered materials,
- The use of native species in plant selection,
- The use of cut-off light fixtures that direct illumination towards the ground, and
- The capture and reuse storm- and grey-water in open space design.

Bio-swales, multi-use trails, cut-off lighting, and low-impact trails in restored habitat

Key Open Space Initiatives/Projects

The UDRP has identified several open space projects that, when completed, will result in an integrated and connected district-wide network of parks, natural resource areas, urban plazas, and streetscapes. The key projects are:

Greenways
- Coleman Creek Greenway
- Rock Creek Greenway

Community Parks
- Coleman Park
- Rock Creek Park

Neighborhood Parks
- Colonel Glenn Park
- Asher Park

Urban plazas, commons, and streetscapes
- International Village Commons
- University Avenue Plaza
- Street "Green" Corridors

Greenways

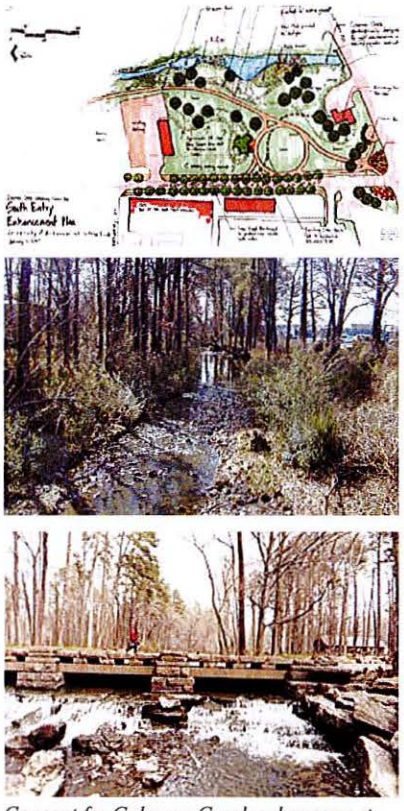
Coleman Creek Greenway

Coleman Creek is one of the most important resources of the community and its health and accessibility is essential to any long-range revitalization of the District. In recognition of this, a public/private partnership between the City of Little Rock, Audubon Society, and UALR has undertaken a master planning study for the rehabilitation of this important creek corridor.

Located east of University Avenue, the character and quality of Coleman Creek varies greatly along its north-to-south course through the district; from heavily wooded zones; to concrete-lined open culverts; to building and asphalt intrusions; to grassy meadows. The recommendations of the UDRP are not meant to replace any findings that result from the on-going Coleman Creek Master Plan, but to reinforce the need for a comprehensive effort to restore a functioning riparian ecological system, and to introduce low impact user enhancements, such as trails and overlooks, along the entire course of this creek corridor, from US630 to Fourche Creek Bottoms.

Rock Creek Greenway

Although Rock Creek occurs largely outside the District with only a small section passing through the area's southern edge, it is an equally important



Concept for Coleman Creek enhancements, Coleman and Rock creeks

resource for the community. As such, the Coleman Creek Master Plan final recommendations for restoration and enhancement should also be implemented along Rock Creek.

Community Parks

Coleman Park

Coleman Park is proposed as a new community-focused open space located in the southeastern sector of the district. Designed as a passive recreation park, this XX-acre open space would promote low-impact trails native habitats and wetlands that would be both a recreational and educational amenity, and serve an important ecological function. Coleman Park would occupy the former Coleman Dairy pasture properties, which are located in a floodplain at the junction of Coleman and Rock creeks.

Rock Creek Park

Rock Creek Park is proposed as another community-focused open space designed to function as a resource and passive recreation park. Located in the district's western sector south of Boyle Park, this XX-acre park would link Boyle Park and Rock Creek with the adjacent existing and proposed neighborhoods and schools.

Examples of potential open spaces types; resource and community parks, and plazas

Neighborhood Parks

Colonel Glenn Park

Colonel Glenn Park is proposed as a neighborhood-focused park that would link a new medium-density residential development with surrounding neighborhoods and schools. This XX-acre park would serve as an important new open space resource for neighborhood events and non-programmed recreational opportunities.

Asher Park

Similar to Colonel Glenn Park, Asher Park is also proposed as a neighborhood-focused park. The key difference is that Asher Park would be located within the center of the new neighborhood. This XX-acre park would serve as an important new open space resource for neighborhood events and non-programmed recreational opportunities.

Plazas, Commons and Green Street Corridors

International Village Commons

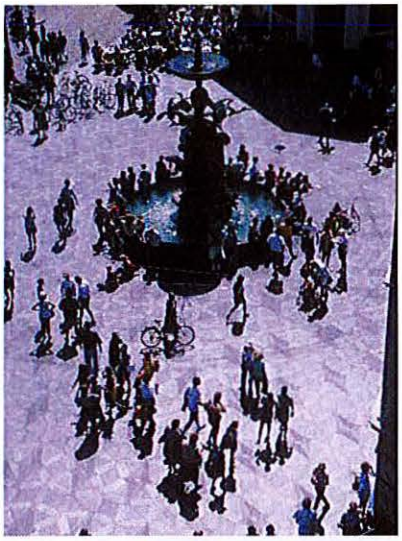
The International Village Plaza is proposed as a signature urban open space that both anchors the new mixed-use International Village development, and serves as a district "gateway" at southwestern corner of the important University Avenue/Colonel Glenn/Asher Avenue intersection.

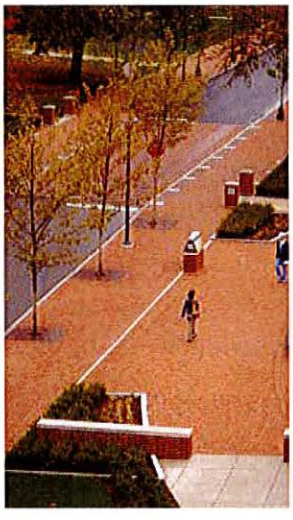
University Avenue Plaza

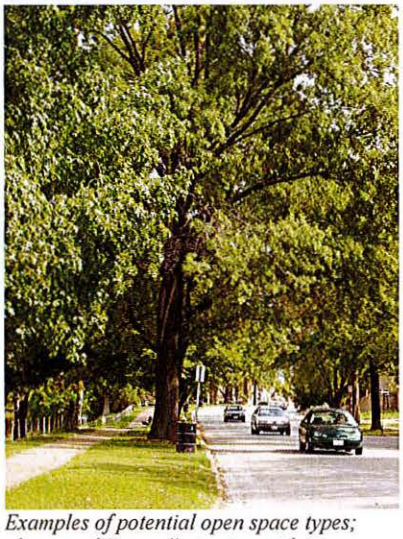
Another urban open space, this plaza would serve as a primarily pedestrian-oriented space located at the core of the proposed University Avenue mixed-use development, and directly across the avenue from UALR's historic main entrance. A key destination "node," this open space should be designed to accommodate a variety of day-to-day outdoor activities, as well as neighborhood events.

Street "Green" Corridors

In terms of revitalization and creation of a district-wide sense of community, the most important open space improvements proposed in the UDRP is the creation of a district-wide network of "green" streets that would physically and visually connect—via sidewalks, crosswalks, and streetscape amenities—neighborhoods with local and district destinations such as schools, parks, commercial areas, and other neighborhoods. The proposed "green" corridor improvements would occur within existing roadway rights of way and individual street enhancements would conform to district-wide streetscape design and development guidelines that would insure safe, attractive and sustainable pedestrian and bicycle access, with increased street-tree canopy, lighting, and signage and wayfinding.







Examples of potential open space types; plazas and "green" street corridors

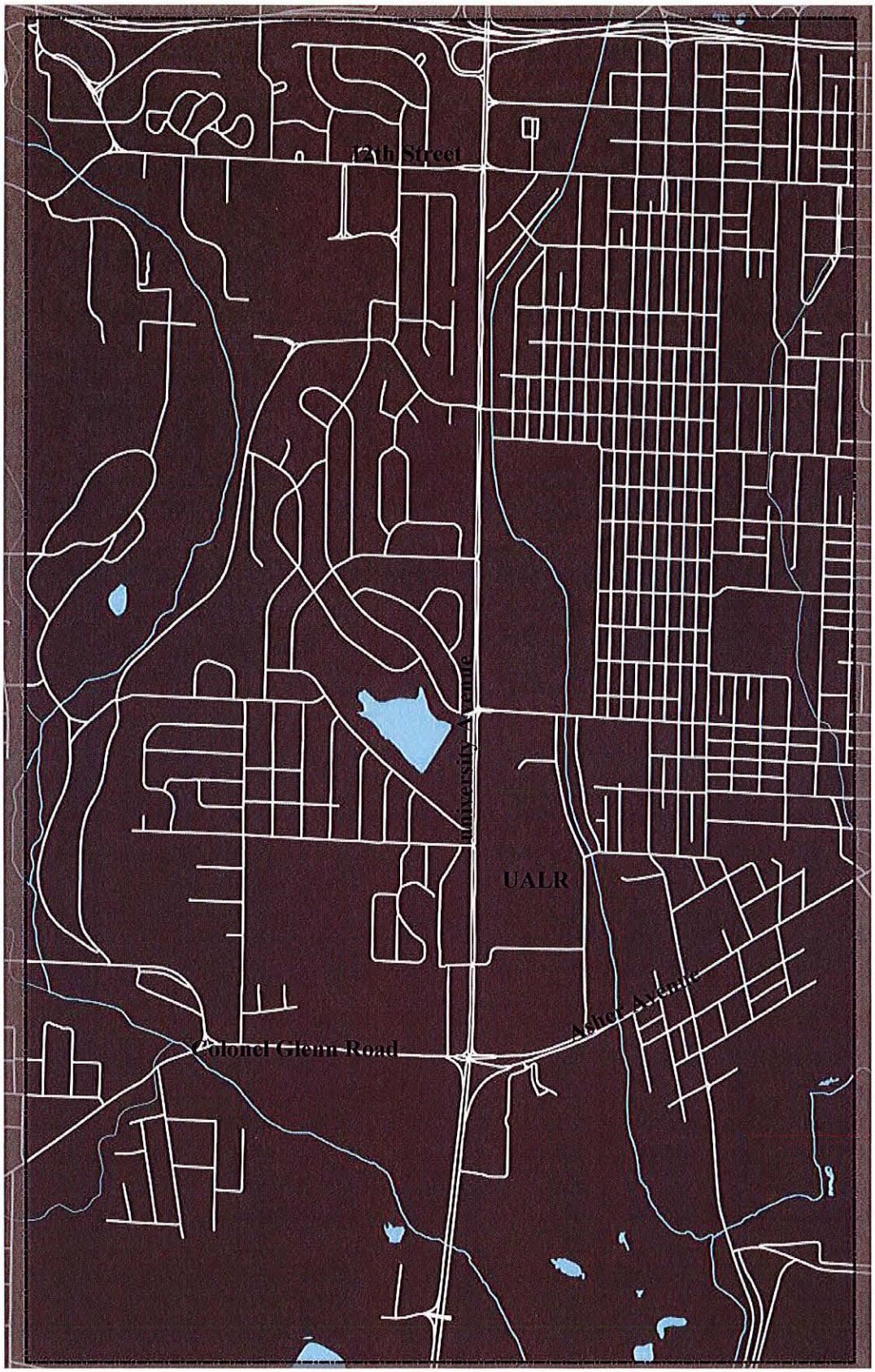
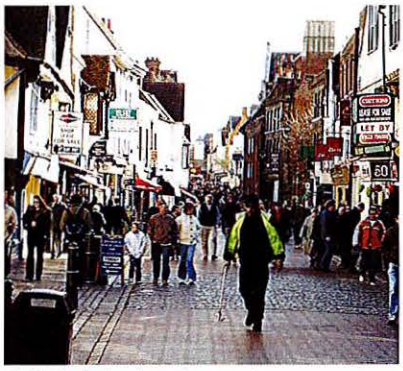


Figure 3-5: University District Circulation Network

CIRCULATION

A ***circulation network***, or ***street environment***, occurs largely within the public realm zone that is called a right-of-way, and this usually includes, but is not limited to, vehicular travel-ways or roadway, and typically, pedestrian access-ways or sidewalks. Each mode of circulation discussed in this report—pedestrian, vehicular, bicycle and transit—occurs primarily within the public realm right-of-way.

Streets are the primary circulation network within most communities and as such, they serve as important places of convergence and connectivity, as well as commercial and civic exchange. To be successful, streets must attract pedestrians, and to attract pedestrians these environments must be human-scaled, safe, and comfortable places to inhabit.



Activated street environment

A key component in this urban design equation is good spatial proportion defined by either; 1) buildings along a street that serve as the walls to an "outdoor room," a condition found in urban mixed-use commercial/residential districts, or; 2) the consistency of traditional neighborhoods with homes set invitingly close to each other and the public realm. Both conditions establish a sense of definition and visual interest for users, whether they are pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists, although pedestrian movement and safety is a priority in the two. Vehicular circulation, while recognized as a critical component, is designed to maintain only adequate levels of services commensurate with a human-scale, pedestrian-first environment.

Therefore, the primary circulation goal of the UDRP is to re-focus district-wide circulation patterns to a pedestrian-first network centered on people, bicyclists, and transit. This lofty, but achievable goal is consistent with the larger vision of establishing a vibrant and sustainable University District, and it can be realized by:

- Implementation of a district-wide, pedestrian movement network made up of well-designed sidewalks that are attractive, safe and universally accessible.
- Improve roadways and vehicular circulation through access and congestion best management practices, rather than expanding roadway widths to accommodate more travel lanes.
- Make alternative transit (CATA) universally accessible through ex-

Buildings creating street edge

Examples of porous pavements, urban bio-swales, streettrees, and bike parking

panded district service with safe and sheltered access points located at major destinations that are out of normal vehicle travel-ways.
- Implementing a district-wide bicycle access network with safe and clear bike lanes on located within all "green" street corridors, and within neighborhood and community parks and greenways.

Sustainability

The following sustainable development criteria will help integrate of the fours modes of movement into one comprehensive circulation network:

- Environmental Quality & Sustainable Sites
- Location Efficiency
- Resource efficiency

Environmental Quality & Sustainable Sites

Comprehensive "street" improvements should occur within the entire existing rights-of-way to rehabilitate the urban ecology of the district, yielding improvements to soil, water, and air quality. The following criteria represent just a few ways the street environment can be improved:

- Paved surfaces should be smooth and without obstructions; have a high albedo level; be as porous as possible—especially on-street parking bays; and be fabricated to minimize formation of bumps and cracks that may limit universal accessibility.
- Streetscapes should be designed to maximize retention and filtration of stormwater runoff, through bio-swales, rain-gardens, and vegetated tree wells.
- Streetscape vegetation selections should be as drought tolerant as possible.
- Streetscape improvements should set a goal of increasing District tree canopy by fifty percent, which will help shade paved areas and reduce the heat-island effect.
- Structural soils should be used in sidewalk zones to optimize street tree growing conditions.
- Bike racks and storage areas should be provided at all district destinations in convenient locations.
- Landscape elements should be used to help mitigate wind drafts and eddies.
- Avoid locating people gathering spaces in close proximity to trash collection areas and other facilities that produce noxious fumes and odors.

Location efficiency

To promote a sense of UD community the plan recommends that all sidewalks, bike lanes, and transit provide access to public amenities and gathering. In addition, these alternative movement systems should be designed and located so that they provide a clear and viable option to using automobiles for everyday transportation.

Dedicated bicycle lanes

Resource Efficiency

To promote environmental stewardship the plan recommends the adoption of sustainable open space design, development, and management practices, such as:

- The reuse of material and resources,
- The use of regionally manufactured, extracted, harvested or recovered materials,
- The use of native species in plant selection,
- The use of cut-off light fixtures that direct illumination towards the ground, and
- The capture and reuse of storm- and grey-water in streetscape design.

Recycled construction materials

Cross-section of parking lot with bio-swales

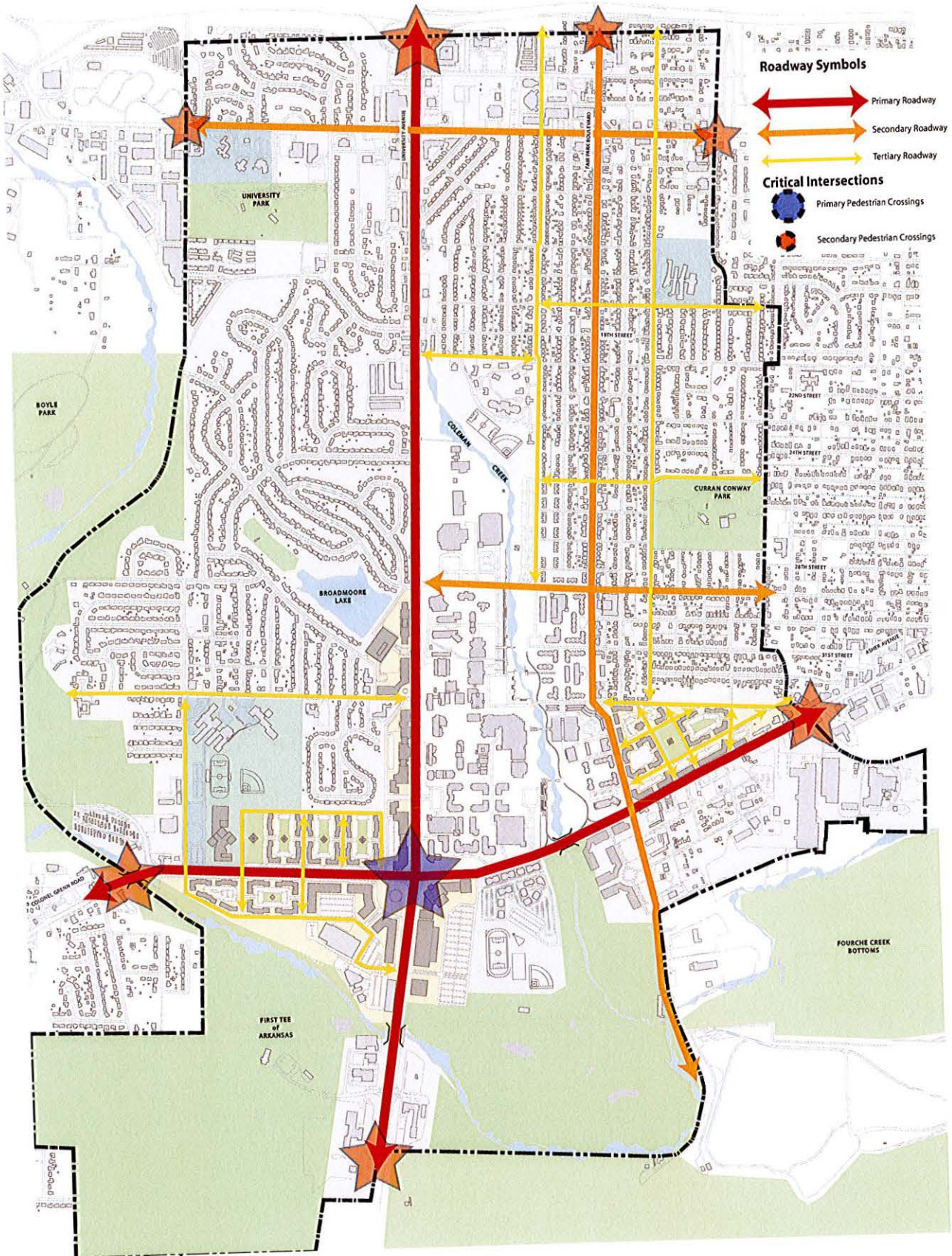


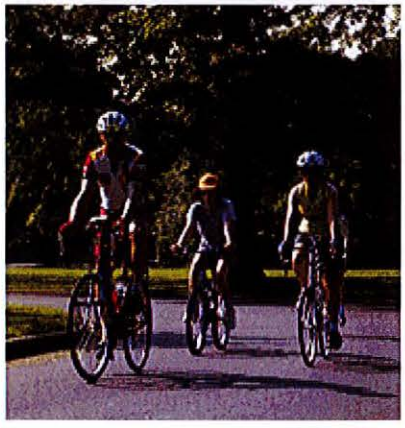
Figure 3-6: Roadways

Circulation Network

As preciously mentioned, the UDRP recommends the development of a district-wide circulation network: one that wholly integrates the primary modes of movement—pedestrian, auto, cyclist, and transit—into a single system focused on people and universal and safe accessibility. This goal does not mean all street corridors need to be the same. Rather, each street type—arterial, connector, or neighborhood—will require different solutions and the resulting variety of conditions will enrich user experience. To accomplish this diversity, the plan establishes a three-tiered hierarchy of circulation corridors for the district. The different hierarchies and corresponding design guidelines were developed in response to existing and proposed conditions along the corridors, which included, but were not limited to, physical conditions, regulatory issues, safety, and access need. Within those necessarily broad groupings, the critical determinants were;

- Connectivity demand to current and future activity-generators/destinations,
- Balancing a corridor's demand verses capacity, and
- Availability of public realm rights-of-way.

Based on these factors, the proposed corridor hierarchies are primary, secondary and tertiary, and each matches, in corresponding order, the proposed street categories of avenues and boulevards, main, and neighborhood corridors see figures 3-7 through 3-9).



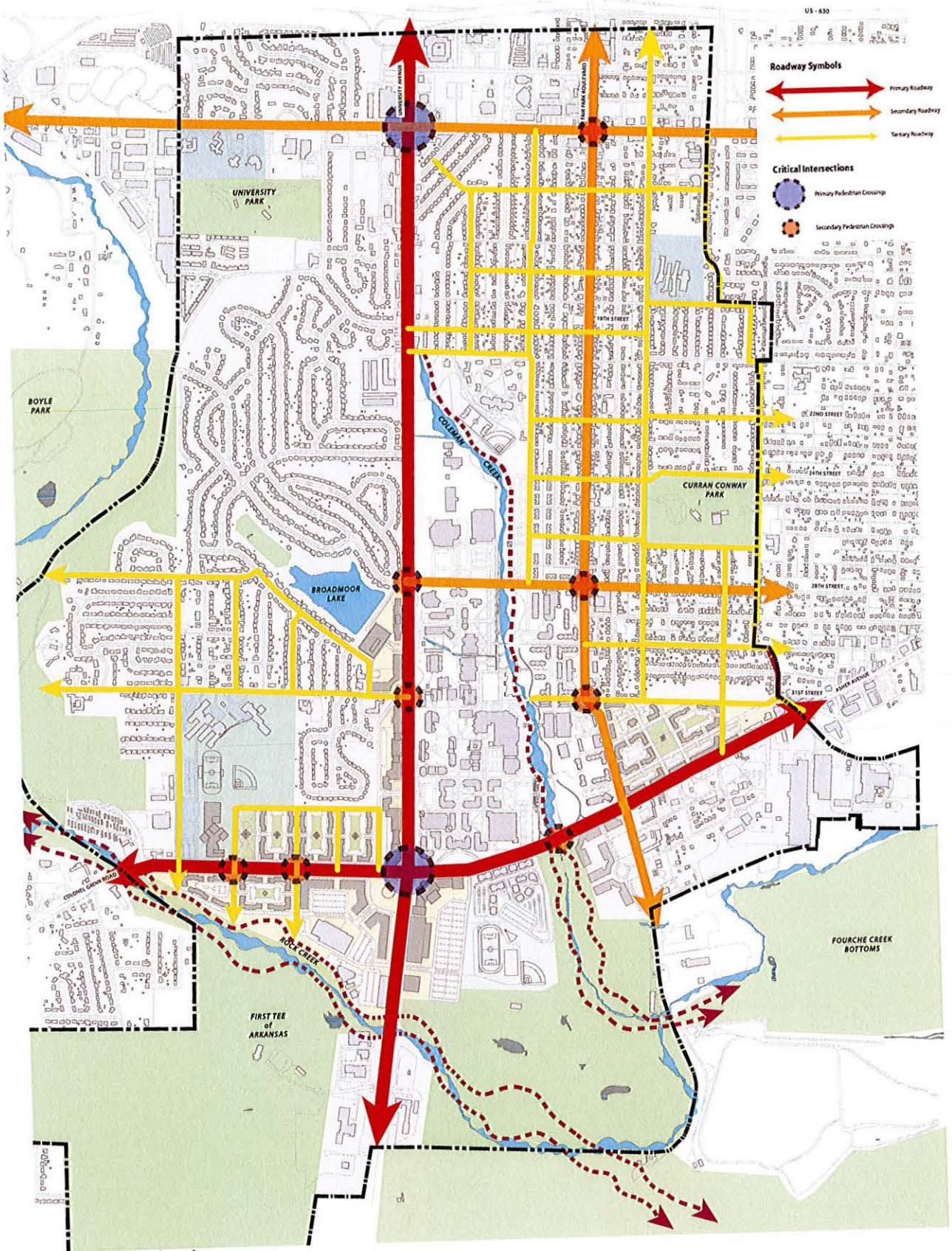


Figure 3-7: Pedestrian

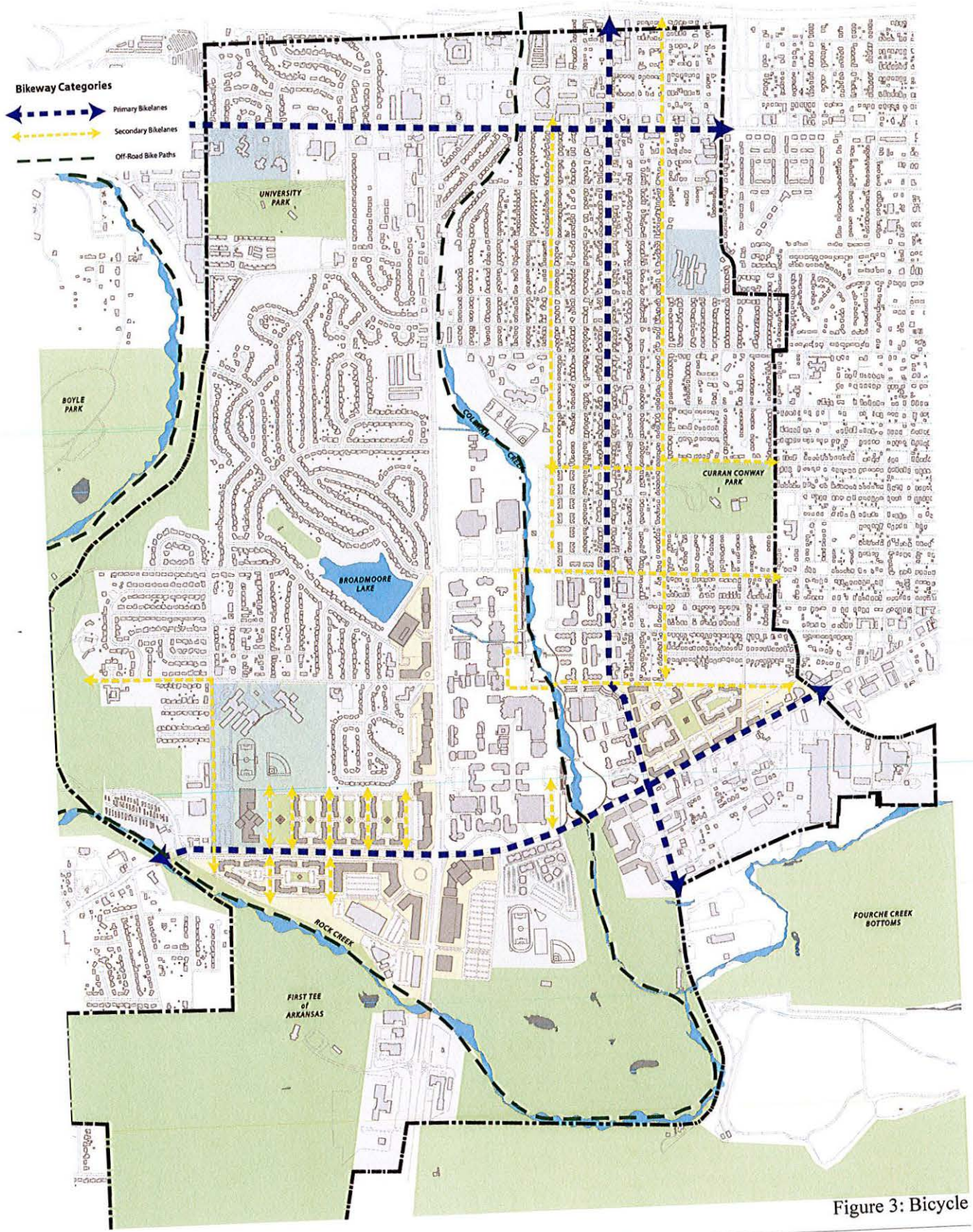


Figure 3: Bicycle

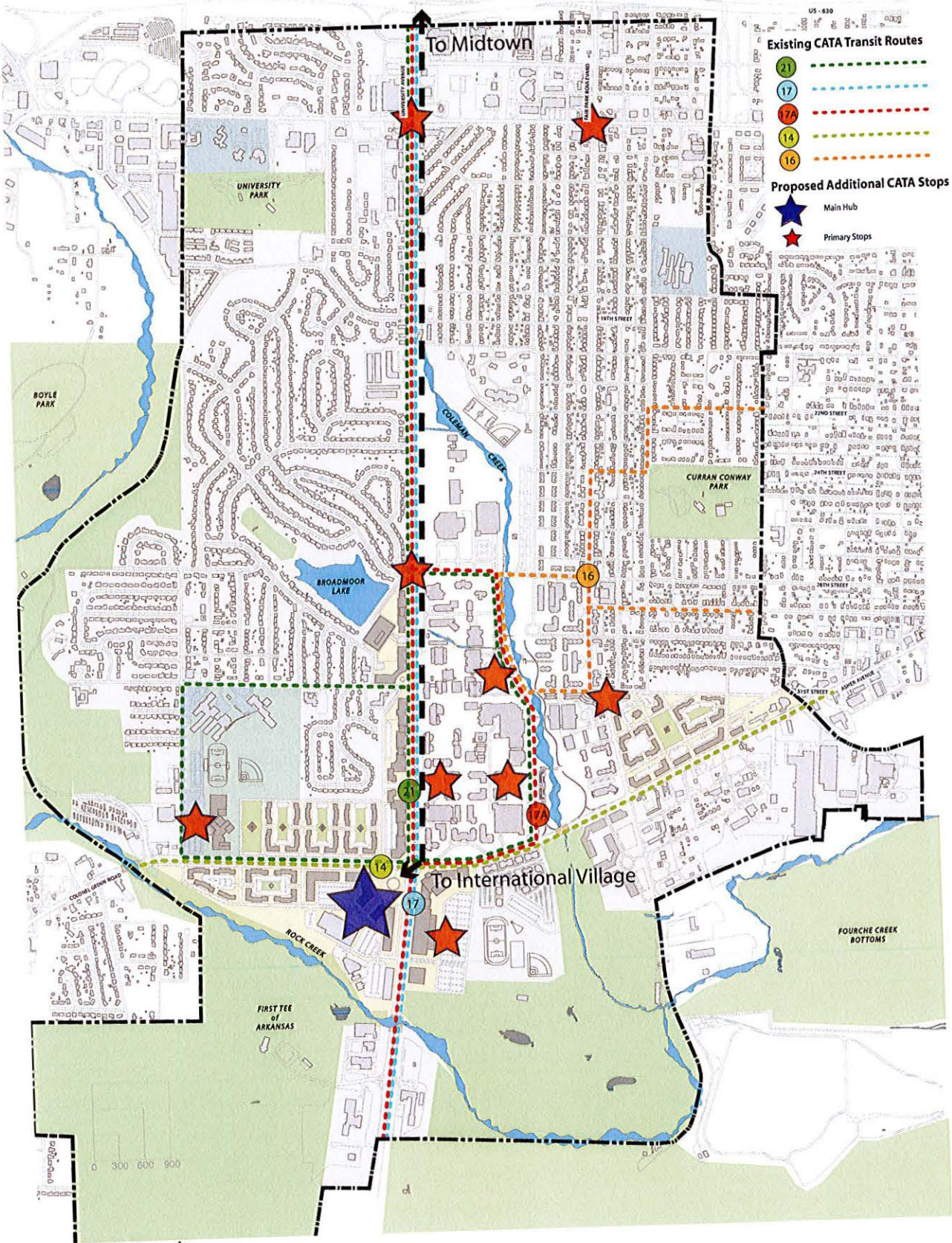


Figure 3-9: Transit

Primary

University Avenue and Colonel Glenn Road/Asher Avenue are proposed as primary corridors. The two streets function as the district's major circulation, both internally and to the larger metropolitan region. Within the district, the primary land use along the corridors is commercial—auto-focused big, mid, and small-box retail malls—with the major exceptions the UALR campus, and a light-industrial area located along the Asher Avenue corridor east of Fair Park Boulevard/Mabelvale Pike.

Consistent with the goal of creating a human-scale street environment, the plan recommends that the two corridors be developed as boulevards and avenues with a preferred narrow street cross-section that will promote a balance of services:

- Good, safe & attractive pedestrian zones,
- Safe, connected, and demarked bicycle zones,
- Increased and highly accessible transit (CATA), and
- Safe, improved automobile-traffic flow patterns.

Vehicular Zone

As mentioned previously, the UDRP vehicular circulation recommendations will require a complete reversal of emphasis within the District from an auto-centric to a people-centric environment: While recognizing the need to move large volumes of vehicles, the preferred recommendations accept higher levels of traffic congestion commensurate with multi-modal transportation corridor environments that are more commonly associated with vibrant and thriving urbanized communities—especially those with high concentrations of neighborhoods, schools, and universities—than at-grade, de-humanizing throughways. As a result, roadway widths should not be continuously expanded to meet demand, but rather, congestion and access should be managed and maintained to meet accepted levels of service (by state, local agencies & municipalities & UD) that result in pedestrian-safe vehicular speeds.

Pedestrian Zone

An expanded pedestrian zone is recommended throughout the primary corridors that would encourage activity and people-movement through the creation of safe and attractive habitable outdoor spaces. To accomplish this, the interface between private development and public right-of-way should be seamlessly integrated, where possible, through the creation of up to 25-foot wide pedestrian zones, from roadway back-of-curb up to building façade.

Bicycle Zone

To increase alternative modes of circulation options the UDRP recommends the creation of dedicated bicycle paths that are incorporated, where possible,

into the public realm rights-of-way of avenues and boulevards. In recognition that current conditions—roadway configuration, traffic patterns, and speeds—do not create a safe environment for cyclist this is identified as a long-term goal, one that will be achievable when auto-traffic is managed at people-and cyclist-safe speeds. To assure that bike lanes are provided in the future, all primary roadway enhancements should included space for future dedicated bike lanes even though the lanes may not be demarked for use until a future date.

Transit

The primary corridors are slated for a number of significant revitalization projects, and when realized many will become destinations that greatly increase activity generation. Increased transit, with more and dedicated routes, improved and new access-areas, and a district hub would help transition the University District from an auto-centric to a sustainable, multi-modal community. In recognition of this, transit access should be maximized along the primary corridors. As with bicycle circulation, transit improvements are a long-term goal that will need to flexible to meet changing conditions.

Primary Corridor Guidelines

Proposed design and development guidelines for all modes of circulation on avenues and boulevards are:

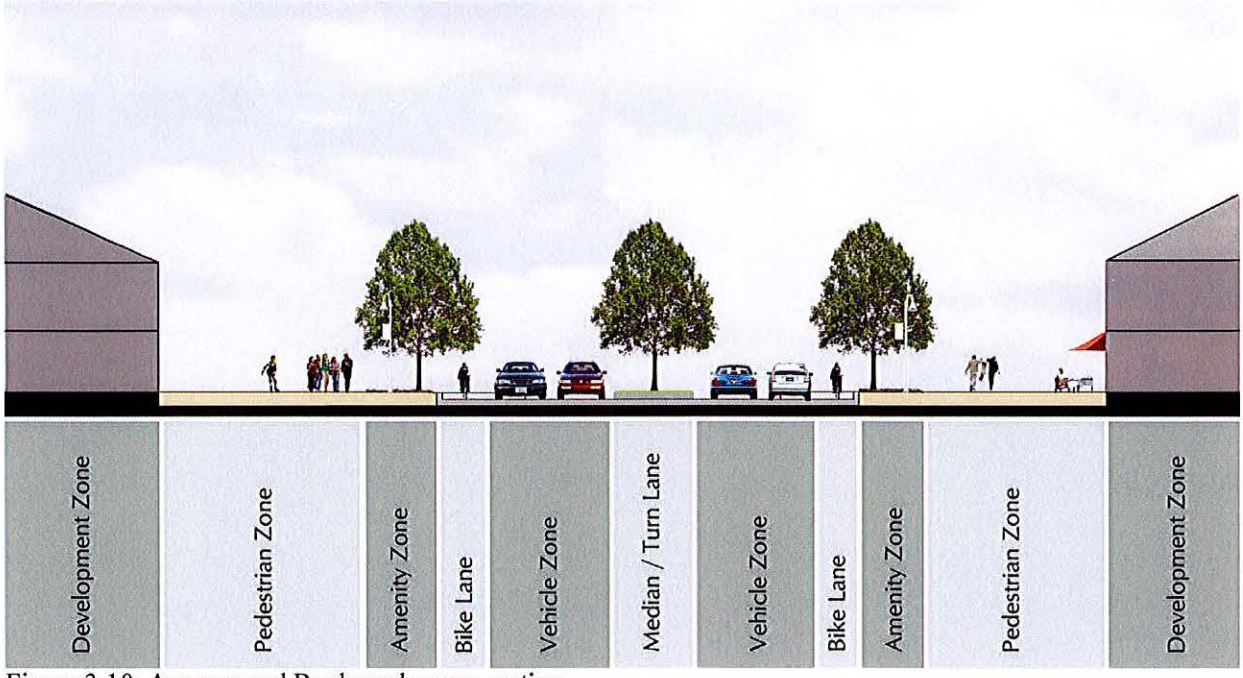
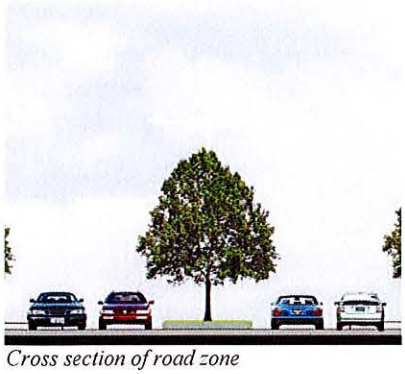


Figure 3-10: Avenues and Boulevards cross section

Vehicular zone:

- Single traffic-flow pattern:
  - 2-3 lanes in each direction (2 preferred)
  - Lane widths: 11' inner lane / 12' outer lane / 10' turn lanes
  - Ideal traffic speed is 25-35 miles per hour
  - Continuous medians dividing opposing traffic flow on all primary streets: 16'-20' median width with continuous vegetation / 10' left-turn lanes (at intersections with left-turn lanes always maintain a minimum 6-foot median)
  - No on-street parking
  - Pedestrian crosswalks at all signalized intersections
  - Safe pedestrian refuge zones should be provided in medians where signalized intersection crosswalks occur at major activity generators
  - Limit the number of driveway curb-cut access points per block (work with property owners to create shared-access points linked through internal parking, etc.)
- Multiple traffic-flow pattern:
  - Creation of parallel streets adjacent to the main roadway (main roadway configuration similar to above):
    - Parallel "local" street with one 12' wide lane in each direction
    - On-street parking on both sides
    - 8'-12' wide median separates main roadway from localized streets



Cross section of road zone

Pedestrian zone:

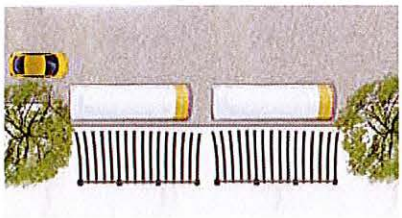
- An Amenity Zone of up to 10-feet wide that accommodates street trees, pedestrian and roadway lighting, way-finding and signage, and fixtures and furnishings—in a combination of paved/planted areas, and;
- A Clear Zone of up to 15-feet wide that is paved and free of obstructions to promote easy and safe movement of pedestrians.

Bicycle zone:

- Dedicated and clearly marked (striped and including a universally-recognized bike lane symbol) bicycle lanes of a minimum 4-foot width should be incorporated
- Bicycle rack and storage areas should be located at major destination areas

Transit:

- Type 1 transit stops should be located at major cross-streets and significant activity generators / destinations
- Transit stops should incorporate, where possible, bus pull-off zones located outside typical auto-traffic flow patterns
- Transit stops should be universally accessible, and provide a safe, sheltered and pleasing environment



Type1 transit stops

Secondary

Fair Park Boulevard and 12th Street are proposed as the district's secondary corridors. Unlike the primary streets, where existing and proposed land uses are in general similar, the two secondary corridors are very different from each other in use and character. However, despite the dissimilarity, both streets have the same primary function, which is as local collector and connector streets.

The 12th Street corridor has mainly commercial and office land uses, and where single-family neighborhoods occur the residences do not face 12th Street. Conversely, Fair Park Boulevard is first and foremost a tree-lined street of single-family homes, with small pockets of commercial and institutional uses located at the corridor's northern and southern ends.

The plan recommends that these secondary corridors be developed as main streets focused on providing the highest level of pedestrian comfort, access and safety. Main streets are people-intensive environments where foot-traffic is given the highest priority. However, given the various extant land uses along the two corridors, development guidelines must be flexible enough to accommodate the diversity of main street conditions.

Secondary Corridor Guidelines

Proposed design and development guidelines for all modes of circulation on main streets are:

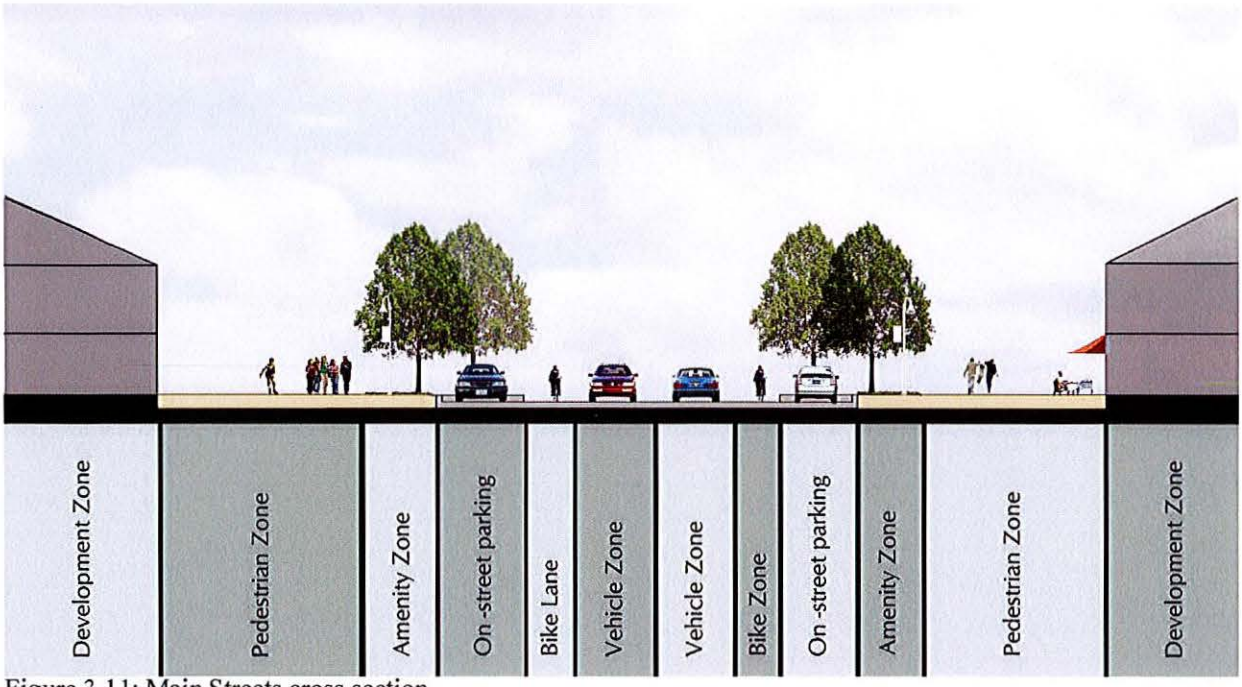


Figure 3-11: Main Streets cross section

Vehicular zone:

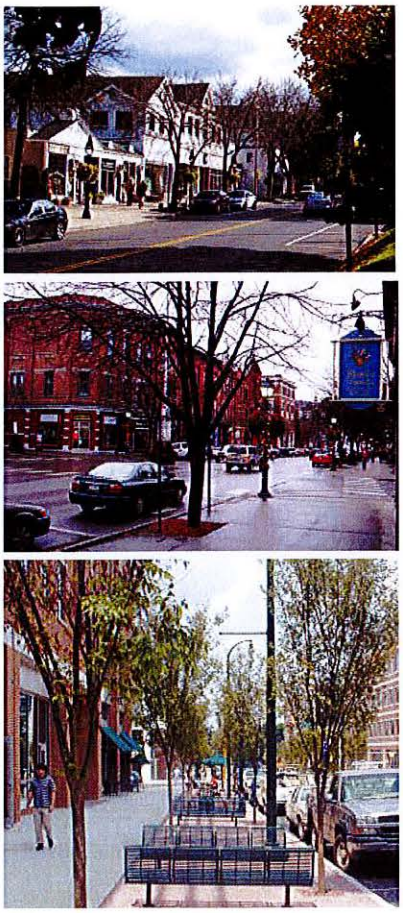
- Narrow roadway made up of one 12' travel lane in each direction
- 10' turn lanes limited to major cross streets and/or destinations
- Ideal main street corridor vehicular flow speed is 25 miles per hour
- No medians—a narrow cross-section promotes visual and physical connectivity
- On-Street parking on both sides, where possible
- Pedestrian crosswalks at all intersections—vehicles must yield to pedestrians along main streets

Pedestrian zone:

- Main streets can have a range of pedestrian zone widths of from 12 to 16 feet, from back-of-curb to private development zone. This flexible pedestrian zone should include:
  - An Amenity Zone of from 4-to-6 feet wide that may accommodate street trees, pedestrian and roadway lighting, way-finding and signage, and fixtures and furnishings—in a combination of paved/planted areas;
  - Where on-street parking is accommodated, implement intersection and mid-block bulb-out sidewalks that are consistent with crosswalks.

Bicycle zone:

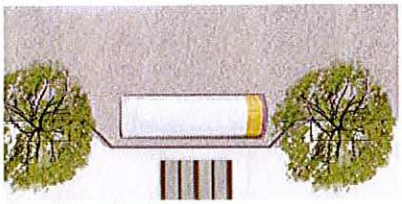
- Dedicated and clearly marked (stripped and including a universally-recognized bike lane symbol) bicycle lanes of a minimum 4-foot width should be incorporated into street
- Bicycle rack and storage areas should be located at major destination areas



Main Streets with on-street parking

Transit:

- Type 2 transit stops should be located at major cross-streets and neighborhood activity generators / destinations
- Transit stops should incorporate, where possible, bus pull-off zones located outside typical auto-traffic flow patterns
- Transit stops should be universally accessible, and provide a safe, sheltered and pleasing environment



Type 2 transit stops

Tertiary

The largest category in terms of numbers of streets is tertiary corridors, which is made up of the district's extensive network of neighborhood streets. The centers of neighborhood connectivity and convergence, tertiary corridors serve as the physical fiber that binds the University District together. Ideally, universal pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular access should be provided on every neighborhood street, with transit access limited to key neighborhood gateways.

Unfortunately, extant neighborhood street conditions are antiquated, with poor roadway surfaces and no sidewalks. Although the re-design of every neighborhood street to better meet a multi-model model is a lofty goal, it would not be realistic—even as a long-range one—given the vast number of street and limited capital improvement funding available.

In recognition of these limiting conditions, the UDRP has recommended that neighborhood street improvements be focused on key corridors that lead to schools, religious institutions, community gathering places, as well as parks and open spaces (see Figure 3-4). This realistic strategy will dramatically improve neighborhood accessibility, especially for those in the community that do not drive and are in most need of alternative mobility solutions, its children and elderly. In addition, the recommendations parallel the federally funded Safe Streets to Schools program that promotes the creation of safe and walk-able sidewalks to neighborhood schools.

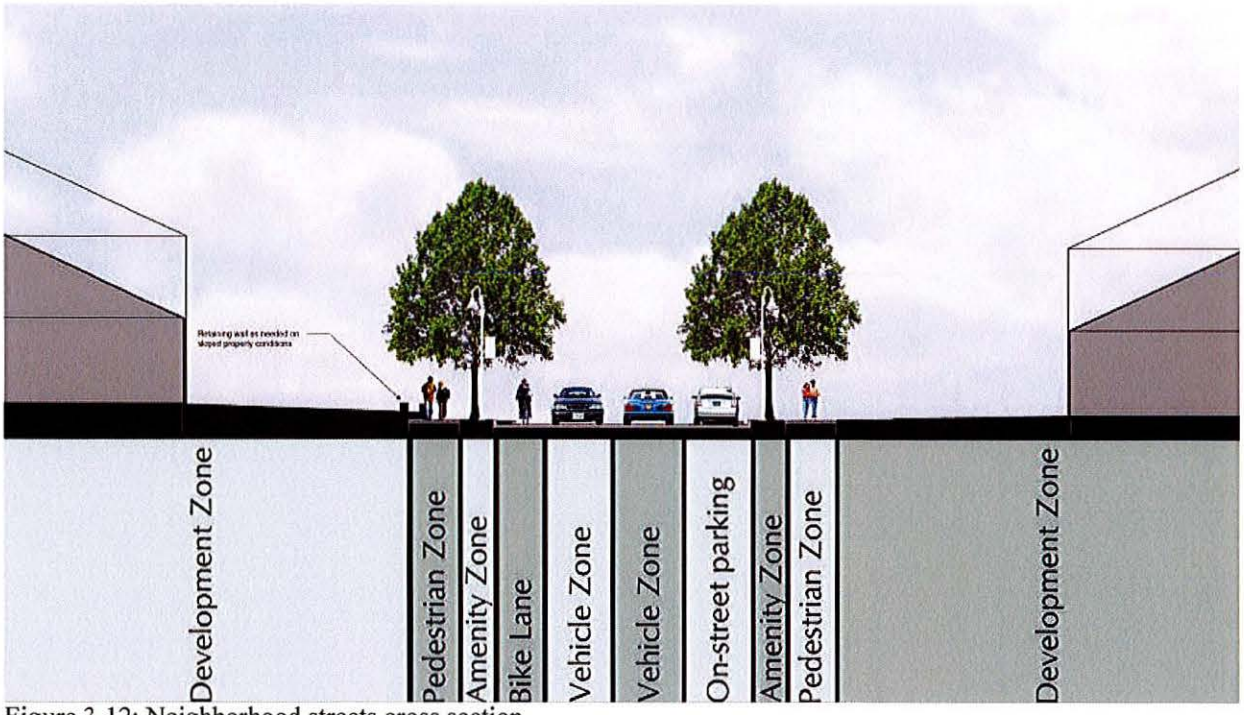


Figure 3-12: Neighborhood streets cross section

To contend with the variety of neighborhood street right-of-way conditions, three configurations have been established; Narrow, Medium and Wide streets. Narrow streets occur primarily in older residential neighborhoods with very constrained rights-of-way, often less than 30 feet. Street that fall into the Medium group represent the predominant configuration within the district and they occurs in both the older Oak Forest neighborhood as well as the mid-1900's Broadmoor community. As the designation suggests, Medium street right-of-way typically spans from 35-to-50 feet wide. Lastly, the wide street configuration should be implemented in higher-density residential neighborhoods with multi-family and/or townhouses. Wide streets would have the broadest range of rights-of-way, with the typical conditions of between 50 to 70 feet.

Tertiary Corridor Guidelines

Proposed design and development guidelines for all modes of circulation on neighborhood streets are;

Narrow Tertiary Corridors

Vehicular Zone:

- Narrow roadway of 20-foot non-divided
- Maximum vehicular flow speed of 25 miles per hour
- No on-street parking—all required residential parking to occur on private property

Pedestrian zone:

- Limited pedestrian zone on both sides of the street that includes:
  - No Amenity Zone, or
  - A minimal 4-foot Amenity Zone that may accommodate street trees, pedestrian and roadway lighting within a low-maintenance planting strip,
  - A Clear Zone of from 4-6 feet wide that is paved and free of obstructions to promote easy and safe movement of pedestrians, and
  - Pedestrian crosswalks at all intersections—vehicles must yield to pedestrians along main streets.

Bicycle zone:

- No dedicated bicycle lanes, with cyclist sharing the roadway with automobiles

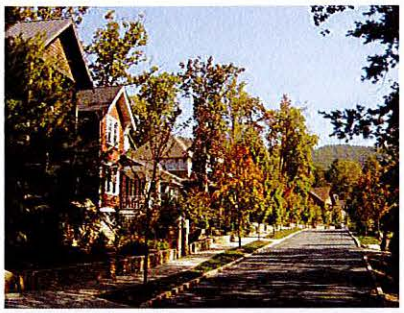
Transit:

- No transit routes or access-stops located along narrow streets.

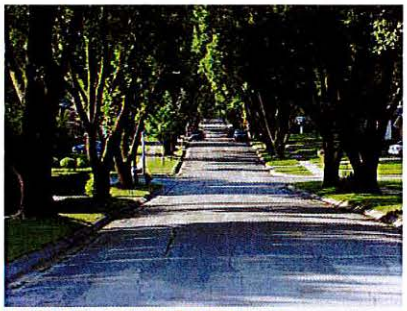
Medium Tertiary Corridors

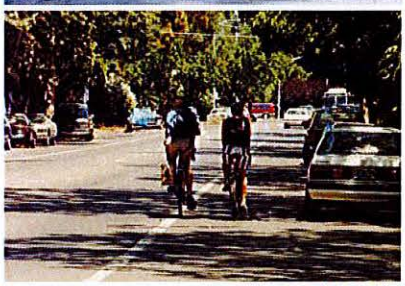
Vehicular Zone:

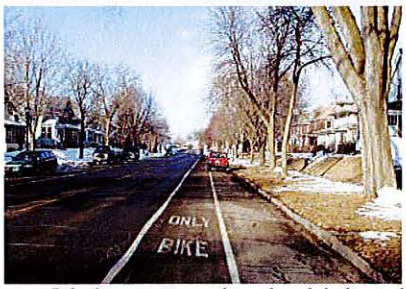
- Narrow roadway made up of one 10-11 feet travel lane in each direction



Neighborhood streets & sidewalks







Bike lane options, shared and dedicated

- Maximum vehicular flow speed of 25 miles per hour
- On-street parking included along one side, minimum
- Where on-street parking occurs, incorporate intersection sidewalk bulb-outs, linked with crosswalks

Pedestrian zone:

- Pedestrian zone on both sides of the street that includes:
  - A minimal 6-foot Amenity Zone that may accommodate street trees, pedestrian and roadway lighting within a low-maintenance planting strip
  - A Clear Zone of from 6-8 feet wide that is paved and free of obstructions to promote easy and safe movement of pedestrians
  - Pedestrian crosswalks at all intersections—vehicles must yield to pedestrians along main streets

Bicycle zone:

- One dedicated bicycle lane

Transit:

- No transit routes or access-stops located along medium streets

Wide Tertiary Corridors

Vehicular Zone:

- Narrow roadway made up of one 11-foot travel lane in each direction
- Maximum vehicular flow speed of 25 miles per hour
- On-street parking included along both sides side
- Where on-street parking occurs, incorporate intersection sidewalk bulb-outs, linked with crosswalks

Pedestrian zone:

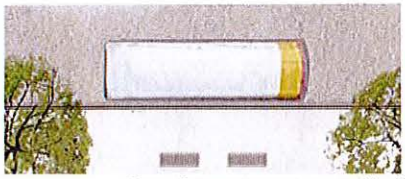
- Pedestrian zone on both sides of the street that includes:
  - A 6-8 foot Amenity Zone that may accommodate street trees, pedestrian and roadway lighting within a low-maintenance planting strip
  - A Clear Zone of from 8-10 feet wide that is paved and free of obstructions to promote easy and safe movement of pedestrians
  - Pedestrian crosswalks at all intersections—vehicles must yield to pedestrians along main streets

Bicycle zone:

- Dedicated bicycle lanes on both sides of street

Transit:

- Limited transit routes and type 3 access-stops located at key neighborhood activity generator locations



Type 3 transit stops, no pull-off