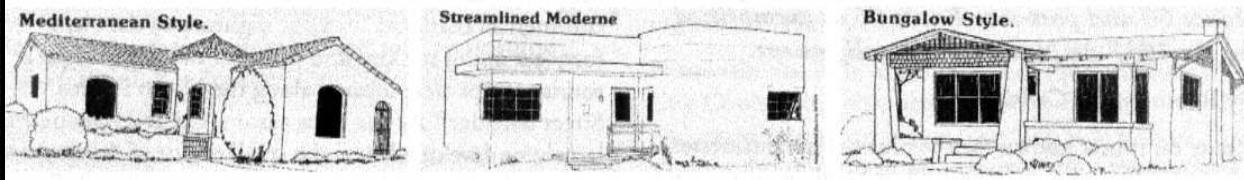


OUR HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD



LOS ALAMOS ADDITION NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

December 2008

Ron Gedrim, Editor

rgedrim@msn.com

Editor's Note

My name is Ron Gedrim and I'm back on LAANA's board as an Ex Officio member and newsletter editor. This special issue of OUR HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD is in response to our membership's desire for information about proposed urban redevelopment along 4th Street. Please read it carefully—this redevelopment is perhaps the biggest threat ever to confront our neighborhood; it could have a bigger impact than what happened after the Montano Bridge went in and then expanded to four lanes. At the same time, realize that this information is being presented from my point of view. Make this issue your own by becoming informed and involved.

On a personal note, and to be perfectly frank, our neighborhood has failed to care for its interests in 4th Street's redevelopment. The situation we are in today has evolved over many years. As a result of our recent inattention, people are becoming alarmed at what might happen. I will do what I can, but there is no substitute for your becoming informed and involved. The business community, their lawyers, and sympathetic governmental agencies are working to open our neighborhood's lots that border on 4th Street to mixed commercial use, including drive-thru stores. Traffic will be routed onto our streets and the added congestion will make a dangerous situation worse. Noise, light, exhaust fumes and trash pollution will increase, and it could even lead to a second-tier of residential lots being taken for additional "buffer" zoning.

Although I am willing to write this newsletter and to help represent our neighborhood in community forums, my time is limited. John Martinez, our President, and I are working hard on behalf of the neighborhood. We need you to be involved and help out because our neighborhood's fate is a bigger project than two busy people can handle. If you like what we have in our neighborhood, help us keep it that way. We need people to become informed, to help with various tasks, to write to officials and be ready to go to advertised community meetings. A petition will be circulating in the coming week. We also need people to step up when LAANA officers are elected next June.

If you have questions, please call our Vice-President, Ladonna Harris, our At Large member Mary Turpin, or your Street Representative. If you need further printed information, please contact our co-secretaries, Paula Getz or Wendy Foxworth. Annual household dues contributions of \$20 can be sent to our Treasurer, Shannon Matteson, at 306 La Plata Road NW, 87107. Please note the contact information below. As time permits, I will be producing LAANA publications on our Historic District, and how you can turn your state tax payments into contributing home improvements. I've already done this for a variety of repairs on the contributing parts of my property and will be happy to take you, step by step, through the process of doing this yourself in a future publication. For now, however, let's put our energies into thinking about the redevelopment plans for 4th Street.

2008-09 LAANA Board Members and Street Representatives

John Martinez	President	343-8803	sj1921@aol.com
Ladonna Harris	Vice-President	345-2680	ladonna@aio.org
Shannon Matteson	Treasurer	345-0448	robands Shannon@msn.com
Paula Getz	Co-Secretary	341-1009	Paulagetz1@aol.com
Wendy Foxworth	Co-Secretary	341-1009	Wendyfoxworth@aol.com
Mary Turpin	At Large	254-8748	abqjeepers@zianet.com
Ron Gedrim	Ex-Officio	345-0760	rgedrim@msn.com
Nora Valenzuela	Alamosa Street Rep	345-5950	
Linda Brannon	La Plata Street Rep	343-0736	
Dan Scott	Placitas Street Rep	345-0513	
Kay Shaffer	Sandia Street Rep	344-6065	

The Urban Redevelopment of 4th Street

It may sound odd to some that our area is undergoing “urban redevelopment.” In many ways our neighborhood and much of the North Valley has always thought of itself as more rural than urban. Reality has it that the Montano Corridor has inexorably tipped the balance to the urban, and with it the city pressures of traffic, congestion, and commerce. The stresses on the rural and historic character of our neighborhood are being felt all around us, whether it’s the expansion of 2nd Street to the east, the Montano Corridor to our south, or especially along 4th Street to our west. In 1937 part of Nipp’s pasture became our Los Alamos Addition, its residential-agricultural properties on four cul-de-sac streets that opened only onto 4th Street. As part of El Camino Real and the pre-1937 Route 66, 4th Street has always had some degree of traffic and commerce. And even though we live a remarkable neighborhood with a cultural heritage of irrigation, gardens, fruit trees, mature landscaping and Albuquerque’s richest assortment of legacy trees—urban redevelopment is necessary along 4th Street.

Lack of planning has resulted in 4th Street largely being out of control—dangerous to pedestrians and motorists, a hodgepodge of contradictory elements inhospitable to our neighborhood and businesses alike, and consistently getting worse. Different initiatives are underway to guide the urban redevelopment of 4th Street. How this redevelopment is planned and guided may be the largest political issue to ever confront the Los Alamos Addition Historic District. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide background on how these initiatives have evolved, where we stand now, and what each resident of LAANA can do at this crucial time to influence the redevelopment process.

Synopsis of Recent 4th Street Issues and Initiatives

North 4th Street Redevelopment Study: Completed by Architectural Research Consultants for the City in May 2002, this study extended from Mountain Road to Douglas MacArthur (south of Montano). When a LAANA board member asked the city why our area wasn’t included in the plan, we were told, “there’s nothing but fast food joints above Douglas MacArthur.” This study was destined to gather dust on a shelf.

Los Alamos Addition Historic District Registration: As David Kammer’s *National Register report on 20th Century Suburban Growth of Albuquerque* brought attention to our neighborhood’s historic qualities, LAANA embarked on a seven-year process to become a New Mexico State Historic District. The process included a detailed historic survey by Ragins and Ragins, a formal nomination by historian Mary Davis, and final approval by the Cultural Property Committee of the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division in 2006. Approximately 70% of our houses are now “contributing” cultural properties, as are our irrigation ditches and many “legacy” trees. All of our contributing cultural properties qualify for up to 50% state tax credits for approved repairs/upkeep and low-cost loans, providing an incredibly valuable preservation incentive. But perhaps even more important, is how our Historic District status may help us protect the character of our neighborhood into the future.

4th Street & Montano Area Improvement Coalition: At the 2003 LAANA Annual Meeting, in recognition of the fact that our neighborhood was on its way to becoming an historic district, a committee was formed under resident Steve Cogan to explore making historic 4th Street a more livable/walkable/renewed public space. This led to the 4th Street & Montano Area Improvement Coalition, whose original executive committee members were largely from our neighborhood. Its area of concern was Douglas MacArthur to the south, 2nd Street to the east, Solar to the north, and Los Poblanos fields to the west. Although the Coalition expanded and even diverted for a time to deal with the Montano Corridor’s expansion to 4 lanes, it became the major focus for 4th Street redevelopment.

North 4th Street Visioning Workshop: In the summer of 2004, the Coalition convened a Community Visioning Process with two weekend workshops in which over 100 residents and small business owners participated. The November 2004 report outlined four goals: 1.) providing a safe environment for area residents; 2.) promoting the establishment of long-term, neighborhood-scale business development along 4th Street; 3.) preserving and enhancing the area’s historical and cultural significance; 4.) accommodating the needs of those who utilize the Montano corridor to access other parts of the City. This visioning process was to serve as the preamble to a North 4th Street design charrette, which would elaborate our vision in specific detail.

North 4th Street Rank III Corridor Plan: This was the gorilla hiding in the closet. As the Coalition struggled to organize a charrette, not to be outdone, Mayor Chavez declared the beginning of a North 4th Street Rank III Corridor Plan (the “Plan”) from downtown to Alameda! When the dust settled and Chavez realized his jurisdiction stopped at Solar and the Village of Los Ranchos, the Plan’s boundary was redrawn from Mountain to Solar. From the start this Plan has been weighed in favor of business interests and their attorneys’, and aided by our City’s weak Planning Department, and now the joke that is called the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC). Community participation has been touted as a basis for this Plan moving forward, and there have been some committed individuals working to try to represent neighborhoods vis-à-vis the Plan, such as the Ad Hoc Committee, but their efforts have been to little avail.

When our sister neighborhood, the Gavilan Addition, found out that the Plan wanted to take one of its residential streets (Pauline) and to allow the rezoning of its east side houses into North Fourth Infill Development (NFID), a buffer zone for 4th business development, there was a minor Gavilan revolt. City Planning has since called Pauline’s death sentence as a “mistake,” but it really was a bald-faced push to pad business interests at the expense of neighborhoods. So how is LAANA faring in the Plan?

LAANA’s properties along 4th Street have been designated as a North Fourth Mixed Use Development District (NFMXD), opening LAANA’s lots along 4th Street to all manner of commercial development. This development might include drive-through businesses, along with increased traffic and congestion, and business uses that open into our neighborhood at the ends of our streets, with noise, light, exhaust, and trash pollution. It could even lead to a second tier of lots to the east eventually being redistricted to an NFID infill district zoning. There is no recognition of our Historic District in this plan, including the 3.5% of our contributing properties that will eventually be lost with NFMXD rezoning. It’s as if our Historic District serves as nothing but money interest for commerce.

Business owners demanded a five-lane 4th Street corridor in agreement that neighborhood charrettes that would create a balance with neighborhood needs and desires. This oft-cited “delicate balance” is what business interests and the EPC refer to as reason to pass the Plan. The only thing missing is the balance itself and our neighborhood interests in the Plan. Right now the EPC is restructuring the Plan into a form it will recommend to the City Council. The City Council will then go over, amend, and probably pass the Plan. Our best hope rides with our councilor, Debbie O’Malley, and with the City Council restoring some sense of what our neighborhoods need, before passing the Plan.

North 4th Street Charrette: Our Charrette finally began in August and to many it has fallen short of the promise we found in the Visioning Process. The design firm Glatting-Jackson (G-J), retained by the City Council, seemed to rely too strongly on the dictates of the North 4th Street Rank III Corridor Plan. Rather than building upon our previous visioning work, G-J did a weak values exercise and stakeholder interviews, and in “executive” fashion made its recommendations. It hasn’t become the “community driven” plan it was promised to be. On November 13, G-J was supposed to present its findings to the community but given the Charrette’s shortcomings, the process has been extended for three January mediated meetings to include a limited number of neighborhood and business representatives. John Martinez and I will represent LAANA at these meetings. G-J’s public presentation has been postponed until later in February.

What Does LAANA Do Now?

LAANA is in a tough position for a variety of reasons, and I’m not going to mince my words:

- Our board has not been effective for the past few years.
- We have not participated adequately in 4th Street Redevelopment forums.
- Over the years, we have allowed detrimental zoning changes along 4th Street.
- Mayor Chavez has consistently punished our area and our neighborhood because we opposed some of his urban-sprawl initiatives; notably, the Montano Corridor.
- Although we have a good City Councilor, Debbie O’Malley, our city government has generally been deficient. pro-business, and anti-neighborhood. Debbie O’Malley has been working for us, but we must do our part.

Specific recommendations:

- We can turn this situation to our advantage if we work hard in the current forums and make our presence felt.
- The battle to retain RA-2 Zoning along 4th Street was lost years ago. What we need to focus on is obtaining the best resolution to our current situation for the long-term benefit of our neighborhood.
- NFMXD Zoning is a mistake for our neighborhood, will result in increased traffic, congestion, noise, air, light, and litter pollution, and open us to further incursions into our historic neighborhood. NFMXD Zoning and its pro-business impetus should be resisted at all costs.
- NFID Zoning is our best alternative. Higher density residential development will form a permanent buffer against 4th Street's noise, not significantly increase traffic and congestion, allow for a defined gateway to our historic district, and produce sidewalks, landscaping, crosswalks, and help with overall safety concerns.
- NFID, plus street improvements, must be negotiated in detail via the North 4th Street Charrette. We have the opportunity to define development along 4th Street that is to our advantage, but we must seize this opportunity now. Otherwise, we let merchants and their proponents determine our residential future.
- John Martinez and I will push for this agenda at the Charrette, the EPC hearings, and the City Council hearings. We are counting on your support to write to both the Charrette and to our City Councilor, Debbie O'Malley (see the links on the address page of this newsletter).
- If you want a general membership meeting to better deal with these issues, or have questions, call your board members or street representatives. Please remember to direct your questions to either your street representative or board members other than John Martinez and Ron Gedrim. John and I need to reserve our energies for public forums.
- Be ready to go to community forums when our presence will make a difference in the redevelopment of 4th Street. There is nothing so convincing to public officials as citizen involvement. Your presence makes them watch what they say and do.
- Sign the petition that is about to circulate throughout the neighborhood. Your signature is the next-best thing to active participation in community forums.

Resources and Contacts:

City Council website: <http://www.cabq.gov/council/> where you can find the following links:

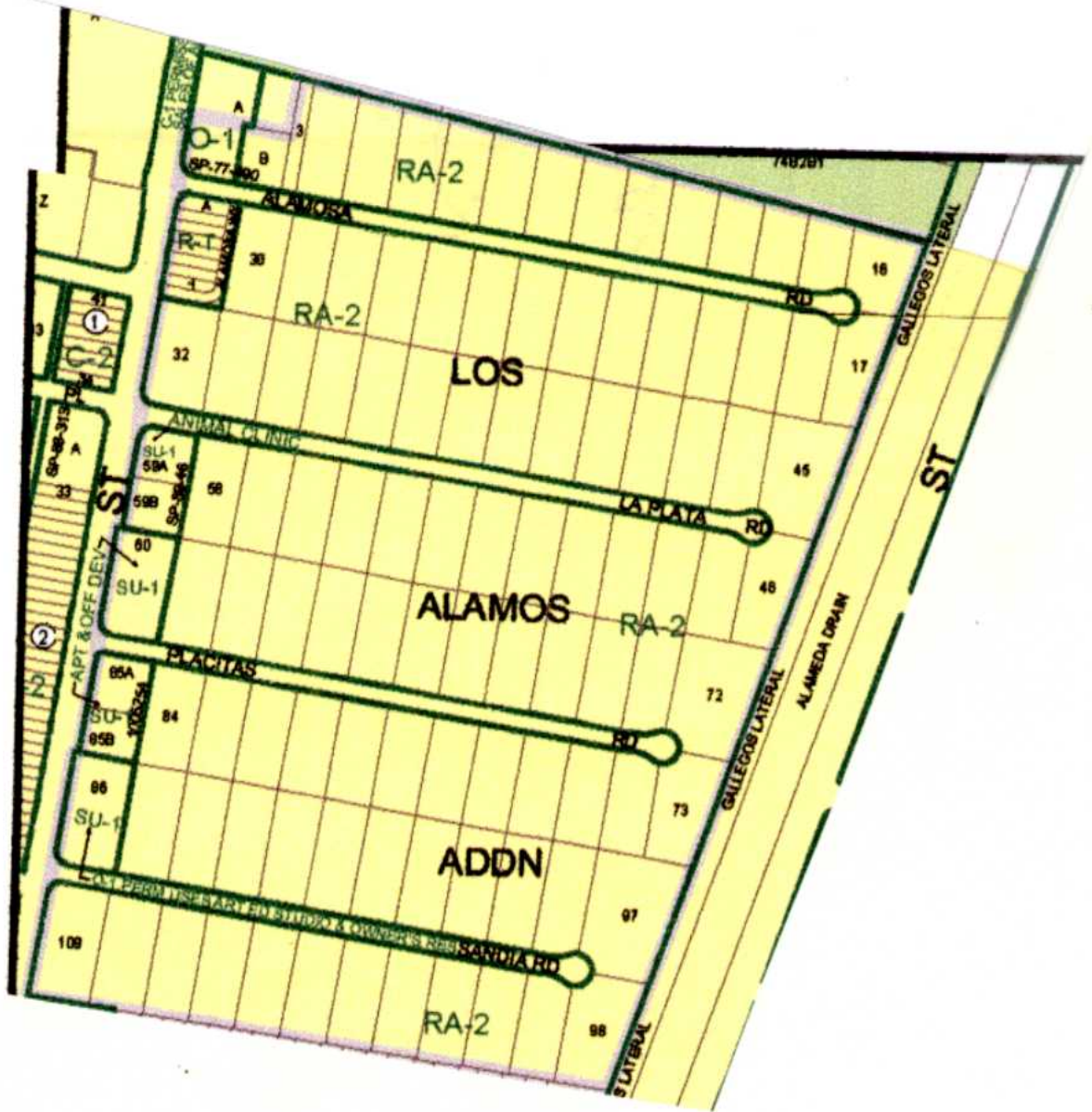
District 2 Councilor Debbie O'Malley: domalley@cabq.gov , **Telephone:** (505) 768-3159

North 4th Street Rank III Corridor Plan (late August posting):

<http://www.cabq.gov/council/current-projects-studies/north-4th-street-rank-iii-corridor-plan>

North 4th Street Charrette: <http://www.cabq.gov/council/current-projects-studies/4th-street-and-montano-area-improvements/4th-street-and-montano-area-improvements>

North 4th Street Charrette Comment Form: <http://www.cabq.gov/council/current-projects-studies/4th-street-and-montano-area-improvements/comments-suggestions-for-4th-street-and-montano-area-improvements>



Los Alamos Addition Zoning Map.

RA-2 (Residential-Agricultural Zone): Sites for low density houses and uses incidental thereto, including agriculture.

SU-1 (Special Use Zone): Suitable sites for uses which are special because of infrequent occurrence, effect on surrounding property, safety, hazard, or other reasons, and in which the appropriateness of the use to a specific location is partly or entirely dependent on the character of the site design.

R-T (Residential Zone): Suitable sites for houses, townhouses, and uses incidental thereto in the Established and Central Urban areas.

O-1 (Office and Institution Zone): Sites suitable for office, service, institutional, and dwelling uses.

**Los Alamos Addition
Neighborhood Association
303 La Plata Road NW**

**LAANA Resident
_____ Sandia Road NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107**

Get Involved!

We need neighbors that wish to improve their neighborhood's quality of life.

No experience necessary; just a desire to make our neighborhood a better place for all our residents and their children!

Give your LAANA Street Representative or Board member a call today!

**Los Alamos Addition
Neighborhood Association
303 La Plata Road NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107**

**LAANA Resident
_____ Placitas Road NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107**

Get Involved!

We need neighbors that wish to improve their neighborhood's quality of life.

No experience necessary; just a desire to make our neighborhood a better place for all our residents and their children!

Give your LAANA Street Representative or Board member a call today!

**Los Alamos Addition
Neighborhood Association
303 La Plata Road NW**

**LAANA Resident
_____ La Plata Road NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107**

Get Involved!

We need neighbors that wish to improve their neighborhood's quality of life.

No experience necessary; just a desire to make our neighborhood a better place for all our residents and their children!

Give your LAANA Street Representative or Board member a call today!

**Los Alamos Addition
Neighborhood Association
303 La Plata Road NW**

**LAANA Resident
_____ Alamosa Road NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107**

Get Involved!

We need neighbors that wish to improve their neighborhood's quality of life.

No experience necessary; just a desire to make our neighborhood a better place for all our residents and their children!

Give your LAANA Street Representative or Board member a call today!

**Los Alamos Addition
Neighborhood Association
303 La Plata Road NW**

**LAANA Resident
_____ Alamosa Way NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107**

Get Involved!

We need neighbors that wish to improve their neighborhood's quality of life.

No experience necessary; just a desire to make our neighborhood a better place for all our residents and their children!

Give your LAANA Street Representative or Board member a call today!