

Chapter Eight:

Implementation

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This chapter provides recommendations for implementation of the Downtown Village Specific Plan:

- 8.1 Project Description
- 8.2 Feasibility of Proposed Zoning
- 8.3 Public Sector Costs
- 8.4 Implementation and Funding Mechanisms
- 8.5 Public Improvements Implementation
- 8.6 Initial Public Improvements Phasing Concept
- 8.7 Sports Fields in the Village Center

8.1 Project Description

The larger downtown area currently contains a total of approximately 970,000 square feet of space for retail services, office, public and community uses and 66 single-family residential units. Under the proposed Downtown Village Specific Plan, commercial uses (retail/services) could increase by up to 182,000 square feet. Office uses could increase by 58,000 square feet. Civic and public uses in a civic center could increase by 50,000 square feet. The Specific Plan could lead to a transformation of single-family residential to multiple-family residential with a net reduction of 11 residential units in the area, from 66 single-family units to 55 multiple-family units. (See Table 8.1) The zoning and land use regulations are flexible in the Specific Plan, so the actual uses could vary significantly. Further, it seems unlikely that all of the space would be developed over the next 15 to 20 years.

Within the village area, land ownership will have a significant effect on when and how development goes forward. La Cañada Properties owns or controls the property between Angeles Crest and just east of Beulah on both sides of Foothill Boulevard. Vons owns most of the property north of Foothill between Oakwood Avenue and Rinetti Lane. (Another private party owns the land under the gas station and part of the Vons building in this block.) The property between these two holdings is in multiple ownerships.

A key element for the implementation of the Downtown Village Specific Plan is the implementation of the proposed North Road and related grid street system. The North Road and grid street system facilitates a phased implementation of the circulation system with appropriate sections of the North Road and grid system to be developed in conjunction with major new private projects.

Table 8.1
Approximate Changes to Land Uses

Commercial Uses				
	Existing	Proposed	Change	% Change
Retail/Service	575,100	757,000	181,900	31.6%
Office	199,200	257,600	58,400	29.3%
Civic/Public	195,800	245,800	50,000	25.5%
Subtotal	970,100	1,260,400	290,300	29.9%
Residential Units				
	Existing	Proposed	Change	% Change
Single-family	66	0	-66	N/A
Multi-family	0	55	55	N/A
Subtotal	66	55	-11	-16.7%

8.2 Feasibility of Proposed Zoning

The proposed increase in commercial space for this area is significantly larger than the findings of the market research, namely that the existing population of La Cañada can support approximately 100,000 additional square feet of retail space and 40,000 additional square feet of office space.

With respect to the 58,000 square feet of office space, 25,000 square feet of this amount is assumed to be the new Sport Chalet headquarters. The remaining 30,000 square feet of incremental office space is consistent with the market analysis.

With respect to the 181,900 square-foot increase in retail space, the Sport Chalet retail space accounts for 16,500 square feet, and T.J. Maxx accounts for 25,000 square feet of the increase. This means that approximately 140,000 square feet of retail space is being provided to serve a current requirement of approximately 100,000 square feet. This amount of space may be viable if it serves the larger region, or if it accommodates future population growth in La Cañada Flintridge. Alternatively, the mixed-use nature of the zoning might allow some of the excess space to be utilized for office or residential uses. Also, as noted above, it seems unlikely that all of the area will be redeveloped over the next 15 to 20 years.

In terms of development timing, the La Cañada Properties ownership is likely to be the first area to be developed. This area has a single owner and Sport Chalet has indicated that they must expand and modernize their store to remain competitive.

The Vons site would be the next to redevelop provided that the current tenants can be accommodated either at the site or at other locations. Vons' also needs to modernize and expand its store to stay competitive in the marketplace. Vons proposed expansion is consistent with the locally supportable need for additional food store space.

Development of the area between the La Cañada Properties holdings and the Vons parcel is problematic in the near and intermediate term for two reasons. First, this area consists of multiple ownerships which must be assembled into developable parcels or the multiple owners must be organized into a development entity. Second, development of the La Cañada Properties and Vons sites is likely to absorb all of the locally generated demand, making development of the unanchored retail in this area much more difficult.

8.3 Public Sector Costs

Public sector costs fall into four broad categories:

- Streetscape improvements
- Circulation improvements
- Public Parking
- Civic Center and Parks

Public sector improvement costs are preliminary and are estimated in year 2000 dollars. Further cost studies will be required at the time of implementation.

8.3.1 Streetscape Improvements

Streetscape improvements include the benches and landscaping along Foothill Boulevard, the North Road and connecting streets and sidewalk bulbouts. Also included are decorative lighting, trash receptacles, news racks, etc. Total costs are estimated at approximately \$1,330,000.

8.3.2 Circulation Improvements

Table 8.2 shows the costs for land and construction for the North Road and the Chevy Chase realignment. For comparison, Table 8.2 also shows the costs for land and construction of the alternative options in described Section 5.2.2. Where applicable, costs include traffic and pedestrian signals.

8.3.3 Public Parking

Public parking costs include the parking lot or a parking structure in the middle of the Downtown Village Specific Plan. Costs are projected to be between \$9,000,000 and \$11,000,000 if a parking structure is built. A parking structure is estimated at \$6,000,000 and land acquisition between \$3,000,000 and \$5,000,000.

8.3.4 Civic Center and Parks

The Downtown Village Specific Plan allows for a 50,000 square foot civic center that would house both city hall and the school district headquarters. These costs also include land acquisition and improvement costs for the Village Park and the Oak Park. Park costs are estimated to be between \$2,500,000 and \$3,000,000. Civic Center costs for a maximum sized civic center are estimated at \$12,000,000 for building improvements, and between \$3,500,000 to \$5,000,000 for land acquisition. For purposes of Environmental Impact Report (EIR) review a 50,000 square foot Civic Center was assumed. Actual size of the Civic Center shall be subject to final plan review based upon a needs assessment conducted by the city.

8.4 Implementation and Funding Mechanisms

Implementation of the public improvement portion of the Downtown Village Specific Plan can be as fast or as slow as the

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Table 8.2 Circulation Improvements Costs

North Road		
	Low	High
Improvements	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000
Land	\$3,900,000	\$6,500,000
Traffic Signals	<u>\$780,000</u>	<u>\$780,000</u>
Total	\$5,930,000	\$8,530,000
Chevy Chase Realignment		
	Low	High
Improvements	\$155,000	\$155,000
Land	\$1,600,000	\$2,400,000
Traffic Signals	<u>\$75,000</u>	<u>\$75,000</u>
Total	\$1,830,000	\$2,630,000

Alternative Options

Re-signalization of existing intersection at Angeles Crest Highway and Foothill Boulevard, Chevy Chase Drive and Foothill Boulevard, and traffic control at Bel Air Drive and Foothill Boulevard

Traffic Signals	\$118,000
Other Improvements	<u>\$60,000</u>
Total	\$178,000

Realignment of Bel Air Drive to the east

	Low	High
Improvements	\$125,000	\$125,000
Land	<u>\$600,000</u>	<u>\$1,000,000</u>
Total	\$725,000	\$1,125,000

Realignment of Bel Air Drive to the west to a new intersection with Chevy Chase Drive south of Foothill Boulevard, and realign Chevy Chase Drive easterly to become the south leg of the intersection of Foothill Boulevard and Angeles Crest Highway

	Low	High
Improvements	\$280,000	\$280,000
Land	\$2,500,000	\$4,000,000
Traffic Signals	<u>\$50,000</u>	<u>\$50,000</u>
Total	\$2,830,000	\$4,330,000

Addition of a signal and realignment of Chevy Chase Drive to the east, but take only the commercial property adjacent to Foothill Boulevard and not any residential property farther south on Chevy Chase Drive

	Low	High
Improvements	\$70,000	\$70,000
Land	\$1,000,000	\$1,500,000
Traffic Signals	<u>\$50,000</u>	<u>\$50,000</u>
Total	\$1,120,000	\$1,620,000

Note: Preliminary circulation improvement cost estimates are in year 2000 dollars.

City wishes. It may or may not be tied to the private sector development schedule. From a practical standpoint, much of the public infrastructure can be timed to match the private development phasing. The following sections discuss: (1) the implementation and funding specifically related to the La Cañada Properties and Vons sites, (2) general discussion of the funding of the various public improvements in the rest of the area, and (3) discussions of assessment districts and redevelopment.

Table 8.3 shows the applicable funding sources for each type of public sector improvement. The table also indicates whether the funding source is a primary or secondary source.

8.4.1 La Cañada Properties

As discussed above the La Cañada Properties site is likely to be the first to be developed. This is likely to be the critical development in the Downtown Village Specific Plan as it will set the tone for what is to come later. It also includes the Civic Center and Village Park, and is the western terminus of the North Road. Given the amount of public infrastructure on this site, development of this project will require a substantial public/private commitment. With specific respect to the Civic Center portion of the project, the City and/or school district will either have to acquire land in the near future or will need to commit to building or financing the Civic Center in the near future. Otherwise, the Civic Center may have to be at an alternative location to allow private development to proceed.

In terms of funding the public infrastructure, some portion of these improvements will be development costs and some will also be conditions to mitigate impacts associated with the development approval process. Funding for the Civic Center portion of this project is discussed separately below.

Table 8.3 Funding Sources

	Primary Source	Secondary Source
STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS		
MTA or State, or County, highway beautification funds	X	
Development fees	X	
City capital improvement budget		X
Business improvement district	X	
Public/private agreements	X	
Corporate or private contributions		X
CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS		
Development fees	X	
City capital improvement budget		X
Business improvement district		X
Public/private agreements	X	
Incremental public revenues		X
Federal, State, or County transportation funds	X	
Assessment district		X
Redevelopment		X
PUBLIC PARKING		
Parking in-lieu fee	X	
Public/private agreements	X	
Incremental public revenues		X
Parking assessment district	X	
Business improvement district		X
CIVIC CENTER AND PARKS		
County or State park bonds	X	
City parks capital program	X	
Existing City and School District occupancy budget	X	
Future City and School District occupancy budget	X	
Public/private agreements	X	
Assessment district		X
Corporate or private contributions (community space)	X	

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8.4.2 Vons Parcel

Redevelopment of the Vons parcel will likely follow the redevelopment of the La Cañada Properties parcels. Redevelopment of the Vons parcel is constrained by the leases of existing tenants. Two major tenants, Rite-Aid and T.J. Maxx, have existing leases that expire at least ten years in the future. Without their cooperation, the Vons parcel cannot be redeveloped until the leases expire.

This parcel does not include a significant amount of public infrastructure. If this project proceeds at approximately the same time as the City is implementing the other streetscape improvements along Foothill Boulevard, it seems likely that the associated streetscape improvements on the Vons parcel, such as benches, lighting, bulbouts, etc., could be incorporated as a cost of the project.

8.4.3 Funding Streetscape Improvements

As noted above, some of the streetscape improvements may be incorporated in the new development projects as they go forward. In addition, the City could pursue funding through the MTA or the State through their highway beautification programs. These programs are competitive and the City would be responding to the “Call for Projects.”

The streetscape improvements are the least costly of the public improvements. These costs can also be added to the City’s capital improvement program and funded over several years. The City may also wish to evaluate the establishment of a streetscape improvement fee as part development approval process. These are also improvements that are often included in business improvement districts.

8.4.4 Funding Circulation Improvements

The costs for the improvements for the North Road and at Chevy Chase Drive and Foothill Boulevard (including alternative options) are set out in Table 8.2. Implementing the North Road through the La Cañada Properties site is likely to be a condition of development. Funding of the roadway costs and land acquisition may involve a public/private agreement between the City and La Cañada Properties.

Implementation of the remainder of the North Road is more problematic, as are alternatives to re-signalization at Chevy Chase and Foothill Boulevard, which involve street realignment. These all involve the acquisition of several individual parcels, as there is not a single landowner. The Chevy Chase/Bel Air realignment will require the City to acquire the property. For the North Road, although it is possible that a developer could acquire the residential properties as part of a possible development, the City should expect that it will need to acquire the properties. The City may need to use its eminent domain powers.

The cost of these circulation improvements is significant, especially if they are to involve realigning Chevy Chase/Bel Air. It seems unlikely that the City’s capital improvement program can absorb all of these costs. It may be possible to include the improvement of the North Road to Commonwealth as part of the public/private agreement with La Cañada Properties. Alternatively, the City can utilize an assessment district to fund acquisition and improvements of the roadway system. The assessment district concept is discussed below. Other sources that the City should consider are development fees and Federal, State or County transportation funds.

8.4.5 Funding Civic Center and Parks

The Specific Plan includes two parks and a civic center. One of the parks and the civic center are proposed to be a part of the La Cañada Properties project. Implementation of these elements is likely to be a part of the public/private agreement between the City and La Cañada Properties. The public facilities provide benefit to the community at large, so the funding base needs to be considered to be the community at large.

With respect to the parks, there may be funds available through County park bond funds or other County park funds. More likely the City will consider these parks as part of its overall park funding program.

Funding for the Civic Center project will come from a multitude of sources. It must be recognized, however, that the City and School District will incur the Civic Center costs whether or not the Civic Center is located in the Downtown Village Specific Plan area or even if they do not co-locate. In other words, the Civic Center costs will be incurred whether or not the other Specific Plan projects are implemented. That being said, a portion of the funding for the Civic Center will come from existing budget sources. With respect to the City, the City is currently paying for its space on Foothill Boulevard. These cost would be reallocated in the budget to fund a portion of the Civic Center and the existing City Hall would be disposed of. The remaining “office” space in the Civic Center would need to be funded through a financing mechanism, preferably one that provides the City and School District with title to the property at the end of the financing.

Any community rooms, auditoriums or performing facilities might be funded through a capital campaign. The City would establish a foundation or non-profit organization to raise funds from individuals or corporations for the construction of these public facilities. On a larger scale, this was the mechanism used to fund

Disney Hall in Los Angeles and is increasingly used by individual schools.

8.4.6 Public Parking

The provision of public parking in the Downtown Village Specific Plan area will have two aspects, parking management and provision of parking. For parking management, it will be important for the City to ensure that convenient parking is available for retail customers and that it is not taken by nearby office users or retail employees. Office users and retail employees have more flexibility in their parking choices. Most retail districts solve the problem either through pay parking or they designate a two or three hour limit for the most convenient parking and a longer limit or no limit for less convenient parking.

The provision of parking is likely to require a combination of in-lieu parking fees, assessments and City contributions. It may also be possible to fund some of the costs through a business improvement district. It is also likely to require the City to acquire the land for parking. Under the Specific Plan a number of properties are being relieved of the requirement to provide on-site parking. When these properties redevelop, they would be required to pay an in-lieu parking fee, which offsets some or all of the costs that the City incurred in providing the parking spaces.

An alternative would be to create a parking assessment district. Property owners within the district would be assessed for their portion of the parking requirements. The advantage of this structure is that it provides the City with a known funding mechanism for providing parking.

8.4.7 Assessment Districts

There are a variety of assessment district options that are available to the City to fund public improvements. These include assessment districts formed under the various state acts, landscape and lighting districts, and community facilities districts. This discussion is generic and does not advocate a specific type of assessment district.

In general, an assessment district issues bonds to fund public improvements and assesses property owners to pay for the improvements over time. It allows improvements to be put in place more quickly than if funded on a pay as you go basis. In some cases the assessments can be levied citywide to allow for general and specific benefit. These would be a base levy placed citywide, and then an additional levy would apply to properties in the Downtown Village Specific Plan area that receives specific benefit from the improvements.

The assessment district approach would seem appropriate if the City wishes to consider the implementation of all of the streetscape improvements and some or all of the circulation improvements in the near term. Depending on the type of assessment district, City Council or voter approval is required.

8.4.8 Redevelopment

The implementation of a redevelopment project area might be possible. It would require a finding of blight and other findings for some or all of the Downtown Village Specific Plan area. There are sites within the Specific Plan area that exhibit conditions of physical and economic blight, either as a consequence of physical and economic obsolescence, multiple ownerships, and/or irregularly shaped parcels. If feasible, redevelopment could provide the City with some additional powers and revenues that could facilitate implementation of the Specific Plan.

8.5 Specific Plan Implementation

In order to implement the goals and objectives of the Downtown Village Specific Plan, to incorporate the appropriate public improvements into public/private discussions which may lead to development agreements, and to facilitate applications for potential grant applications, donor gifts or other funding sources, it is recommended that a Specific Plan Implementation Program be prepared as soon as possible. This Specific Plan Implementation Program should incorporate the elements identified in Figure 8.1.

It is recommended that the process of developing the Specific Plan Implementation Program continue the public involvement carried out in developing the Specific Plan. This would, therefore, include ongoing meetings with property owners, creation of an implementation task force(s) appointed by the City Council, and ongoing review by the City Council and Planning Commission. The Specific Plan implementation task force should undertake as its first priority the identification and phasing of street improvements, and as its secondary priorities the consideration, evaluation and implementation of the Civic Center development program and the parks program.

At the same time, the task force should consider programs including, but not limited to, the following:

- Grant applications for streetscapes, parks and facades.
- Incentive programs, such as grants or loans for storefront design and the City's existing façade improvements program; marketing and retailing counseling for small businesses; and assistance with relocation of retail to the Village Center.
- Targeted marketing and recruitment, such as identifying specific "targeted" businesses and proactive recruitment; and establishing a combined City and Chamber of Commerce task force to coordinate targeted commercial tenants.

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- Maintenance and management, such as a Downtown Business Improvement District to improve the existing businesses and business climate in the area.
- Public Improvements Program, such as use of state money for street improvements; improved landscaping and signage; and streetscapes, parking areas and parks maintenance.
- Establishment of a parking district, including setting parking in-lieu fees.
- Public art program.

The following additional improvements and considerations should also be explored:

- A pilot project to upgrade the facades to the south of Foothill Boulevard between Gould Avenue and the freeway underpass. In addition, the task force should work with the owners of the existing service stations to define ways in which their streetscape edges can be enhanced to reinforce the overall appearance of the village streetscape character.
- Enhancement of the streetscape edges of the existing, parking areas, which are currently open to view from Foothill Boulevard. Elements such as landscaping, trellises, etc. should be considered.
- Bicycle connections from a dedicated bicycle path along the North Road and the new development in the Village Center to the rest of Downtown Village Specific Plan area. This would most likely occur by means of a bicycle path along Foothill Boulevard.

8.6 Initial Public Improvements Phasing Concept

There is no single way to phase the public improvements. Public improvements may be phased by geographic element and/or by

functional element. Examples of functional elements include street trees, lighting and street furniture.

Figure 8.1 illustrates an initial phasing concept for public improvements in the Village Center.

Phase 1 is related to the likely early development of major property holdings at the west and east ends of the Village Center.

Phase 2 suggests the completion of public improvements along Foothill Boulevard and the provision of special entry point enhancements at Foothill Boulevard and Angeles Crest Highway. As an example of the preliminary nature of this phasing concept, it may be appropriate to include the Angeles Crest Entry Point as a part of Phase 1.

Phase 3 suggests the construction of Oak Park and the portion of the North Road between Commonwealth Avenue and Oakwood Avenue.

Phase 4 suggest a later development of the North Road between Beulah and Commonwealth Avenue and the central, underground public parking structure. This phase is later than the phases above due to the public costs of the parking structure and the difficulty of private sector assembly of the properties intended for commercial and residential development along the North Road.

Phase 5 consists of the realignment of Chevy Chase Drive. This element is identified as a later phase because of cost. However, this geographic phasing element, like any of those noted above, could be moved within a phasing strategy.

One of the components of the recommended Public Improvements Plan would be development of a Refined Phasing Plan based on both geographic elements and functional elements.

8.7 Sports Fields in the Village Center

The potential for a small sports field complex constructed on air rights over parking has been identified for the block north of Foothill Boulevard and between Oakwood Avenue and Rinetti Lane. This potential complex should be considered for implementation within the context of the entire city to evaluate the most feasible and best location for sports fields.

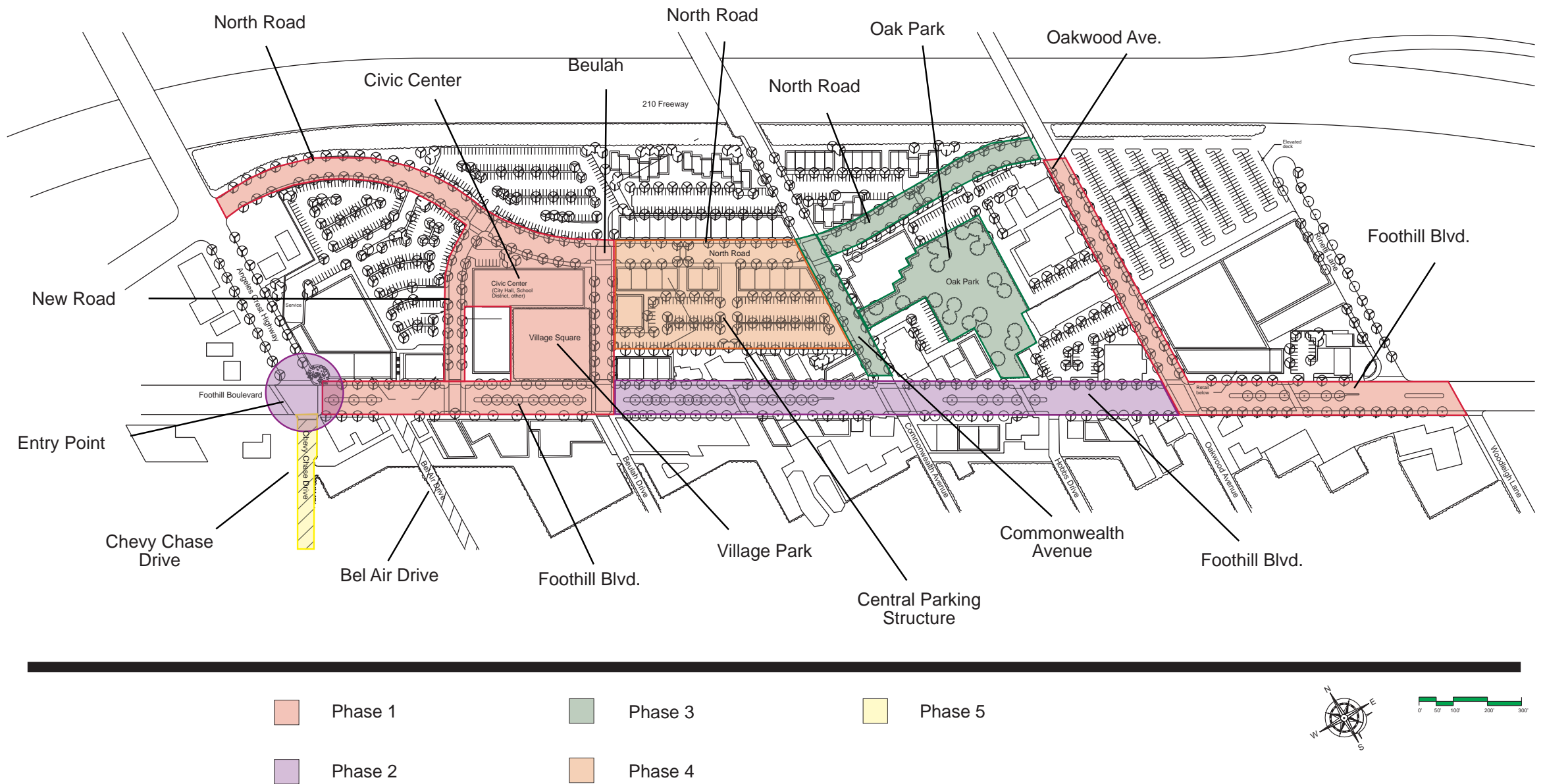


Figure 8.1: Initial Phasing Concept for the Public Improvements in the Village Center

