

City of Santa Fe - Midtown Campus Project

9 April 2018

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Planning Narrative

The revisioning of the Santa Fe University of Arts and Design presents an historic opportunity to heal the wounds of decades of short-sighted planning that has resulted in an isolated and fortified campus, unknown to most residents and visitors to the city. The campus is located in the geographic and demographic center of the city, however the campus creates a large void in the city fabric surrounded by an array of few streets that do not connect the surrounding communities. With over 33 buildings, the 64+ acre site exhibits a wide variety of open space and underperforming parking. The campus inhibits walkability, commerce, education, and civic goals. An integrated civic space with creative outlets that connect the surrounding communities to the ambitions of a higher education, which most urban higher education campuses support, is noticeably missing from the current condition of the campus.

Our vision aims to thread many new conduits of connectivity and collaboration between the campus and the community. The plan positions the campus as a new city center. Art, design, theatre, and film remain central to the essence of the place. No longer will college students hide behind walls and suburban strip malls. The academic facilities and interconnected tech-hub facilities will transition students into the workforce through a shared creative entrepreneurial spirit. While the closure of SFUAD is unfortunate in many respects, it gives Santa Fe the opportunity to fully realize the Midtown Local Innovation Corridor (LINC), and enables the rebirth of Midtown, providing much needed housing (over 3,000 units!) and space for economic development, job training, and a broader spectrum of higher education. The lack of affordable housing, the dominance of vehicular transportation, and few options for workforce training and higher education are among the leading factors of inequity in Santa Fe. The Midtown Campus will not solve these issues of course, but if proper planning is allowed to prevent the short-sighted sole consideration of profit, Santa Fe can make a considerable leap towards an equitable future.

We have boldly charted a future that expands the footprint of campus far beyond the confines of SFUAD. This is essential to solving the isolation of campus and transforming this area into a zone of connectivity and collaboration. Decades may be required to achieve the vision – in order for it to happen, the City and its citizens must be fierce in guarding the potential for realizing the appropriate urban connections.

Strategies

1. Throughout
 - a. Exemplify sustainable development through reutilization and expansion of existing facilities where possible.
 - b. Design new buildings and landscapes to suit the mountain desert climate of Santa Fe, harnessing the power of the sun and photovoltaics to approach a net-zero energy campus.
 - c. Harvest precipitation from buildings and hardscapes to irrigate landscapes within the campus, while restoring and protecting the arroyos and acequias that thread natural beauty through the campus.

2. Center
 - a. Open a large new urban park, “Santa Fe Green,” connecting a major new central academic building at the heart of campus to Cerrillos. Use the park to cover underground parking and large rainwater cisterns. Protect and enhance the central green with additional educational and civic buildings.
 - b. Build “St. Michael’s Pavilion” to house a new park café and bandstand for larger public events.
 - c. Enhance the northwest block with the Greer Garson Theatre and Fogelson Library with additional community buildings that provide additional space for the theatre and library, allowing them to thrive in the 21st Century. Create a new urban plaza between.
 - d. Create a tree-lined perimeter boulevard between the campus and surrounding properties. Redeveloped buildings along the Cerrillos corridor will face the campus as well, providing a lively central commercial corridor facing the campus.
 - e. Construct affordable housing (200 units) along the east side of the property facing the reinvigorated “Los Pinos Trail” along the acequia.
 - f. Expand the Greer Garson Studios with additional sound stages and post-production facilities.
 - g. Refine the “Campus Quad” between the existing dormitories to create a more secluded academic landscape within the larger Midtown Campus.
 - h. Begin a tech-hub of commercial buildings for 21st Century entrepreneurship. Include a large new professional-quality maker space.
 - i. Strategically retract and expand the footprint of the higher education campus to provide fiscally sound alliances with the new public and private industries on the broader campus. The large new central academic building will provide an iconic nexus for the film, arts, and tech enterprises emanating from the classrooms, studios, and laboratories of campus.
3. North
 - a. Expand Cerrillos to a boulevard street from St. Michael’s to Camino Carlos Rey, slowing it down with more space for sidewalks to desirable pedestrian destinations, shade trees, local travel lanes with parking, transit lanes and stops.
 - b. Expand LINC Zoning Overlay District to the north side of Cerrillos to balance this new urban corridor. Development shown on both sides of Cerrillos provides an estimated 1,250 apartments in three floors over ground floor commercial space.
 - c. Open a large new urban park, “Santa Fe Green,” connecting a major new central academic building at the heart of campus to Cerrillos.
 - d. Provide suitable parking structures internal to the blocks for students, shoppers, and residents designed in concert with the mixed use development.
4. East
 - a. Transform the St. Michael’s corridor with mixed-use urban development implementing the incentives of the LINC zoning overlay.
 - b. Provide a range of mixed-income housing options: 1,500 apartments – including an estimated 1,250 units over commercial space, 200 new traditional apartments and 50 live work units.
 - c. Reconnect the Hopewell neighborhood to St. Michael’s and the revitalized Midtown Campus through smart street realignments and reopening of buried acequia networks.
 - d. Open the east entrance to the Midtown Campus through the provision of a new “Garson Park” that provides much needed open space for the Hopewell and new Midtown Campus neighborhoods.
 - e. Connect the mixed use development south of St. Michael’s with another entry into campus that does not require driving on St. Michael’s.
5. South
 - a. Improve connectivity to Siringo Rd and the adjacent neighborhoods through the construction of two new roads connecting the south side of campus.
 - b. Continue ribbon of affordable housing along periphery of campus.
 - c. Construct another civic building to match the scale of the Higher Education Center to provide a compelling gateway into campus.
 - d. Preserve the natural setting around el Arroyo de los Chamisos as one of the last large vestiges of native grasslands in Santa Fe. Enhance the multi-modal trail network to provide excellent walkability and bicycle commuting.
6. West
 - a. Redevelop underutilized land at periphery of campus, knitting a new street grid between the Midtown Campus and Franklin Miles Park.
 - b. Create a mixed-use tech-hub of live-work housing (75 units) and commercial buildings for 21st Century entrepreneurship. Parking should be shared and building entrances should be on several pedestrian lanes that connect the central green to Franklin Miles Park.