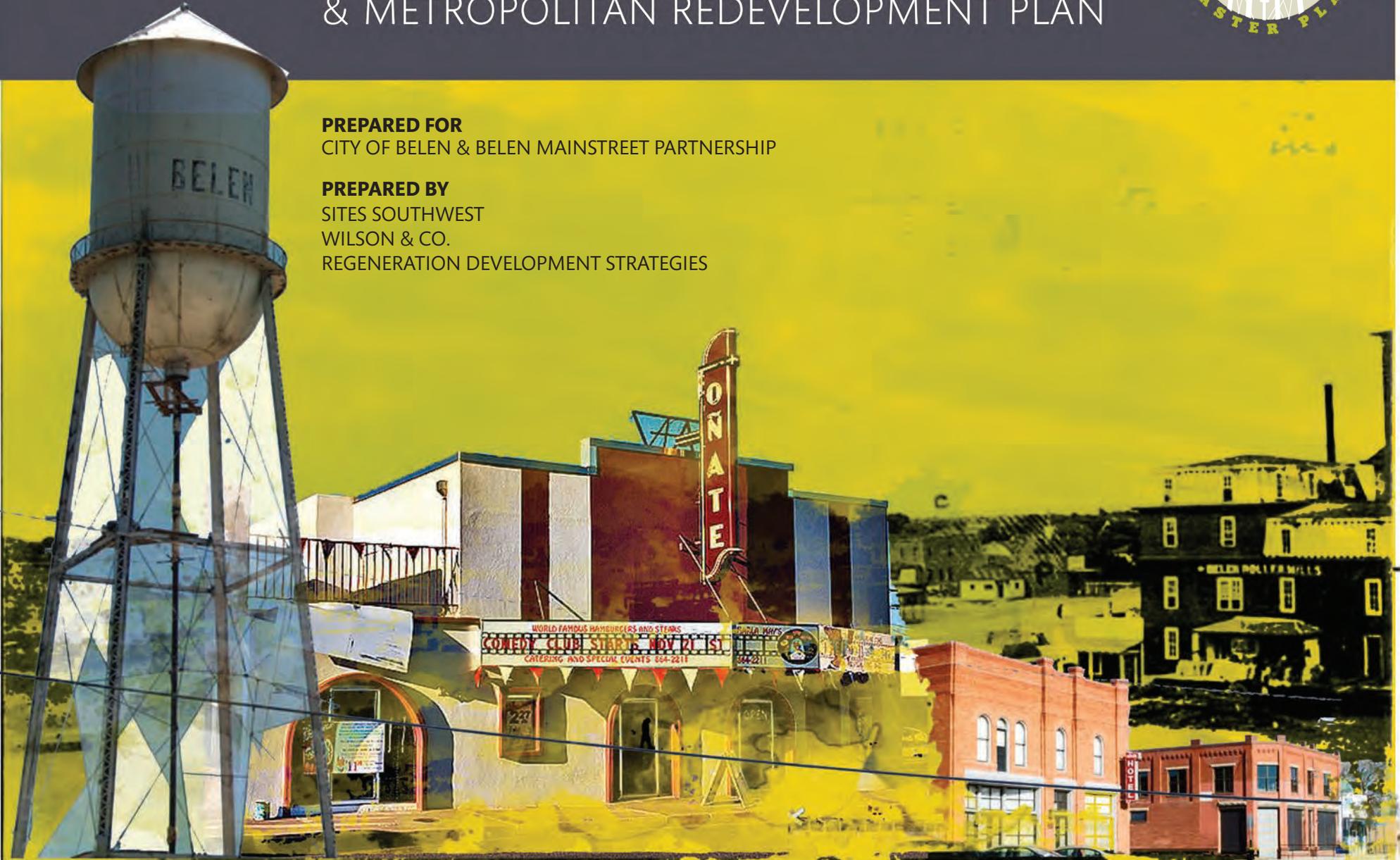


BELEN DOWNTOWN **MASTER PLAN** & METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN



PREPARED FOR
CITY OF BELEN & BELEN MAINSTREET PARTNERSHIP

PREPARED BY
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REGENERATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES



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I. INTRODUCTION

“Successful economic development is rarely about the one big thing. More likely, it is about lots of little things working synergistically together in a plan that makes sense.” – Ed McMahon, Senior Resident Fellow, Charles E. Fraser Chair for Sustainable Development and Environmental Policy, Urban Land Institute

The City of Belen recognizes downtown and its MainStreet District as the “Heart of Belen.” In its Comprehensive Plan as well as in a number of special studies completed after the Comprehensive Plan was adopted, the City acknowledges the importance of creating and sustaining a healthy mix of commercial, cultural, and government activity in downtown Belen as essential to the entire City’s overall economic well-being. As a result, the City has invested in downtown capital improvements and adopted special zoning tailored to downtown needs. However, there remain a large number of vacant and underutilized properties in the District and new business formation has lagged during the recovery from the Great Recession.

1. PLAN PURPOSE

This plan seeks to address these ongoing challenges by 1) helping define the community’s vision for the City’s downtown core, and 2) identifying priority strategies and catalyst projects that can spearhead downtown revitalization to achieve the community’s vision.

To accomplish these goals, the plan recognizes that one of the most important roles that the Belen MainStreet Partnership and the City of Belen can play is preparing an “investment ready” downtown. Both of these organizations, working together with additional partners, will be the driving force behind pro-actively creating a positive policy context

and physical environment to incentivize community businesses and quality development projects. By working toward realizable, short and long term projects, these agencies can pave the way for an lasting revitalization effort that will breathe new life into Belen. Creating an investment ready downtown involves three core goals:

1. Remove the existing barriers to development and reinvestment that existing within downtown.
2. Target new opportunities for development and reinvestment.

Mitigate the risks of development and reinvestment to incentivize new development.

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These core goals are anchored by four actions that must be taken to achieve the goals:

1. Active involvement in the economic development process.
2. In-place financial incentive tools & fiscal readiness.
3. Public and private leadership & community commitment.
4. The creation of a physical environment that is structured and well-managed as an economic development asset.

2. NEW MEXICO METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT CODE

The New Mexico MainStreet Program, the New Mexico Local Economic Development Act (LEDA), the New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Act and the New Mexico Affordable Housing Act create the legal framework for local action to strengthen and capitalize on existing downtown assets and catalyze new investments that will create an environment that supports a vibrant downtown and the economic health of the community as a whole.

The State of New Mexico has several statutes intended to help municipalities promote economic development, redevelopment, and stability where these are hindered by a variety of factors. The New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (§3-60A-1 to 3-60A-48 NMSA 1978) is one such statute.

The Metropolitan Redevelopment Code provides New Mexico cities with the powers to correct conditions in areas or neighborhoods within municipalities that “substantially impair or arrest the sound and orderly development” within the city. These powers allow the municipality to help reverse an area’s decline and stagnation through activities that are designed to eliminate these conditions. A municipality may only exercise these powers in areas designated as metropolitan redevelopment areas and activities must conform to an approved metropolitan redevelopment plan for the designated area.

Designation of an MRA is based on findings of “slum or blight” conditions, as defined in the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (§3-60A-4). The criteria in the Code for a “blighted” area include both physical and economic conditions.

As defined in the Code,

“Blighted area” means an area within the area of operation other than a slum area that, because of the presence of a substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures, predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility or usefulness, unsanitary or unsafe conditions, deterioration of site or other improvements, diversity of ownership, tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land, defective or unusual conditions of title, improper subdivision or lack of adequate housing facilities in the area or obsolete or impractical planning and platting or an area where a significant number of commercial or mercantile businesses have closed or significantly reduced their operations due to the economic losses or loss of profit due to operating in the area, low levels of commercial or industrial activity or redevelopment or any combination of such factors, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth and economic health and well-being of a municipality or locale within a municipality or an area that retards the provisions of housing accommodations or constitutes an economic or social burden and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals or welfare in its present condition and use.

In 2015, the City and the Belen MainStreet Partnership evaluated conditions in downtown and reported these conditions to the City Council. Based on the findings of the evaluation, the Council found the area to meet conditions of slum and blight as defined in the MRA Code and designated the Belen Downtown MRA (see Appendix A).

2.1 SUMMARY OF NEED

Downtown Belen exhibits a combination of factors that contribute to blight, including physical and economic conditions. There are a number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures, including 37 vacant buildings in the area, some of which have been vacant for a number of years. Several businesses in the area have closed and no new businesses have taken their place, contributing to decreasing levels of commercial activity. Buildings are generally maintained, but there has been little recent investment in older buildings. In most cases, buildings have been secured structurally but otherwise exhibit signs of poor maintenance. There are signs of neglect, including peeling paint, faded signs and similar indicators of disrepair.

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In addition, the diversity of ownership – 145 separate owners (in addition to the City, Board of Education, State and County) of 224 parcels – has made it difficult to implement a coordinated redevelopment effort.

These factors combine to substantially impair and arrest the sound growth and economic health and well-being of the Belen Downtown MRA.

2.2 LOCATION OF THE MRA

The general boundaries of the MRA extend from ½ block north of Reinken on the north to ½ block south of Baca Street on the south and from the BNSF tracks on the east to ½ block west of Main Street on the west. The area extends south along Main Street to Gilbert, with ½ block on each side of Main Street included in the area, as shown in **Figure 2**. A list of properties is contained in Appendix A.

3. PLAN OUTLINE

The Downtown Master Plan includes an overview of the history of Belen as it influences where downtown is today. The plan documents the assets within the area covered by the Belen MainStreet Partnership's MainStreet program. These assets include some of the City's most significant historic buildings, locally significant buildings, parks and open spaces, existing streetscape improvements and the businesses, residences and government services that contribute to downtown's success.

The plan vision and goals were developed by the Belen MainStreet Partnership. The actions that the City and the Belen MainStreet takes to accomplish the goals represent the "little things working together" to achieve the vision.

The master plan describes the overall concept for downtown, public and private investments and policy changes that are recommended, including design guidance and capital improvements. These will be accomplished over time, and the larger projects may be undertaken in phases.

The design guidelines and implementation sections provide more detail about the proposed actions catalytic projects, responsible parties, and potential funding sources.

INTRODUCTION

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II. BACKGROUND

Belen is located in Valencia County, NM, about 35 miles south of Albuquerque. Downtown Belen is located at the intersection of NM 309 (Reinken) and NM 314 (Main Street), adjacent to BNSF railroad tracks, as shown in Figure 1 (Belen and vicinity map). As shown in Figure 2 (detailed map of the downtown study area), the northern boundary of the downtown study area for this plan is the north side of Reinken; the east boundary is the railroad tracks; the south boundary is the south side of Baca, and the west boundary is the west side of Main Street. The district extends south on both sides of Main Street to Gilbert Avenue.

1. AREA HISTORY

The story of Belen is incredibly rich in culture and history with native Indian, Hispanic, and Anglo-European roots. From an eighteenth century community of freed slaves to a Spanish land grant to an American railroad town, Belen's past is a quintessential story of the West.

In 1741 New Mexico Governor Gaspar Domínguez de Mendoza granted 200,000 acres of land to a group of settlers led by brothers-in-law Captain Don Diego Torres and Antonio Salazar. The Nuestra Señora de Belén Grant came to house numerous plazas or compounds—including Belen, Pueblitos, Los Trujillos, Jarales, Bosque, and La Joya.

The Nuestra Señora de los Genízaros Plaza was home to a community of Spanish-speaking, Christianized Indians who pre-dated the land grant. These Genízaros—generally abducted as children and sold or traded to Hispanic settlers for periods of indentured servitude—were sometimes given permission to establish their own communities on the fringes of Spanish Colonial settlement. Like Abiquíu in the north, Belen is one of a small number of New Mexican communities with Genízaro origins.

The communities on the Nuestra Señora de Belén Grant practiced subsistence farming and ranching—primarily of sheep. Belen's location within the river valley of central New Mexico made it a natural stop along the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro—the settlement and supply route connecting Mexico City to Santa Fe. Belen welcomed travelers and traders for the next 150 years, and hosted a customs house for trade activities. A military garrison established on the grant in 1750 became a full-fledged presidio for protecting the region from Apache, Comanche, and Navajo raiding.

Following the Mexican War of Independence and the opening of trade with the United States, the Camino Real also functioned as the southern route of the Santa Fe Trail. Belen residents Felipe Chavez and Antonio Gilbert became successful merchants and freighters of goods along the route. By 1870, Chavez—nicknamed “El Millonario”—was the second richest man in New Mexico.

BACKGROUND

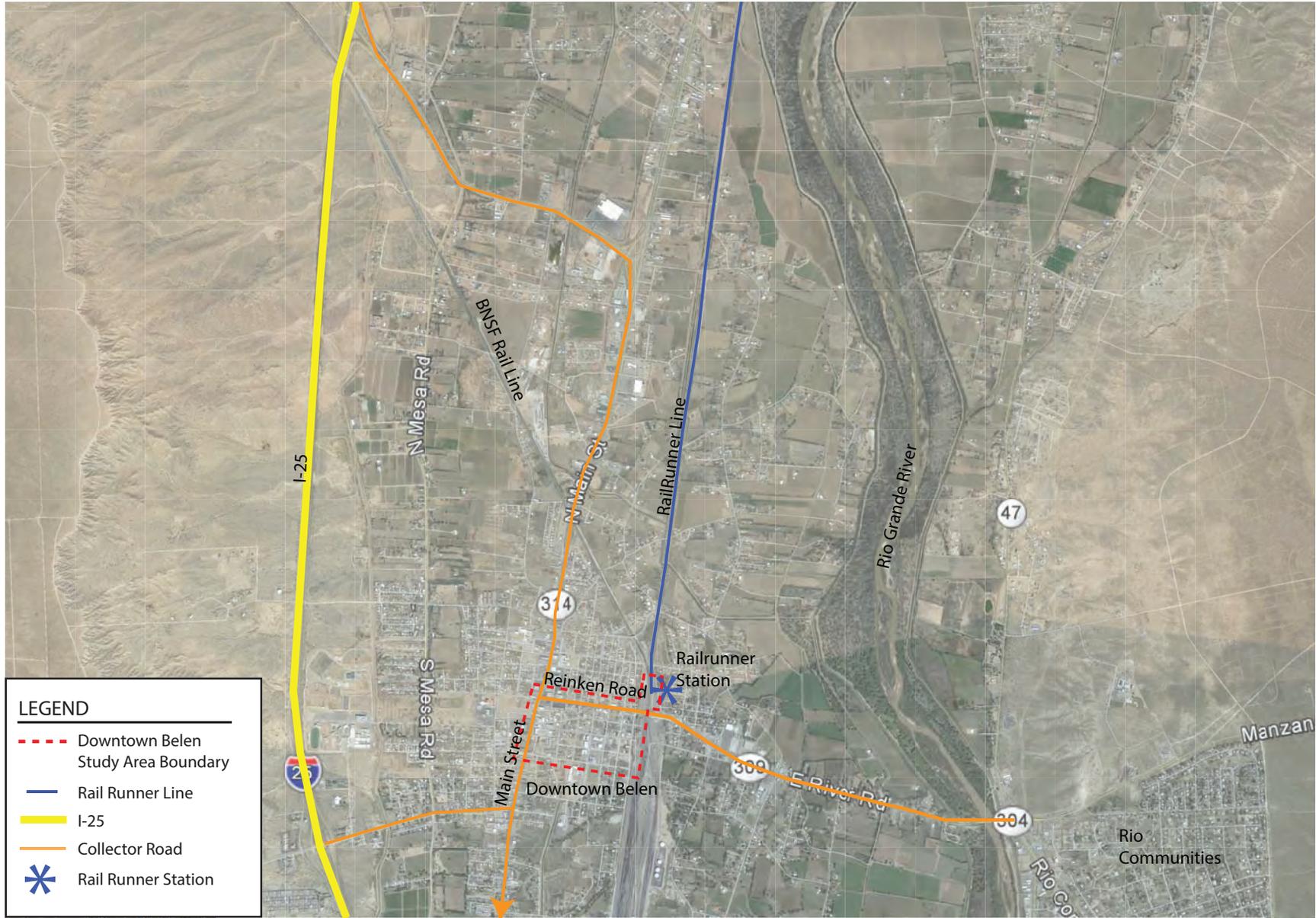


FIGURE 1. BELEN VICINITY MAP

1 MILE 

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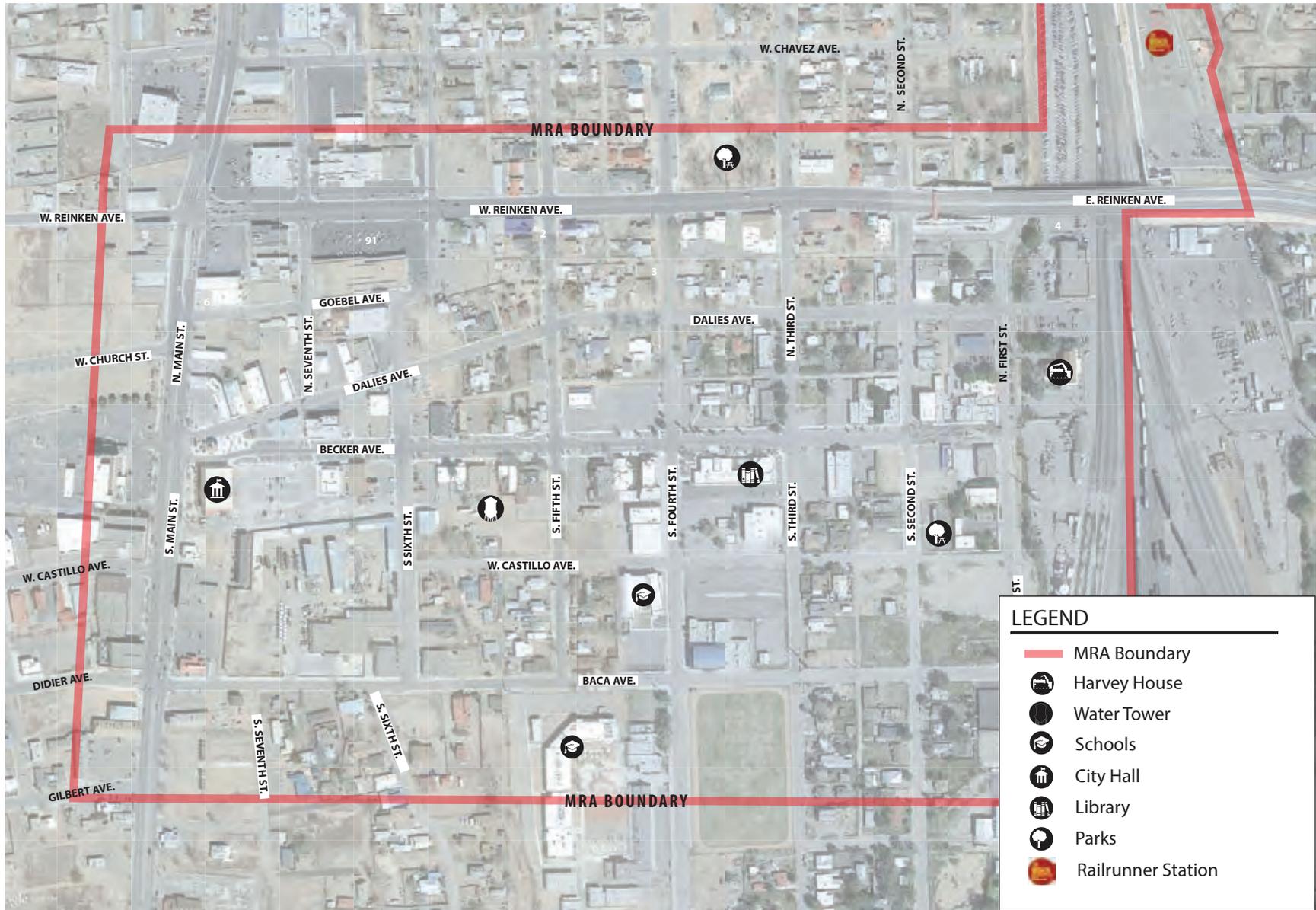


FIGURE 2. BELEN DOWNTOWN MRA

BACKGROUND



CORNER OF BECKER AND DALIES, 1910

Early activity centered around the Plaza Vieja—near what is the today the intersection of Wisconsin and Ross streets. Belen became an official Catholic parish in 1793, marking the first of the annual Our Lady of Belen Fiestas. The Fiestas have been a tradition of immense importance to the community for more than 250 years. By the early nineteenth century, a Catholic church had been built on the plaza. When the first church collapsed due to water damage in 1855, a new church was built in what had become known as New Town.

Camino Real trade increased when New Mexico became a U.S. territory in 1848. Belen soon attracted a sizeable contingent of immigrant German traders. These men included Louis Huning and his nephew John Becker, who emigrated from Germany to join the family business. Felipe Chavez loaned Becker money to open his own mercantile in 1877—the beginning of a long and successful career in Belen. Becker brought relatives from Germany and elsewhere in the states—including nephews Carl Dalies and Charles Reinken—to help run the business. Another local merchant—Fred Scholle—was also part of the Huning family. Other Germans in Belen included storeowner Julius Freudenthal, who served as Belen’s Postmaster during the 1860s.



EARLY TRAIN DEPOT

The Camino Real was superseded by the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway in 1880, and Belen became a stop on the route south to El Paso. The early twentieth century decision to create an eastern railroad line through nearby Abo Pass was hugely beneficial to the little agricultural and ranching community. Completed in 1908, the Belen Cutoff quickly became part of the most popular east-west transcontinental railroad route. Wooed by Chavez and Becker, the AT&SF built a roundhouse, repair shops, an ice plant, coaling station, and large railroad yards in Belen—creating a new job market for locals.

Belen’s transformation into a hub of railroad lines inspired a considerable boom in both population and construction. Many of the community’s early twentieth century structures were constructed of brick in both plain and decorative styles. The New Mexico Manufacturing & Contracting Company of Belen, established in 1907, fired bricks for the local trade.

Becker formed the Belen Town and Improvement Company, and platted the Belen Town Site in a grid on the west side of the railroad tracks.

BACKGROUND



KUHN HOTEL

Main Street, the primary commercial thoroughfare, was lined with mercantiles owned by Chavez, Becker, Becker's brother Frederick, Oscar Goebel, and Frederick Scholle. By design, Becker's mercantile presided over the intersection of Main, Becker, and Dalies (originally Coronado) streets. Becker's steam-powered Roller Mills were situated across the street. He soon built the First National Bank of Belen next to the Roller Mills.

The west end of Dalies Avenue featured numerous one-story brick buildings—a bar called the Cutoff Cantina, a U.S. Post Office, and the Buckland Brothers Drugstore. Several single-family houses were located farther east down the street. The handsome brick edifices of the Belen Central Grade School and Commercial Club were also located nearby.

Several hotels were established in a cluster at the east end of Becker Avenue close to the railroad tracks. Enterprising divorcee Ruth Kuhn built the Kuhn Hotel on the south side of Becker Avenue in 1906. A year later, John Becker built the Belen Hotel across the street for Bertha Rutz, his children's longtime nanny. Railroad employee Thomas Seery constructed the Central Hotel in 1909. By the end of the decade, the

Mission Revival style AT&SF depot and Harvey House were completed trackside.

By 1920, Belen had been designated as a village. Modern amenities such as electricity, gas, water, and telephone services soon followed. The shipping and trading center for regional agricultural commerce, Belen saw the shipping of much alfalfa, oats, corn, and fruit. Becker's Roller Mills was the largest such facility in New Mexico. Brought from Germany to work for Becker, local businessmen Paul Feil and William Ellermeyer built a department store—the only building in town with an elevator—on Main Street in 1928.

The decade of the Great Depression resulted in the reduction of hours for many local railroad workers and the closure of the Harvey House. But New Deal funding made possible the building of Anna Becker Park, a junior high school, and a new Spanish Pueblo Revival style city hall and welfare building. Offering short-term respite from the hardships of the day, the Art Deco style Oñate Theater was built on Dalies Avenue in 1932.

During World War II, the local population of 3,500 people doubled due to increased railroad traffic transporting both soldiers and supplies. The Harvey House reopened as an AT&SF Reading Room for railroad workers. Many residents within the town tended gardens, chickens, and livestock on their properties. Free Oñate Theater movie tickets were given to local children if they helped collect scrap metal needed by the war effort.

During the postwar era, the major north-south road through New Mexico followed the route of the Camino Real. Belen thus found itself located along NM 1 first, then El Camino Real Highway, until the construction of Interstate 25 there during the early 1960s. Belen became a city in 1966.

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The era of the 1970s was one of change for the railroads. Technological advances in railroad operation led to the closure of many stations and the consolidation of lines. With fewer employees necessary to operate the railroad, the AT&SF closed the Belen Reading Room in 1980. The following years saw the building's use first as a community center, and finally as the Harvey House Museum. Today the restored Doodlebug locomotive is a draw for railroad enthusiasts.

Though the greatest days of traveling the Iron Rails are over, the railroad continues to be a positive influence on Belen. BNSF is one of the major employers in Belen, which is still a major railroad refueling station. Agriculture is still a factor in the local economy, though not as significant as it once was. Belen's annual Matanza pig roast claims to be the largest in the world. In the last decades, Belen has become a popular shooting location for Hollywood movies. Today with a population of more than 7,000, Belen is also a bedroom community of Albuquerque, with commuting to Albuquerque and other communities facilitated by I-25 and the Rail Runner commuter rail corridor.

2. PLANNING FRAMEWORK

2.1 COMMUNITY PROCESS

Two major activities were conducted during the preparation of the draft plan. These included focus groups and a general public meeting. Once the draft was completed, the document was reviewed by stakeholders, City staff, the Belen MainStreet Partnership and the public. The final draft document was presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission and Belen City Council.

February Focus Groups

A series of four focus groups targeted to specific stakeholder groups was conducted on February 24, 2015. Participants were invited to the meeting that covered their issues but were able to attend any meeting that met their schedules. The groups included elected and appointed officials and City staff, the Belen MainStreet Partnership Board, downtown business and property owners, and the Belen arts and cultural

community. A total of 41 people participated on one or more of the meetings.

Public Workshop

A public workshop was held on April 15. The Chamber of Commerce / MainStreet Partnership provided dinner. The consultant team provided an overview of the project purpose, background and the information collected through the focus groups. Four information stations contained information on transportation, housing, economic development and design. Meeting participants rotated around the room and were able to contribute ideas and comments at each station. There were 26 participants representing downtown businesses, property owners, neighborhood residents, the City and the Belen MainStreet Partnership. Summaries of the focus groups and meetings are in Appendices.

2.2 EXISTING PLANS & STUDIES

Several City documents include policies for the MainStreet district and identify needs and redevelopment goals. These documents recognize the importance of downtown to the City's identity, culture, and economic well-being.

Belen Comprehensive Plan (2003)

The Comprehensive Plan is more than 10 years old, but it identifies Central Belen, which includes the Study Area, as the area of much of Belen's commercial land use. The goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan support the development and redevelopment of the downtown district. The Comprehensive Plan notes that there is sufficient vacant land for future new development and many older structures, some of which are historic, that are suitable for redevelopment. The Plan recognizes the importance of rehabilitation and redevelopment of downtown buildings because of the area's unique character and qualities as the "Heart of Belen."

A survey of community residents and key stakeholder interviews, conducted as part of the Comprehensive Plan, identified the following issues:

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- Belen should retain its character, culture, friendly atmosphere and historic structures.
- Stakeholders were concerned about the condition of the local economy, community and appearance, and the need to provide services to a growing population.

Goals related to downtown include the following:

Land Use Goal A: Preserve and enhance the unique character and historical culture of Belen.

- Provide support and incentives to preserve historic structures such as: the Belen Hotel, the Central Hotel, the Harvey House, the Felipe Chavez House [not within the downtown district] and other historic residences.
- Redefine and regulate the designated historic district which is currently located near the railroad terminal.
- Promote and support the development of a combined historic and cultural district to accommodate the local arts community.
- Use zoning and other regulatory ordinance to maintain historical and cultural elements in the community.
- Development architectural design standards that are appropriate for the community and promote quality, history, and prosperity.

Land Use Goal C: Maintain the appearance of a clean and scenic community.

- Encourage the restoration or re-building of old abandoned buildings in the community that are structurally sound. Intervene as soon as possible on buildings if owners are not maintaining them.

Land Use Goal F: Provide adequate housing for all residents of the City of Belen.

- Provide opportunities for multi-family housing units to be located in areas where higher density is acceptable and designed in a manner that would be compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods

Economic Development Goal O: Support and promote the local business community.

- Preserve and protect historic and cultural attractions (Harvey House, Belen Hotel, railroad depot) as a means of attracting tourism.
- Encourage tourist-oriented businesses such as restaurants, galleries, and small specialty shops to locate in the downtown area and along Belen's Main Street.

The City has accomplished a number of the goals related to the MainStreet district, including the designation of a MainStreet district, recognition and preservation of historic structures, and efforts to stabilize and redevelop the Old City Hall. However, in spite of these policies and actions, the MainStreet district has not rebounded economically.

City of Belen Strategic Growth Plan (2010)

The Strategic Growth Plan, adopted in 2010, identifies the Belen Center as one of five centers of economic activity in the City. It notes that this is the Central Business District for Belen as well as the civic focal point of the community and the location of established residential neighborhoods. The future of Becker Avenue, which is promoted as the “Heart of Belen”, is envisioned as an entertainment area with stores, restaurants, galleries, and civic buildings. The district’s focus for the local arts community, historic character, development pattern, distinctive architectural styles, and connection to the Rail Runner are seen as assets. The Strategic Plan identifies the Downtown Corridor (Main Street through downtown) and the Reinken/River Road Corridor as important in linking downtown to other activity centers and the region.

Goals for the Belen Center promote a walkable area in combination with mixed-use development, with the ultimate goal of a vibrant downtown area for both residents, employees, and tourists. The strategy is to encourage development and redevelopment within the district and surrounding the Rail Runner station.

It should be emphasized that while the City and the Belen MainStreet Partnership have worked to achieve the vision for Belen Center that

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is outlined in the Strategic Growth Plan, the research conducted for the Metropolitan Redevelopment Act (MRA) Designation Report (see Appendix A) indicates that the additional interventions enabled by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Act would help stimulate development and redevelopment that is not currently happening on its own.

City of Belen Affordable Housing Plan (2013)

This plan describes existing housing conditions and analysis the affordability of the available housing stock. The plan also recommends a multi-pronged approach to improve housing opportunities in Belen.

Heart of Belen Marketing Plan (2006)

This strategic marketing plan focused on the “Heart of Belen” as a unique place, with the anticipation that Belen can capitalize on regional job growth and the Rail Runner through the train station, landscaping and pedestrian improvements. Revitalization was seen as a proactive step to creating economic growth in Belen. Key recommendations were:

- Plazas to be located at Main and Becker (“Main” gateway) and at the eastern end of Becker (the “Gate”)
- Transformation of the Old City Hall Buildings into the Belen Cultural Center, including performing arts, art exhibits and art programs
- Implementation of a Marketing Action Plan, including brand development, infrastructure improvements and communication

Part of the infrastructure envisioned for the Heart of Belen is complete, including the western plaza, streetscape improvements along Becker, the Rail Runner station, and a pedestrian connection from the station to the Heart of Belen. The City and the Belen MainStreet Partnership have secured funds for the initial improvements to the Old City Hall. The Marketing Action Plan included several ideas for physical improvements that are in process or have not been implemented and comprise catalytic projects for the Downtown Master Plan/MRA Plan. These are:

- Complete the Belen Cultural Center
- Complete the eastern gateway and landscape improvements on Becker Ave

- Develop a multifamily housing project
- Develop the Water Tower site
- Provide for sponsorship of banners and planters and identify sources of matching project funds

Program enhancements recommendations include increasing the number of festivals as well as regular year-round events activities and increasing the number of unique retail opportunities, including art galleries, antique shops, bookstores, specialty stores, and food offerings.

Old Belen City Hall Assessment Report (2014)

The assessment report documents existing conditions and recommends a preservation plan for the building. The report assesses the character of the building, the condition of building elements and the status of the building with respect to current building codes. The consultant developed a site plan, floor plans, elevations based on existing WPA Architect notes and reports and field measurements. The preservation plan includes cost estimates for adaptive reuse as a museum, offices and space for a theater and community gatherings.

Belen MainStreet Community Economic Assessment (2014)

This assessment describes the Belen MainStreet area as it compares to Belen, Valencia, and the State. The report provides information and analysis to guide economic development in the study area. The assessment includes information on demographics, employment patterns, gross receipts and pull factors, MainStreet district business and employment composition, and regional and local trade area analysis. Detailed findings of this report are included in the *Market Study* section of this document.

Belen Station Area Planning Study (2009)

The MRCOG sponsored a series of station area plans at New Mexico Rail Runner station sites along its length within the MRCOG region, from Belen to Bernalillo. The Belen Station Area Planning Study includes the area within a ½ mile radius of the station site with a particular focus on opportunities within ¼ mile, or a five minute walk. The study evaluated existing land use and development patterns, key

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frontages and gateways, pedestrian circulation and connections, bicycle routes and parks and plazas within the area, along with issues specific to the station site such as station access, commuter parking, and connecting transit service.

Belen Rail Runner Station, Infrastructure & Development Workshop Report (2009)

This report was drafted from the outcomes of a public workshop lead by the City of Belen and the Mid-Regional Council of Governments (MRCOG) as a follow up to the station area planning study and the design of the pedestrian bridge that crosses the Reinken Avenue overpass. The workshop aimed to discuss and coordinate infrastructure improvements surrounding the Rail Runner Station that would continue the implementation of the station area planning study. It resulted in the selection of eight projects for further study and design:

- Landing area south of the pedestrian bridge
- 1st Street reconfiguration
- Harvey House Plaza
- 2nd Street Plaza
- Becker Avenue between 3rd and 1st Streets
- Arrival Park
- Commercial redevelopment east of the station
- Reinken Avenue reconfiguration

Belen Downtown Vision (2011)

This study was prepared by students of from the School of Architecture and Planning of the University of New Mexico and the staff of the MainStreet program. This study examines the urban fabric of the downtown core and proposes specific physical interventions. Twelve sites are chosen as catalyst projects to aid the redevelopment of the downtown study area.

Envisioning the Future of Belen, UNM DPAC (2004)

This student project was conducted by University of New Mexico Design and Planning Assistance Center (DPAC), as a studio class in the School of Architecture and Planning. The final report identified three important districts – the railyard, the acequia along 1st Street, and Becker Avenue. Key ideas:

- Housing near the rail station
- Path along the acequia
- Infill along the acequia pathway
- Activating empty spaces through public parks and gardens
- Redevelopment along 1st Street
- Becker Avenue infill as a “gallery district” with cafes, galleries and commercial/residential mixed use, including live-work spaces
- The report also noted the significance of the water tower as a landmark and suggested ways to incorporate it into public art.

Walkable Belen, Research and Analysis (no date)

Prepared by UNM Valencia students, this project is a comprehensive assessment of land uses and walkability through downtown. The assessment noted pedestrian opportunities and suggested locations for way-finding signage to address different purposes:

- Informational kiosks
- Vehicle directional signage
- Pedestrian directional signage
- Destination point signage

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III. EXISTING CONDITIONS

This chapter describes the existing physical conditions within downtown Belen, highlighting the many assets and opportunities within the District. Although downtown has struggled to attract and retain businesses and has a number of vacant properties, there are a numerous assets that can be utilized to catalyze future redevelopment. These include historic buildings, city owned properties, existing landmarks such as the water tower, the recently completed improvements to Becker Ave, and downtown's high level of walkability.

1. LAND USE

Much of the land uses along the Main Street corridor, Reinken Street, and Becker Avenue, are commercial generally abutted by residential neighborhoods.

Public institutions along Becker Ave. include City Hall, the Belen Public Library, the Police Department, the State Motor Vehicle and Public Health Departments, the Municipal Court, and at the corner of Becker Ave. and Main Street, the City Water Department. Other public institutions in the study area include the Anna Becker Park located on the north side of Reinken Ave. and Belen Middle School and Infinity High School on the south side of the study area.

Cultural resources include the Old City Hall, the Belen Hotel, the Central Hotel, the Harvey House and a number of other historic buildings. The Belen Hotel and Harvey House are on the National Register of Historic Places, and many other buildings are significant to the history of Belen.

Scattered throughout the area are also a large number of empty or under-utilized lots as well as buildings that are vacant and/or in need of repair. Some of the lots are undeveloped; others are used for surface parking. Many of the commercial buildings are vacant or under-utilized (**Figure 3**).

1.1 LAND OWNERSHIP

Most of the land in downtown is privately owned, with many parcels owned for generations by long-time Belen families. The eastern edge of the study area is owned by the Santa Fe Railroad.

As shown in **Figure 4**, there are a number of lots owned by public agencies and institutions. Purple parcels are owned by the City of Belen, yellow parcels are federally-owned land, red parcels are state-owned land, and blue parcels are owned by the Belen Public School District.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

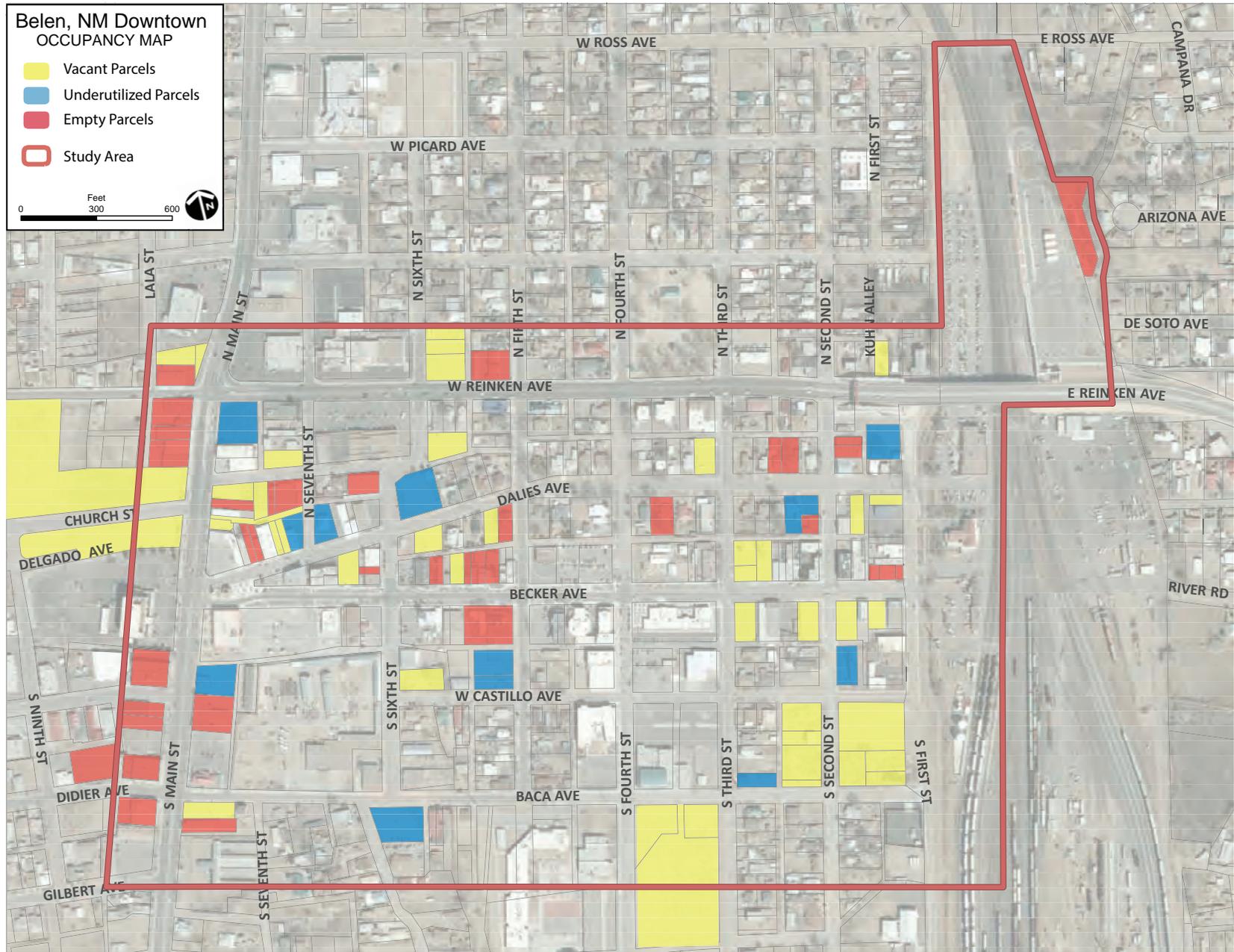


FIGURE 3. BELEN DOWNTOWN OCCUPANCY MAP

EXISTING CONDITIONS

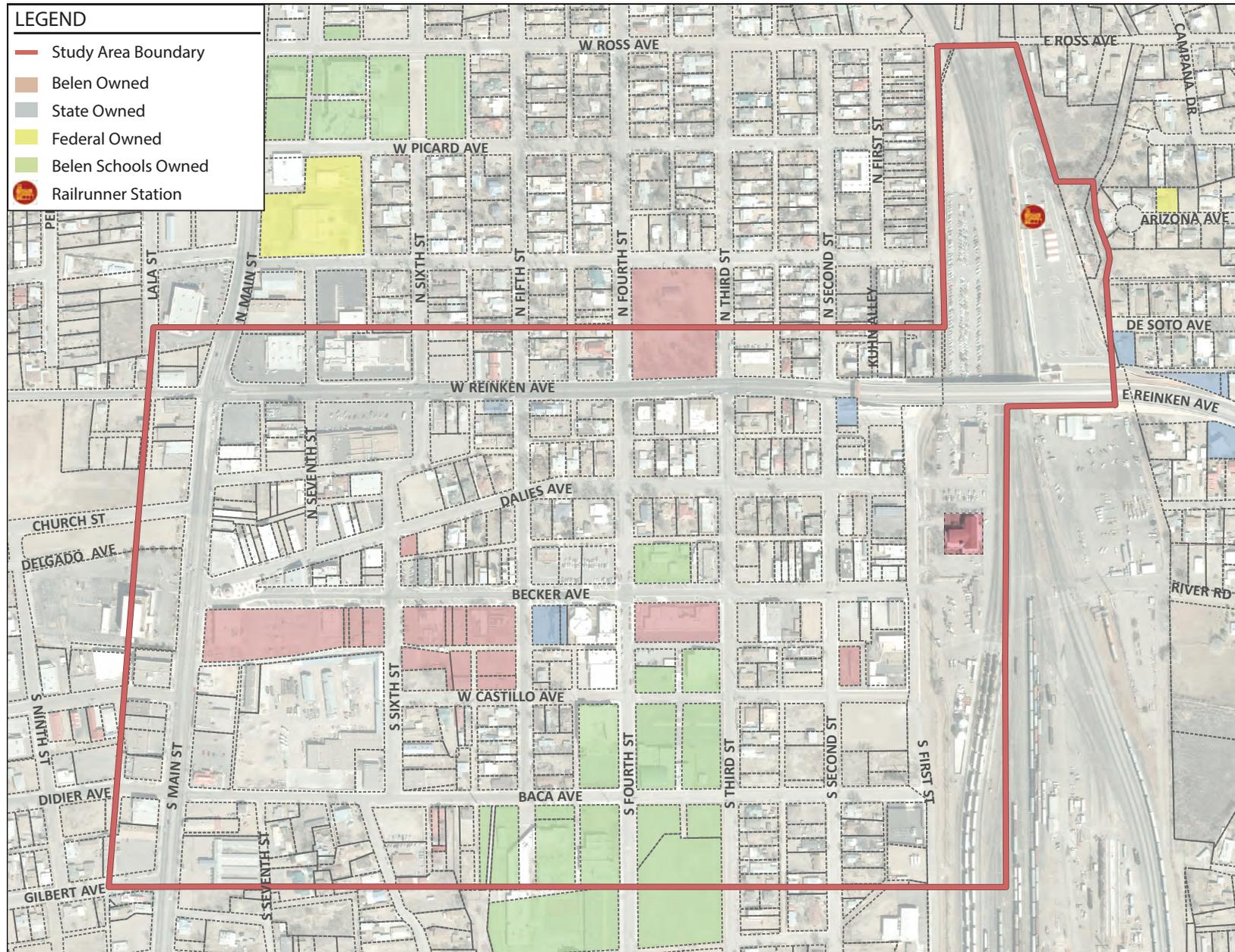


FIGURE 4. PUBLICLY OWNED LAND



1.2 CITY OF BELEN ZONING CODE

There are a number of development and design regulations set forth by the existing zoning code. The area is subject to these regulations which have been drafted to preserve and enhance the culture and history of downtown as well as to improve quality of life and to create a safe environment.

Figure 5 shows the zoning districts that apply in the study area. Key requirements of the applicable zoning districts are described below.

R-1 Single-Family Residential (Yellow)

Portions of the planning area around Anna Becker Park are zoned Single-Family Residential or R-1. This zone is targeted to residential uses with a density of one dwelling unit per lot and a minimum lot size is 6,000 square feet. The front setback is 20 feet and the rear setback is 15 feet. Maximum allowable building height is 35 feet. Churches, schools, and parks are permitted uses.

R-2 Multifamily Residential (Orange)

The R-2 Multifamily Residential zone applies to parcels along Baca Avenue and the residential blocks north of Reinken closest to the railroad tracks. The R-2 zone allows for medium density and permits apartments, condominiums, and certain non-residential uses. The minimum lot size is 7,000 square feet with the same setbacks as in the R-1 zone. Maximum allowable building height is 45 feet. Mixed-use residential projects with a combination of medium density residential and permitted commercial uses could potentially be developed in areas zone R-2.

R-2A High Density Residential (Light Green)

The High Density Residential Zone, or R-2A, is not directly represented in the planning area, however this zone abuts the Rail Runner station immediately northeast of the study area, and high-density, transit-oriented development could be a future development type in the most intensely developed areas of downtown. The R-2A zone allows single-family detached and attached dwelling units as well as apartments, condominiums, and certain non-residential uses. The minimum lot size is

4,000 square feet for single-family homes, with a front setback of 10 feet and a rear setback of 15 feet, and a maximum building height of 45 feet.

C-R Commercial/Residential (Light Pink)

The Commercial/Residential Zone, or C-R, applies between Reinken and Baca Avenue from 1st Street almost to 6th Street. This zone allows a mix of uses, including residential, commercial, and retail activities. The minimum lot size for commercial establishments is 4,000 square feet, with a front setback of 20 feet and a rear setback of 15 feet, and a maximum building height of 35 feet.

C-1 General Commercial (Red)

The Main Street frontage and the blocks to and including 6th Street frontage are zoned General Commercial, or C-1. This zone permits retailing, financial services, and personal services. The minimum ground floor area for commercial establishments is 7,000 square feet, with a front setback of 6 feet for commercial structures and 20 feet for residential structures. Maximum building height is 45 feet.

M-C Manufacturing/Commercial (Purple)

The eastern portion of the planning area, along the railroad, is zoned Manufacturing/Commercial, and allows for light manufacturing.

1.3 OVERLAY ZONES

Apart from the standard zoning districts, there are two overlay zones for Main Street and Becker Avenue that pertain to the downtown area. These overlay zones supplement the development and design regulations in the underlying zoning districts and are intended to preserve and enhance the special character of both Main Street and Becker Avenue.

Main Street Overlay Zone

The Main Street Overlay Zone applies to buildings fronting Main Street. This zone was designed to encourage human-scale development and increase overall walkability along Main Street. It includes design guidelines that restrict building height, setback, and the overall form of

EXISTING CONDITIONS

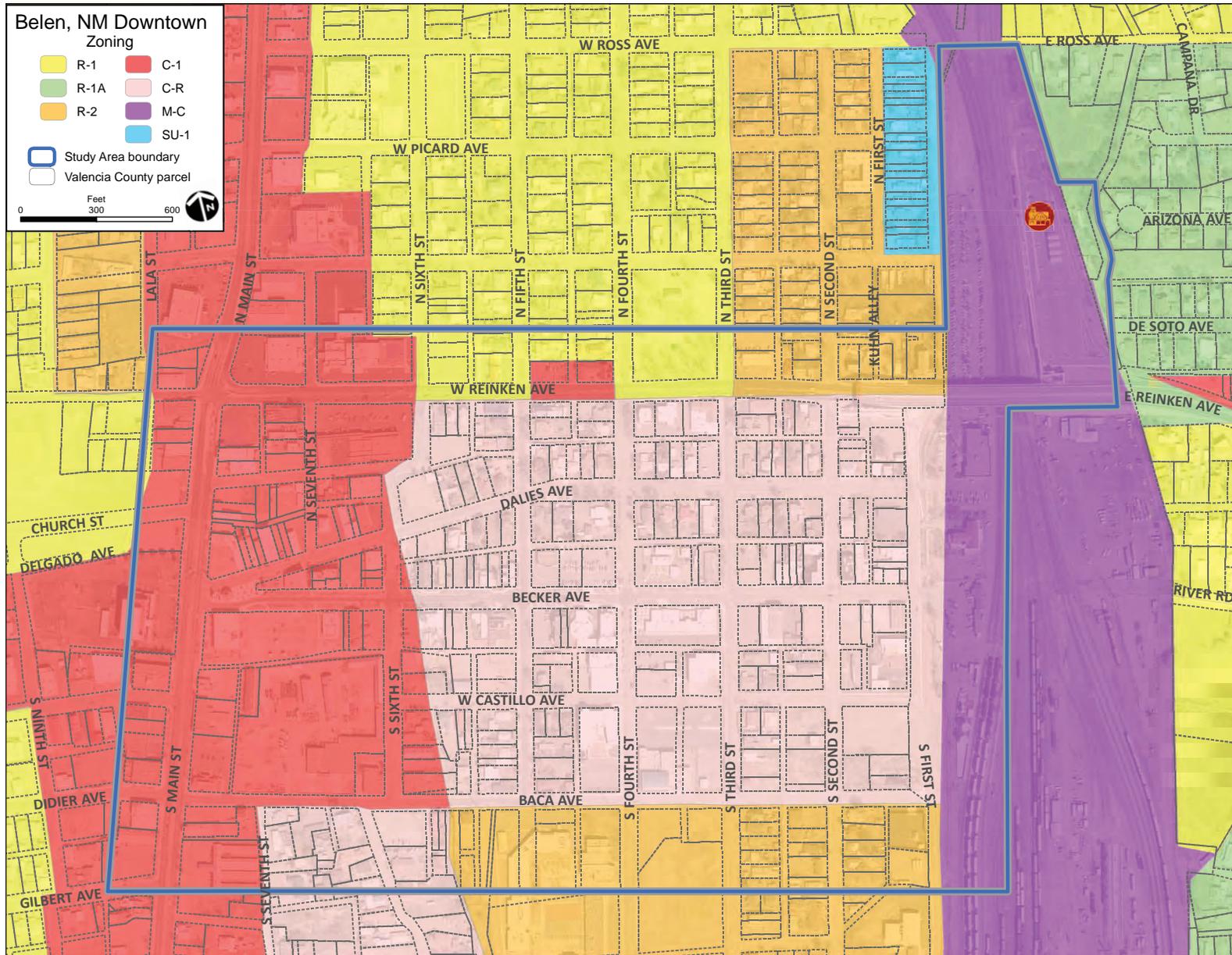


FIGURE 5. DOWNTOWN BELEN ZONING DISTRICTS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

the building. It intends to encourage small-town character by supporting a smaller building block design. Property owners must submit a site plan for any proposed development and improvements to property within the overlay zone.

Highlights of the regulations in the Main St. overlay zone include:

- Setbacks: A minimum setback of ten feet is required in this zone, measured from the building to the lot line contiguous with Main Street.
- Building façade: Encourages earth tone material on the exterior façade, as well as brick or stone façades.
- Building height: Buildings shall not be taller than 45 feet.
- Pedestrian walkways.: Minimum of ten feet from the curb should be preserved/developed for pedestrian walkways and uses.
- Off-Street Parking: It is suggested that off street parking be located behind buildings. When planting areas are visible from Main Street, the lots should be screened by vegetation, planters, or similar means.
- Street trees: Every 30 feet within ten feet of the curb.
- Area lighting: lighting shall conform to the Night Sky Protection Act for outdoor lights to preserve energy and dark skies.

Becker Avenue Overlay Zone

The Becker Avenue Overlay Zone was designed to promote revitalization efforts of Becker Avenue and to maintain the special character of mixed-use developments along the Becker Ave. corridor between Main Street and 1st Street. Similar to the Main Street Overlay Zone, it is also intended to encourage pedestrian activities and create a gathering place for the community. It calls for the protection and preservation of historical and cultural significant properties along Becker Avenue. For all proposed developments, a site plan, sketches of proposed buildings, and a landscaping plan are required.

Highlights of the regulations in the Becker Avenue overlay zone include:

- Building façade: To preserve the historic character of the area, at least 50 percent of the total façade on new or reconstructed buildings fronting Becker Avenue should be composed of brick. Bold

- painted patterns and “curtain walls” are not allowed.
- Pedestrian walkways: Minimum of twelve feet from the curb should be preserved/developed for pedestrian walkways and uses.
- Off-Street Parking: Parking requirements may be reduced by 50 percent with development review.
- Street trees: Every 30 feet within five feet of the curb.
- Area lighting: outdoor lighting is mentioned but does not reference the Night Sky Protection Act to preserve dark skies.
- Drainage: Where there is no stormwater drainage collection system available, on-site stormwater retention should be directed to the back of the property.

2. TRANSPORTATION & PARKING

In order for downtown Belen to succeed, the transportation and parking systems must support and incentivize reinvestment and redevelopment. In other words, transportation and parking must achieve multiple community goals (e.g. economic development, community identity and placemaking, public health, etc.) and not just a one-dimensional goal of accommodating vehicles. Most importantly for downtown Belen, transportation and parking policies and investments must *create* economic value to catalyze private-sector investment. A summary of existing transportation and parking conditions in downtown Belen is shown in **Figure 6**, with the following sections providing greater detail.

2.1 IMPORTANT DOWNTOWN STREETS

Downtown Belen’s grid street network and network of alleys provide excellent access throughout the downtown. One of the major opportunities and constraints for the future revitalization of downtown Belen is the fact that downtown is bounded on two sides by New Mexico state highways. The evolution of these two corridors using a “complete streets” context-sensitive approach is critical for the future success of downtown. To ensure this happens, the City and MainStreet should work with NMDOT to develop a corridor plan for Reinken and Main Street in the near future, as discussed in the Catalytic Projects section. While a corridor plan was beyond the scope of this project, the corridor plan should build off the recommendations put forth in this plan which have broad support in concept from the City, NMDOT, and downtown stakeholders (including residents, merchants, and property owners).

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Main Street (NM 314)

Main Street (NM State Highway 314) is downtown's main commercial street and a state highway. The street extends from I-25 at the southernmost Belen exit to become Isleta Boulevard. Land use along the road are mostly commercial, including several banks, Hub Furniture, a Dollar Tree, restaurants, and a few smaller boutique shops near the intersection of Main Street and Reinken. Recent upgrades have included on-street parking, additional landscaping, and sidewalks. NMDOT has installed left turn lanes in the center medians and dedicated free right lanes at key intersections and at new businesses.

Figure 7 shows the varying cross-section dimensions of Main St. as it approaches downtown and then passes through downtown. Key elements of the street include:

- The Main St. right-of-way width varies between approximately 80 - 105 feet, with:
 - Four through lanes (2 in each direction);
 - A center turn lane;
 - Dedicated free right turn lanes in some locations;
 - On-street parking on a few blocks; and
 - 5 -10 foot sidewalks on both sides of the street.
- The current speed limit is 35 MPH, which could be reduced through downtown to encourage slower speeds and a more walkable street.
- Landscaping improvements have been installed along most blocks from Goebel Avenue on the north to approximately Camino del Llano on the south.
- Main St. has a signalized intersection with right and left turn lanes at Reinken Ave.

Becker Ave

Becker Ave is a two-lane local street that runs east/west thorough downtown, connecting with Dalies Ave and Main Street on the western end, and the railroad tracks on the east. Land uses along this road include many public institutions, including the Belen Municipal Court, Belen Library, State MVD, Police Department, and City Offices. Several smaller businesses are also on Becker, although large scale retail establishments (and pedestrian generators) remain along Main Street.

However, the roadway is home to many historic buildings, including a cluster of buildings near 2nd Street, which has been a busy filming location.

Recent improvements have been installed along the roadway that added landscaping, sidewalk improvements, angled parking, pedestrian furniture, new street trees, and drainage improvements. Perceptually, this has visually “narrowed” the roadway, making a more pedestrian-friendly and walkable environment. The angled parking along both sides of the street has especially contributed to the narrowing of the road, and could be continued throughout downtown.

Reinken Ave

Reinken Ave. is a major roadway in Belen and the vicinity, providing an important east-west connection between Rio Communities and Main Street / NM 309 and I-25. The Reinken Ave. railroad overpass provides a grade-separated crossing of the BNSF railroad tracks and pedestrian access from the Rail Runner Station to downtown (via “switchback ramps” that lead from the at-grade station platforms to the elevated Reinken Ave. overpass). Reinken Ave. is also the only connection across the Rio Grande in Belen, linking to NM 47 and Rio Communities to the east.

Land uses along the street are mostly retail uses and some civic uses, including a Lowes Grocery Store between 6th and 7th Streets, a US Bank across the street and Anna Becker Park. Recent improvements to Reinken Ave. include raised medians with bollards to create right-in/right-out (RIRO) traffic pattern at certain intersections.

Participants at public meetings noted that the vehicle speeds and crossing distance on Reinken Ave. create a barrier for pedestrians between downtown and the neighborhoods to the north and between downtown and the Rail Runner Station

Figure 8 shows the varying cross-section dimensions of Reinken Ave. as it passes through downtown. Key aspects of the roadway cross include:

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- East of Main St., Reinken Ave. right-of-way is between 70 - 80 feet with:
 - Four through lanes (2 in each direction);
 - A center turn lane; and
 - 5 foot sidewalks on both sides of the street.
- The current speed limit is 35 MPH, which could be reduced through downtown to encourage slower speeds and a more walkable street.
- There are existing traffic lights and crosswalks at 3rd Street and 6th Street, which are important pedestrian links between Anna Becker Park and the surrounding neighborhood to downtown.
- At the Main St. intersection, Reinken Ave. has one west-bound through lane and right and left turn lanes onto Main St.
- West of Main St., Reinken Ave. is a two-lane road.

2.2 TRAFFIC VOLUMES

Annual traffic counts collected by the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) for the downtown segments of Reinken Ave. and Main Street are summarized below.

Main Street

For Main Street, traffic volumes have been falling since 2002 along all segments through downtown. The latest traffic counts for downtown segments were:

Area	Year	Total Vehicles	AM Peak	PM Peak
North of Reinken Ave	2011	21,088 (16,396 AWDT)	1,308	1,697
South of Reinken to Becker	2012	15,312 (14,099 AWDT)	1,064	1,242
South of Becker to Baca	2014	13,431 (10,748 AWDT)	877	1,115

Reinken Ave

Traffic volumes on Reinken have risen slightly or remained steady since 2002 along segments through downtown. The latest traffic counts for downtown segments were:

Area	Year	Total Vehicles	AM Peak	PM Peak
East of 1st Street (2014)	2014	18,433 (16,180 AWDT)	1,173	1,560
West of First Street	2012	19,278 (17,609 AWDT)	1,249	1,477
East of Main Street	2013	17,476 (15,181 AWDT)	1,008	1,408
West of Main Street	2012	3,438 (3,151 AWDT)		

Future Roadway Improvements

The daily volumes on both of the Reinken Ave. and Main St. corridors are low relative to the existing roadway capacity, and have been steady or declining since 2002 (see **Chart 1** and **Chart 2**). The low volumes along Reinken and Main Street indicate that:

- At a minimum, additional dedicated free right lanes do not appear to be warranted anywhere on the Main St. or Reinken Ave. corridors based on the existing or likely future traffic volumes. This is especially true on the segments with the lowest traffic volumes where they have been recently required; and
- As a longer term intervention, a “lane diet” (where lanes are narrowed) and/or a “road diet” (where lanes are eliminated) – that build off of NMDOT’s and the City’s recent streetscape improvements – might be justified on the downtown segments of both Reinken Ave. and Main St. This approach would be done in order to implement a complete streets, context-sensitive, “rightsizing” design approach as is appropriate to a downtown context.
- A road diet would allow for the installation of dedicated bike lanes and/or on street parking. This would establish a higher multi-modal level of service for these users.

Such features would reallocate space to pedestrians, bicyclists, or on-street parking and could calm traffic, reduce incidents of speeding, and potentially reduce the number and severity of crashes along these roadways. Potential strategies to reconfigure these streets are presented in the *Implementation Strategies and Projects* section of this document.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

CHART 1. TRAFFIC COUNTS ON REINKEN

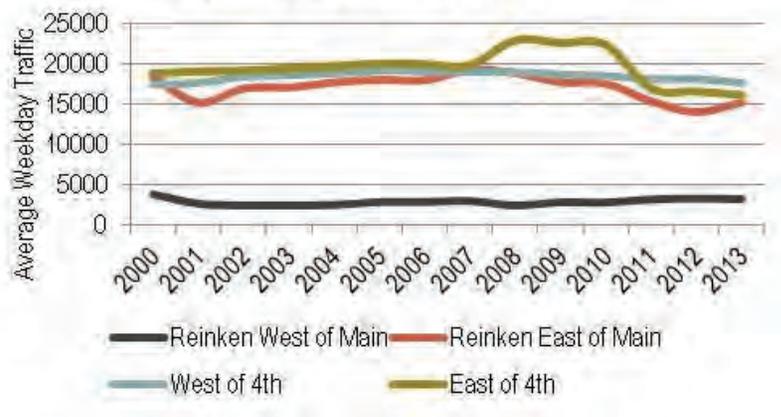
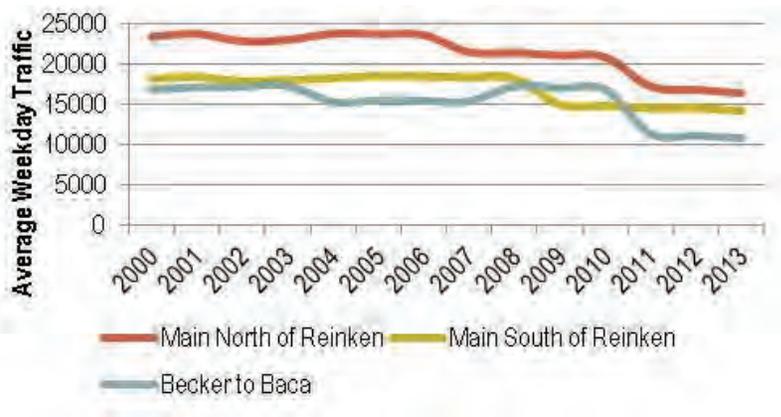


CHART 2. TRAFFIC COUNTS ON MAIN STREET

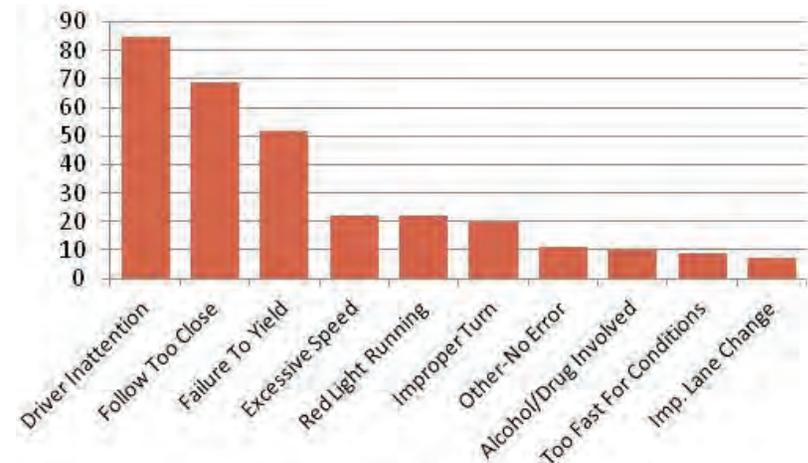


2.3 CRASH DATA

Crash data collected by the NMDOT indicates that over the five years from 2008 through 2012, the highest number of crashes were on Reinken Ave. The Main St./Reinken Ave. intersection experienced the greatest number of crashes, with 69 crashes during this time period. The intersections with the next largest volumes of crashes were at 6th/Reinken and 3rd/Reinken, with 18 and 21 crashes, respectively. Fortunately, there were no reported pedestrian crashes along these two roads, and only 4 bicyclist crashes (3 injury).

Crash data analysis by the Mid Region Council of Governments indicates that the crash rate at the Reinken and Main Street intersection was 1.4 crashes per 1,000,000 vehicles, or slightly above the 1.07 average for the Albuquerque Metropolitan Area. The injury and fatality rate was 0.4 crashes per 1,000,000 vehicles, also a bit above the area average of 0.34. The good news is that crash rates for other intersections along these two roads were below average during this period. The top primary causes of crashes are driver inattention, following too close, and failure to yield. The incidence of most the collision types shown in Chart 3 - as well as the severity of injury and property damage that occur when a collision does happen - could be reduced by reducing the design speed of Reinken and Main through design proposals recommend in this plan (lane diets, road diets, design exceptions to not require free right turn lanes as property redevelops, addition of striped bike lanes, addition of more on-street parking, etc.).

CHART 3. TOP CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO CRASHES



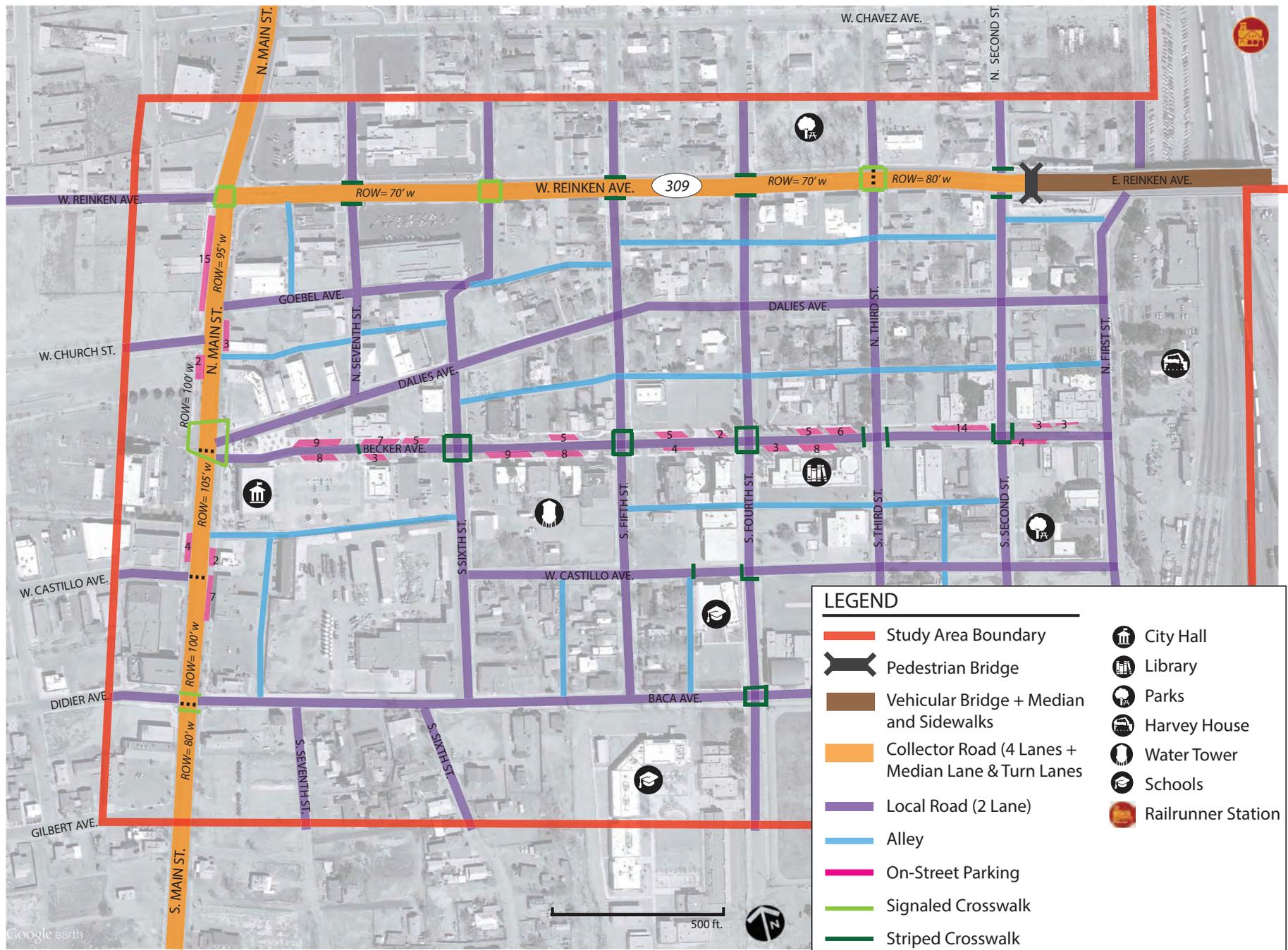


FIGURE 6. EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK AND ON-STREET PARKING

EXISTING CONDITIONS

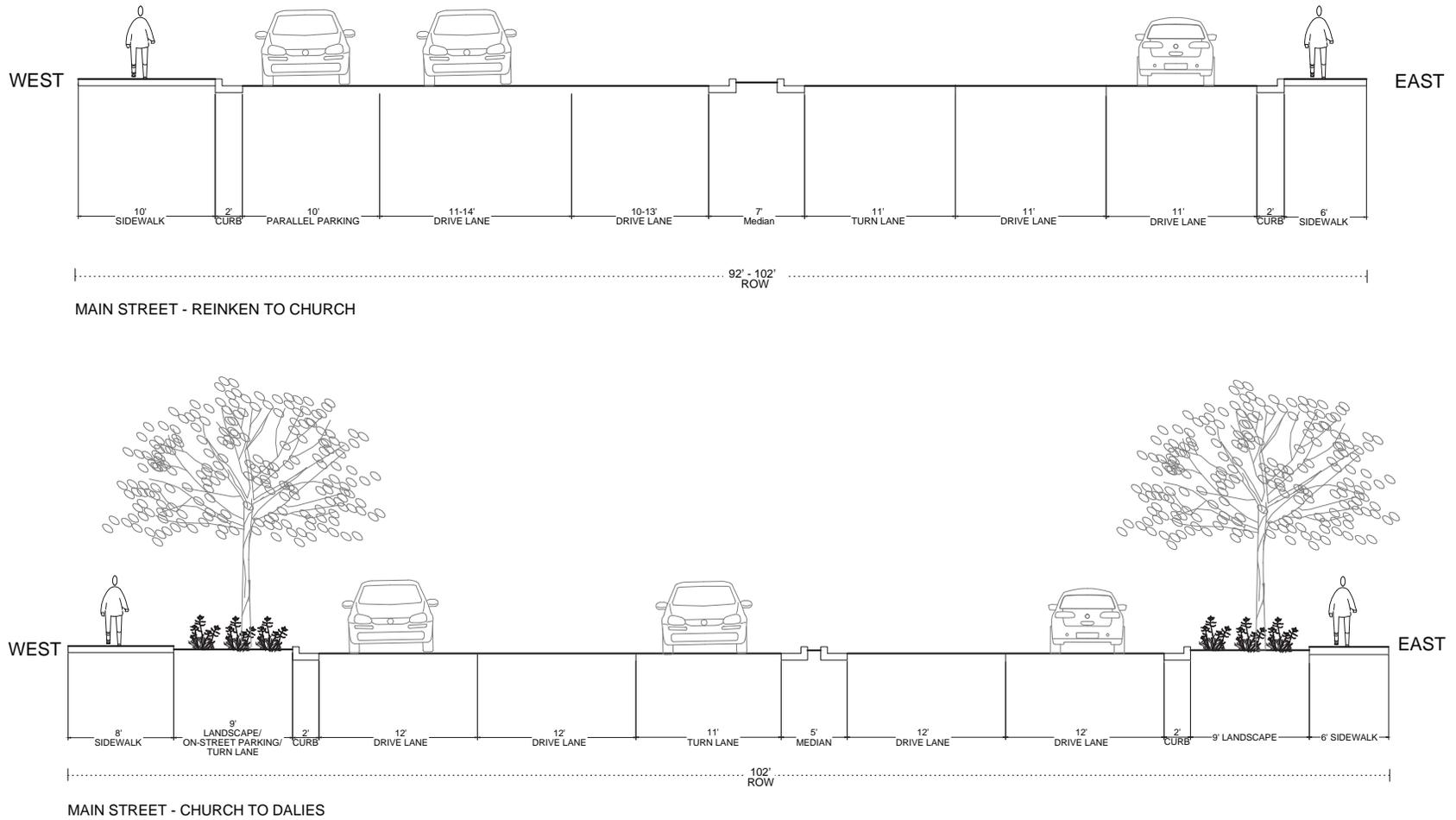


FIGURE 7. EXISTING ROADWAY SECTIONS, MAIN STREET

EXISTING CONDITIONS

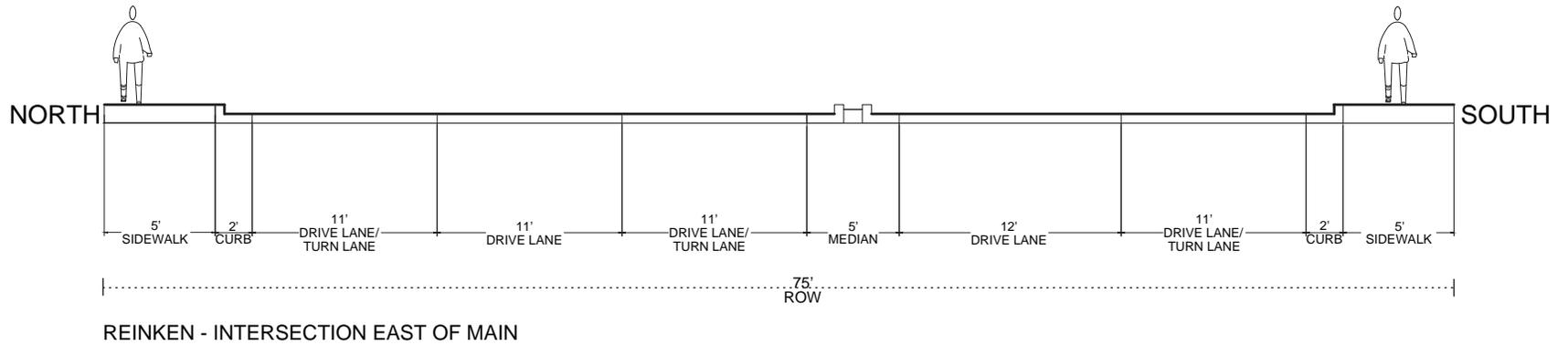
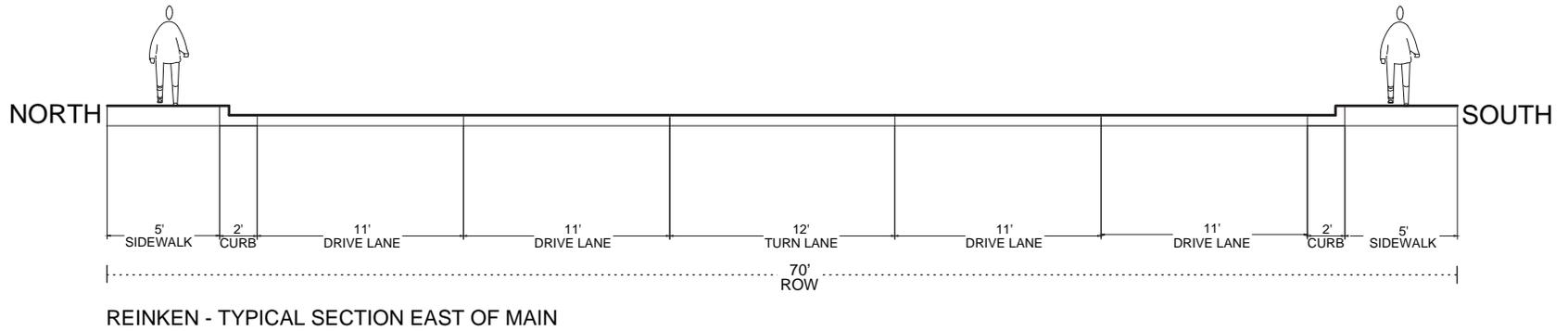


FIGURE 8. EXISTING ROADWAY SECTIONS, REINKEN

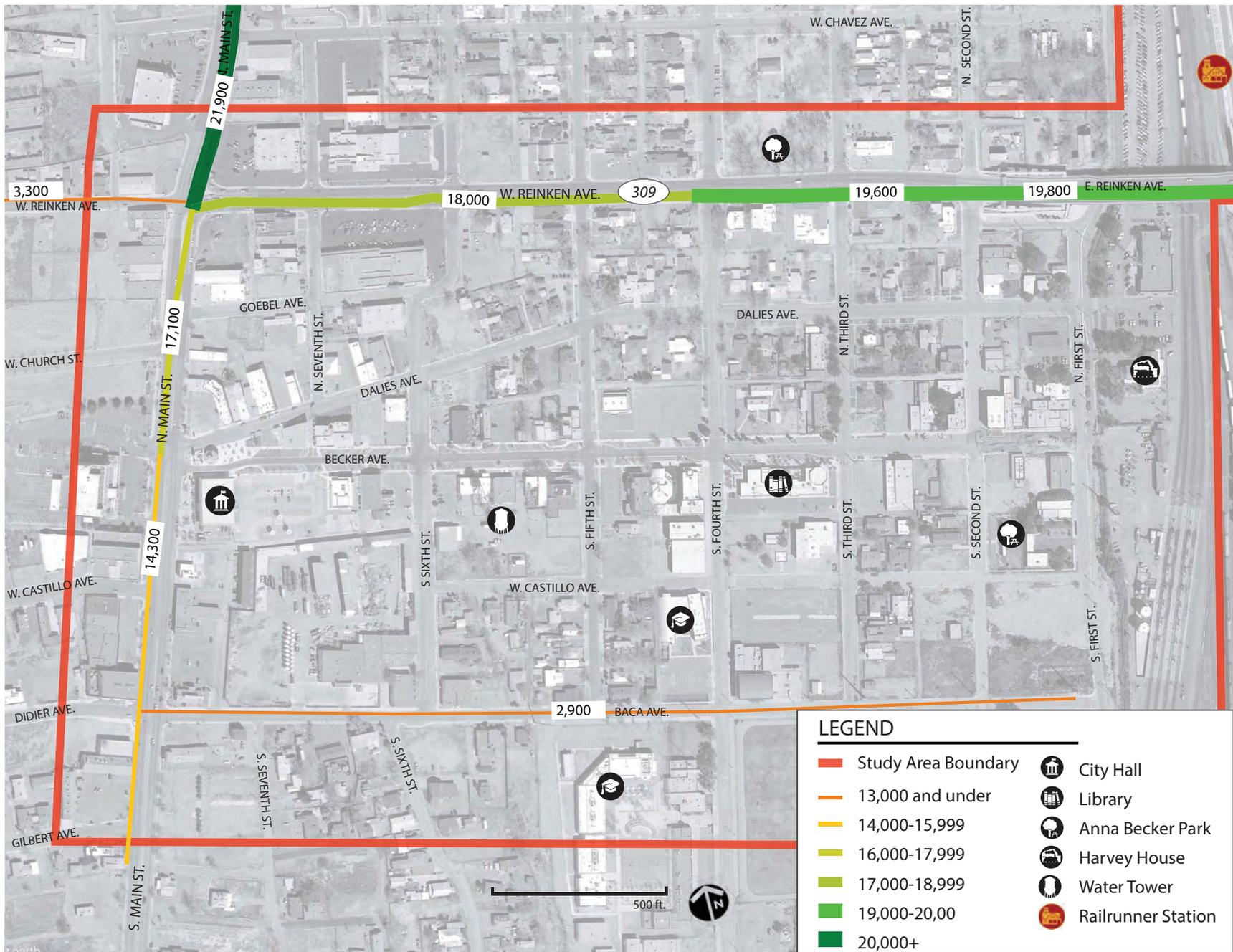


FIGURE 9. TRAFFIC COUNTS

Source: Mid Region Council of Governments and the NM Department of Transportation

2.4 PARKING & ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Parking in downtown includes on-street parking and parking lots. Observation of downtown parking during weekdays indicates that there is more than adequate parking in all parts of downtown, with the possible exception of a few blocks on Main Street at limited peak-demand times of day that have only on-street parking. There are an estimated 1,450 off-street parking spaces and 150 on-street spaces distributed throughout downtown as shown in **Figure 10**. A parking management plan that emphasizes 1) maximizing the availability and turnover of on-street parking spaces, 2) developing shared parking facilities that are located behind buildings where possible and are accessed via side streets and alleys, and 3) better, more consistent signage to indicate where parking facilities are located.

Access management to some lots along Reinken and Main Street is a concern for both business owners and the city. Some lots have several curb cuts along these roads in addition to access off side streets. The presence of multiple curb cuts along these major roads can create an impediment to pedestrians walking on the sidewalks and can create conflict points between turning vehicles and free flowing traffic. Reducing the number of existing curb cuts and limiting future curb cuts through an access management strategy along these streets would help improve the walkability of these streets and limit turning movements to designated intersections.

In addition, dedicated right turn lanes along sections of Main Street have been installed - sometimes at the request of the business owners or NMDOT. The idea is to give drivers direct access to these businesses while also limiting conflict between free flowing traffic. However, these right turn lanes also widen the street, making crossing distances longer for pedestrians. In addition, like multiple curb cuts, they also introduce additional conflict points between turning vehicles and pedestrians. Given the desire to create pedestrian friendly streets, additional dedicated free right lanes do not appear to be warranted anywhere on the Main St. or Reinken Ave. corridors based on the existing or likely future traffic volumes. This is especially true on the segments with the lowest traffic volumes where they have been recently required

Given these conditions, an access management strategy for downtown that limits right turn lanes and encourages parking lot access to locate on side streets would create a more walkable, pedestrian friendly district.

2.5 RIO METRO RMRTD TRANSIT

RMRTD Regional Rail Runner Service

Rail Runner Express service extends from Belen on the south to Santa Fe. Seven northbound and seven southbound trains per day serve Belen. Two trains in the morning provide express service to Santa Fe, and one train runs from Belen to the Albuquerque Transportation Center in downtown Albuquerque. There are two afternoon trains from Belen to Santa Fe, and two evening trains from Belen to downtown Albuquerque. There are four southbound trains from Santa Fe – one in the morning, one mid-day, one later afternoon and one evening. There are two very early morning southbound trains from downtown Albuquerque and one late afternoon train from downtown Albuquerque. Service is designed around commuter schedules, although the afternoon trips for commuters to and from Belen are relatively late in the day. Weekend options are more limited, but there are trains morning, afternoon and evening to and from Santa Fe to Albuquerque.

Total boarding in 2012 were 82,559 passengers, or about 7.3 percent of the station total, which is larger than the total for Los Lunas.

RMRTD Local Bus Services

Rio Metro Valencia provides fixed route service, with one route serving Belen. Route 206 links from the Rail Runner Station to Calle del Llano. Fixed route service extends through downtown along Reinken. Route 206 is scheduled to provide service to and from the Rail Runner, with three routes in the morning from Camino del Llano to the station and three in the evening from the station to Camino del Llano, all timed to meet the train.

Rio Metro Dial-a-Ride offers curb-to-curb service anywhere in Belen between 8 am and 5 pm. Rides must be requested by noon one day in advance, or on Friday for Monday rides.



FIGURE 10. EXISTING SURFACE PARKING

2.6 PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

The existing street pattern is ideal for a pedestrian friendly downtown, reinforcing Belen's small town character. Pedestrian routes within downtown are shown in **Figure 6**.

A pedestrian connection to the Rail Runner is via an overpass along Reinken from the Rail Runner parking lot to 1st Street or 2nd Street and Reinken. Participants in public meetings noted that this connection is challenging because of the height of the overpass and distance from the Rail Runner station to downtown destinations. The Harvey House is about 1/4 miles from the Rail Runner station, but the overpass limits the number of pedestrians who may easily access other downtown amenities.

In addition to the Rail Runner station, key destinations that draw people daily and for special trips include the Harvey House Museum, Belen Public Library, the Doodlebug site, Lowe's grocery store, banks, Belen Middle School, Infinity High School, restaurants, and a number of government offices along Becker. Belen Middle School and Infinity High School bring youth into downtown every day during the school year. Middle school and younger high school students would benefit from being able to walk easily to after school activities at the library, karate, and art studios and other places that offer programs for youth.

The City of Belen has made significant investments in pedestrian amenities along Becker Avenue, including a western gateway and plaza at Becker and Main, landscaping, sidewalks, seating and pedestrian lighting. Participants in public meetings noted a need for similar improvements along north/south streets and on other east/west streets.

A pedestrian trail runs along the acequia on 1st Street through a portion of the study area. Existing studies have noted an opportunity to improve this trail to take advantage of the natural charm of the nearby acequia. There is an opportunity to create additional community connections to this acequia trail and other destinations within downtown. As highlighted in the Implementation and Strategies section of this document, a phased approach to filling in missing sidewalks, installing street furniture, and street trees can be utilized to ensure that the entire downtown district is walkable and pedestrian friendly.

Reinken Overpass

The Reinken Ave overpass connects Downtown to the Belen Rail Runner Station. It consists of an elevated overpass with four through vehicle lanes which extends from 1st Street to Wisconsin Street. A pedestrian bridge traverses the vehicular overpass and connects the Rail Runner station to downtown via ADA accessible "switchback ramps" on either side of the vehicular overpass. While the vehicular overpass and pedestrian bridge allow access between the Rail Runner Station and downtown, it is not easy for pedestrians to navigate. Comments at public meetings identified the difficult access between downtown and the train station as a barrier to residents, employees and visitors who take the train (or would like to). However, the existing pedestrian bridge and switchback ramps are new and expensive improvements and are likely to remain in place for the foreseeable future. For this reason, improving transit and bicycling connections between downtown and the Rail Runner station is the focus of this plan, as discussed in the "implementation section."

2.7 BIKEWAYS

There is currently no dedicated bicycle infrastructure within Downtown Belen. However, both Main Street and Reinken have been designated as bike routes on the Mid-Region Council of Governments Long Range Bikeway System (LRBS). In addition to providing bicycle connections to downtown and the Rail Runner station, these streets form important bicycle connections to the acequia trails and other routes identified in the 2008 Valencia County Mobility Plan. Formalizing these bike routes by installing on-street bike lanes or through other bicycle infrastructure may encourage bicycling within downtown. Additional routes may also be designated to and within downtown, and include directional signage, shared lane markings, "sharrows", or other low cost facilities that would make downtown more bicycle friendly.

3. ASSET INVENTORY

3.1 SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL AND HISTORIC FEATURES AND BUILDINGS

Within and nearby downtown are Belen's most significant historic buildings. These include buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and/or the State Register of Cultural Properties. A number of buildings are not listed on either register but are significant to the history of Belen because of past ownership, existing or prior businesses, or other contributions to Belen's past.

A list of significant buildings is shown in **Table 1**; those that are potential opportunity sites for adaptive reuse or redevelopment are marked with an asterisk. The locations of these buildings (along with images of each) are shown in **Figure 11** and **Figure 12**.

Properties on the National Register of Historic Buildings

At present, four properties in the City of Belen are registered on the State and/or National Historic registry, two of which are found within the downtown area. Two buildings of special note include the Belen Harvey House and the Belen Hotel.

1. **Belen Harvey House.** The Harvey House was constructed in 1901 to serve as a Hotel to the Santa Fe Railroad and is an example of the Mission Revival architectural style. It was constructed as a two-story T-shaped brick structure with a pitched cross-gable roof. In 1910 remodeling it was remodeled by the Santa Fe Railway architect Myron to be a restaurant to serve passengers and to house the Harvey Girl waitresses. The Harvey House was operated between 1910 and 1939 and was the most visible and successful building in Belen during the Belen's heyday as a train hub.
2. **Belen Hotel.** The Belen Hotel is a two-story brick constructed with decorative brick style elements. It is flat-roofed and L-shaped and was built in 1907 to serve the Santa Fe Railroad personnel. Along the first floor, display windows front onto Becker Avenue. The Hotel was built and run by Mrs. Bertha Rutz from 1907 until 1953. 1907 was the year when the Belen railroad cutoff was built, which spurred railroad related economic development in the City.



BELEN HARVEY HOUSE

Source: Kansas Historic Society



BELEN HOTEL

Source: Belen Then and Now

EXISTING CONDITIONS

TABLE 1. CULTURALLY AND HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS IN DOWNTOWN

MAP KEY	NAME	LOCATION	DATE	ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	HISTORIC THEME	NOTES
1	Felipe Chavez House	325 N. Lala St.	1860	Territorial	Camino Real/Santa Fe Trail/Railroad Boom	Not in plan area but very significant; NRHP/SRCP listed
2	Scholle Building	NW corner Main St. and Castillo	1899-1900	Originally Swiss chalet style; greatly modified	German merchant trade, Santa Fe Trail/Railroad	Extremely modified, but this appears to be only remaining mercantile building from early 1900s; current fitness center and vacant storefronts
3	Former Coffee House*	718 Dalies Ave.	Early 1900s?	Stucco; possibly brick construction	Railroad boom if old	Building is part of a contiguous strip of small shops, and may be in early 1900s photo as café; Belen MainStreet Partnership / Chamber of Commerce is in the same block of buildings
4	Buckland Pharmacy	600 Dailies Ave.	1906	No style; brick; greatly modified	Railroad boom	Operated as a pharmacy for more than 100 years
5	Belen Hotel	200 Becker Ave.	1907	Decorative Brick	Railroad boom German merchant trade	Owned by Judy Chicago NRHP/SRCP listed
6	Belen Harvey House	104 North 1st St.	1910	Mission Revival	Railroad boom	Harvey House Museum NRHP/SRCP listed
7	Railroad Depot	106 North 1st St.	1909	Mission Revival—modified some	Railroad boom	Owned by BNSF
8	Brick Building w/ mixtilinear parapet*	109 South 1st St.	Early 1900s?	Modified—stucco with brick false front	Likely Railroad boom;	In old photos, the building looks like a hotel; Recently approved for a crematorium in an existing garage. Crematorium is associated with Noblin Funeral Service.
9	Gil's Bakery	247 Main St.	Early 1900s?	Modified—stucco		Was bakery that is now vacant. Has structural issues
10	Old Central Hotel*	114 Becker Ave.	1909	Decorative brick	Railroad boom	Current owners are renovating the building; plan to store wine from Jaramillo Vineyards
11	Garcia Grocery*	112 Becker Ave.	Early 1900s?	Decorative brick with a false front	Likely Railroad boom based on the style and appearance of the brick	Founded by Estanislado Garcia in 1940. Building housed Eva's Blue Ribbon Chile Products until 2005; family lived in attached brick house to the east; vacant

EXISTING CONDITIONS

MAP KEY	NAME	LOCATION	DATE	ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	HISTORIC THEME	NOTES
12	Sears Kit House	NE corner of Dalies and 5 th	c. 1910	Picturesque cottage	Railroad boom	Private residence
13	Noblin's Funeral Home (Originally Zionist Lutheran Church)	418 Reinken Ave.	1911	Gothic	German merchant influence	
14	Kuhn Hotel*	Under overpass at Reinken and tracks	1924	Rebuilt and relocated after fire; Prairie influence	Railroad boom	Vacant
15	Pete's Cafe	105 North 1st St.	c. 1920s	Spanish / Pueblo Revival; not original style	Pete's Café started 1949 in building already operating as a restaurant	Still operating as restaurant
16	Feil & Ellermeyer Dept. Store*	NW corner of Main and Didier	1928	Stucco over brick-no style; originally plain brick	German merchant trade/ railroad boom	Bought by Herman Tabet in 2013; vacant
17	First Baptist Church	401 Becker Ave.	1920s?	Elements of Art Deco style		Integrity-affecting addition on front façade is probably removable
18	Onate Theater	710 Dalies Ave.	1932	Art Deco	Great Depression Era	Today Harla May's Fat Boy Grill
19	Old City Hall*	500 Becker Ave.	1939	Spanish Pueblo Revival	Great Depression Era –WPA assistance	NRHP nomination done; preservation plan in process; obtaining funding to stabilize the structure and start repairs
20	Anna Becker Park	Reinken Ave. between 3 rd and 4 th St.	1930s		Great Depression Era –WPA assistance/German merchant trade	Named for John Becker's wife; Land for the park was donated by the Beckers
21	Belen Bottling Company	515 Becker Ave	Unknown	Decorative Brick		Being Renovated
22	KARS Radio	860 North 2nd Ave.	Unknown	No style; brick;		
23	Patrick's Vacuum	114 Main St.	Unknown	No style; brick;		
24	Hub Furniture	204 Main St.	Unknown	No style; brick; heavily modified		Old theater
25	Sugar Bowl Lanes	207 Becker Ave	Unknown	No style; brick;		Vacant

* Opportunity site for development, reuse, or redevelopment

Note: NRHP=National Register of Historic Places; SRCP=State Register of Cultural Properties



FIGURE 11. HISTORIC AND SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS



1. Felipe Chavez House



2. Scholle Building



3. Former Coffee House



4. Buckland Pharmacy



5. Belen Hotel



6. Belen Harvey House



7. Railroad Depot



8. Brick building with mixtilinear parapit



9. Gil's Bakery



10. Central Hotel



11. Garcia Grocery



12. Sears Kit House



13. Noblin's Funeral Home



14. Kuhn Hotel



15. Pete's Cafe



16. Feil & Ellermeyer Dept. Store



17. First Baptist Church



18. Oñate Theater



19. Old City Hall



20. Anna Becker Park



21. Belen Bottling Company



22. KARS Radio



23. Patrick's Vacuum Cleaner



24. Hub Furniture (Central Theater)



25. Sugar Bowl Lanes

FIGURE 12. HISTORIC BUILDING PHOTOS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

3.2 PARKS AND COMMUNITY SPACES

Downtown has a number of existing parks and community spaces as well as opportunities for developing vacant properties and surface parking lots as permanent or temporary community spaces. Figure 13 shows the locations of existing parks and well-located open areas.

The largest park in downtown is Anna Becker Park, which is located adjacent to Reinken Ave. on the north side of downtown. There is an existing traffic signal and pedestrian crossing that links the park to downtown. Anna Becker Park is the site of the weekly farmer’s market during summer months.

The downtown plaza at Becker St. and Main St. serves as the western gateway into downtown and the “Heart of Belen.” The plaza area contains a large gazebo, seating, and lighting.

Doodlebug Park located on 2nd St. south of Becker St. is the home to one of the few remaining “doodlebug” self-propelled train cars in the United States and serves as a reference point for the importance of railroad in the history of the eastern part of downtown.

El Corazon de Belen community garden is located at Sixth St. and Dalies St. Within the park are a shade structure and picnic tables, a garden shed and potting table, and raised garden beds. Food that is grown in the community garden is donated to the Belen Food Pantry.

The City Hall parking lot has been used for public events such as the Hub City Music Fest & Carnival and the Rio Abajo Festival. Large parking lots, especially when they are unused at times, have potential to be activated as a space to host temporary events, and these temporary events can sometimes catalyze permanent uses.



EXISTING CONDITIONS



Patios and shade between buildings



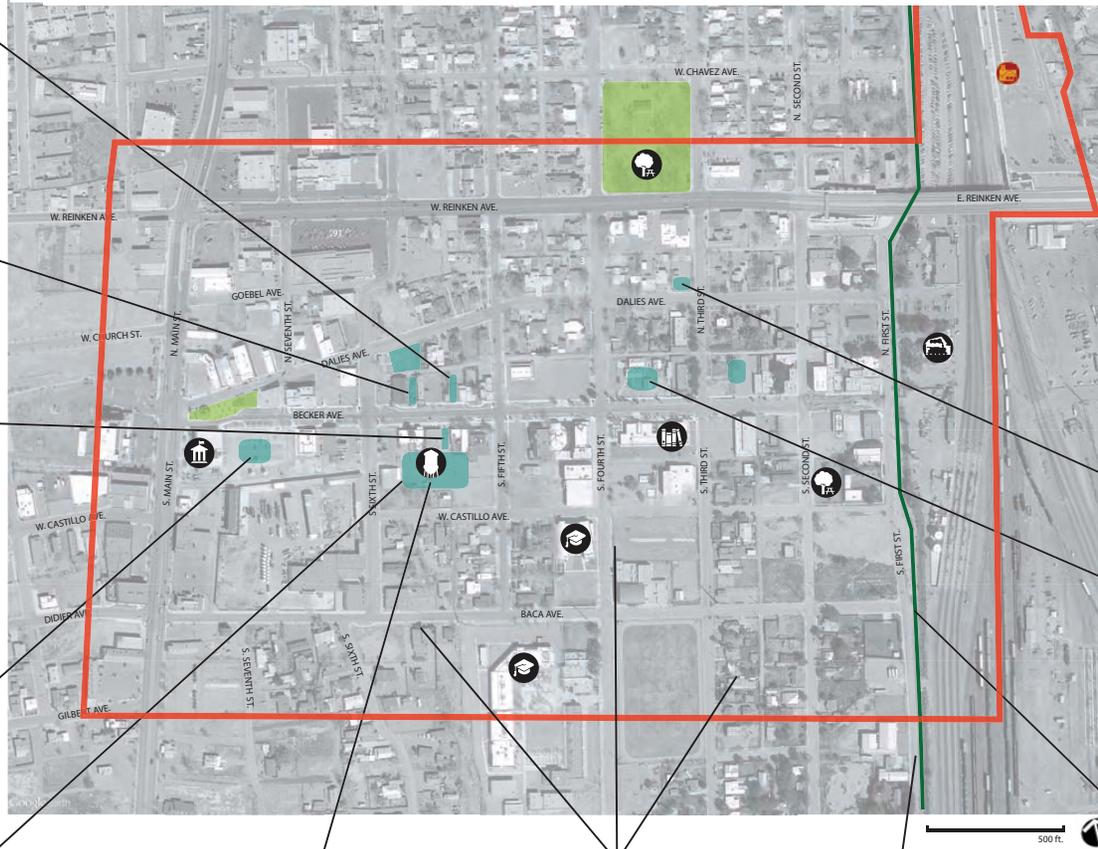
Patios and shade between buildings



Seating and vegetation in spaces between buildings



Large plaza for community events, farmer's markets, etc.



LEGEND

- Study Area Boundary
- Trail/Linear Park
- Community Space Opportunities
- Existing Parks
- Old City Hall
- Library
- Parks
- Harvey House
- Water Tower
- Schools
- Railrunner Station



Pocket parks and playgrounds within easy walking distance of housing



Shaded community courtyard areas stay cool in warm months



FIGURE 13. PARKS AND COMMUNITY SPACE

3.3 HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Stable, attractive neighborhoods within walking distance are crucial to the economic health of any downtown. Downtown Belen is fortunate to have established, historic neighborhoods within and adjacent to downtown, as shown in **Figure 14**. Existing housing is primarily single family, with a variety of small scale bungalow styles.

Some housing is in poor condition and a large percentage of housing is vacant. Strengthening these neighborhoods through renovation of existing housing, increasing occupancy and strategic, well-designed infill will be important to the future of downtown.



EXISTING CONDITIONS



FIGURE 14. HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

4. OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Given the wealth of historic buildings, public facilities, configuration of downtown streets, and vacant land, there are a number of opportunity sites that may be redeveloped in the future. **Figure 15** highlights the potential joint development sites where public-private partnerships (P3)

could lead to catalytic redevelopment sites. For example, the Old City Hall on Becker Ave. provides an excellent opportunity for redevelopment as an adaptive reuse project that could anchor the corridor and spur other redevelopment projects downtown. This site could catalyze additional private development along Becker.

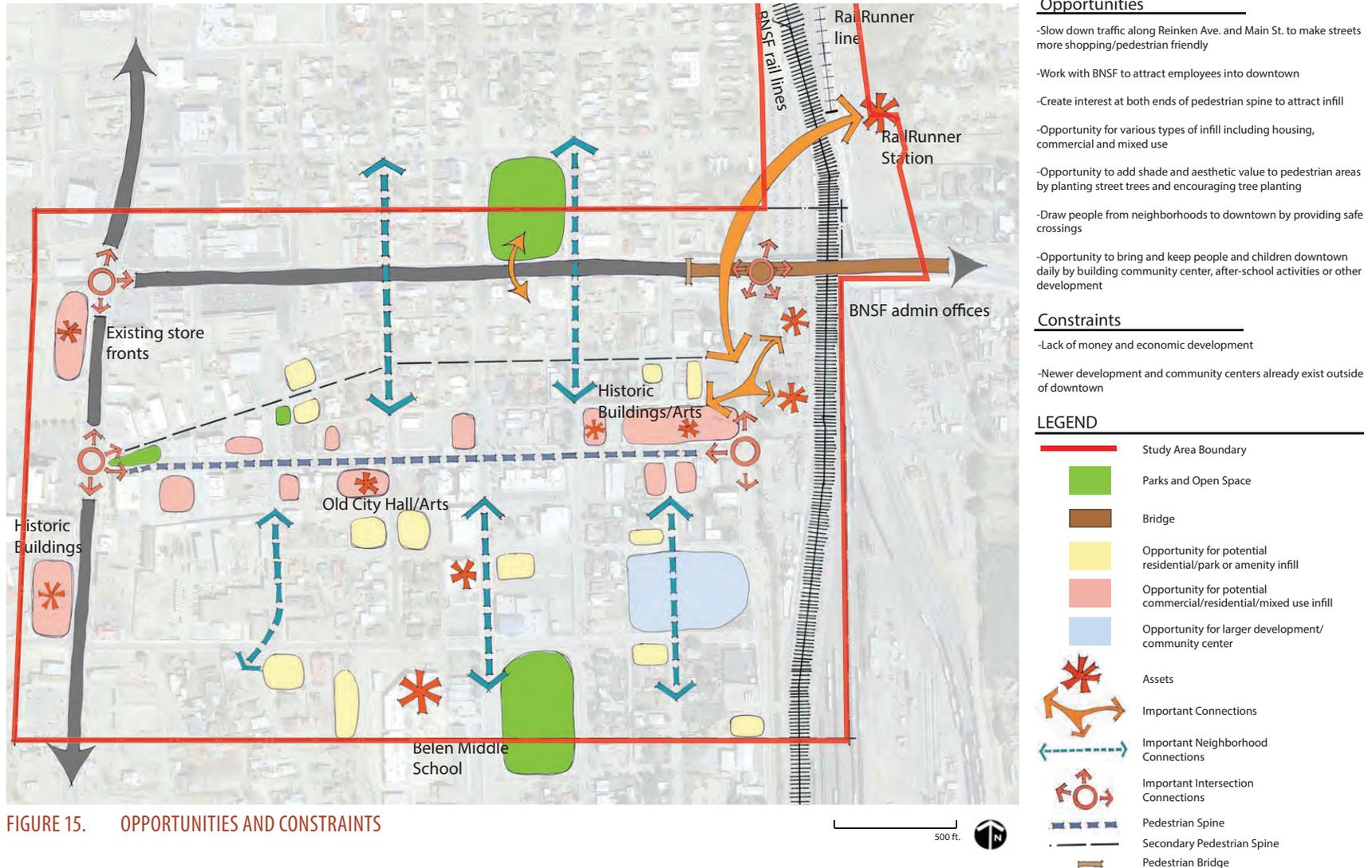


FIGURE 15. OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

IV. MARKET STUDY

The City of Belen has completed a number of recent studies that provided information for the following Market Analysis. Most recently, The University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) conducted a community economic assessment of the Belen MainStreet community in March 2014. This document assesses the economic challenges and opportunities facing the City and recommends strategies for capitalizing on existing assets and opportunities. The City also completed a Strategic Growth Plan in 2010 that identified specific activity centers within the City and specific actions to attract new enterprise and revitalize existing development. The background information and findings of the Strategic Growth Plan also inform this section of the Downtown Master Plan. In 2013 the City completed an Affordable Housing Plan which characterizes the area’s housing market and short term housing demand.

The City of Belen Strategic Growth Plan identifies downtown Belen as the civic focal point of the City, its central business district and the focus of Belen arts community. Market opportunities identified in the plan include continued development and redevelopment along Becker Ave, mixed use and live/work spaces, public events, and higher-density housing in and adjacent to downtown and the Rail Runner station, and infill with a more rural character east of the Rail Runner station.

The strategic plan recognizes Main Street between Aragon Road and Camino del Llano as the “Downtown Corridor.” Market opportunities along this corridor include compact mixed-use development that is compatible in form, scale, and design with the existing historic and traditional downtown buildings along Main Street.

The BBER community economic assessment identifies the Belen trade area as all of Valencia County, since the communities in the County are all well within a 30 minute drive time of Belen and the MainStreet district. The study notes the high number of commuters who travel to Albuquerque or elsewhere within Valencia County for employment.

1. DEMOGRAPHICS

The Belen Center area included in the Strategic Growth Plan encompassed the downtown core and surrounding neighborhoods east and west of the railroad tracks. In 2008, this area had 2,280 people in 990 housing units and almost 2,300 jobs. The number of jobs in downtown and in the City has decreased since then, but the market focus of the area is the same.

1.1 POPULATION

The population of Valencia County was 76,569 in 2010, an increase from 66,152 in 2000. The population of Belen was 7,255 in 2010. The City has grown more slowly than the County or the state. From 2000 to 2010 Belen grew at an annual rate of 0.52% compared to 1.46% for Valencia County and 1.24% for the state.

The population of the Belen CCD, which includes the entire southern part of the County, was 20,808 in 2010. This represents 27 percent of the County population and the population that most represents the primary trade area for downtown. From 2000 to 2010, the population of the CCD increased by an annual rate of 0.89%, which was faster than the population growth within the City but slower than the County growth rate.

There were 227 people and 116 households within the Belen MainStreet Partnership boundaries in 2010. MainStreet residents are predominantly Hispanic, and nearly half of these residents are adults 45-64 years old. Consequently, there is a lower percentage of children and young adults in the district than in the City as a whole.

1.2 INCOME

Incomes in Belen are lower than Valencia County or the state. Median household income was estimated to be \$28,614 in 2012 compared to \$42,525 for the County and \$44,886 for the state. The poverty rate in Belen was 36.4 percent, compared to 21.4 percent in the County and 19.5% in the state. Over 27% of Belen households had incomes less than \$15,000.

1.3 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

As detailed in **Table 2**, the high school graduation rate in Belen is slightly lower than the statewide graduation rate but similar to Valencia County. Approximately 75 percent of residents in Belen have a high school diploma compared to 80.7 percent in Valencia County and 83.6 percent in New Mexico. Just over 13 percent of Belen residents hold a bachelor's degree. This is lower than college graduation rates in the County (16.6%) and the State (25.8%).

1.4 JOBS & UNEMPLOYMENT

The BBER Economic Assessment reported a total of 317 jobs in the MainStreet district and 3,152 in Belen. The labor statistics don't tell the whole story, however, since there are a few hundred workers at the BNSF facilities along the eastern border of downtown that are not counted in this location. Downtown workers are likely customers for downtown restaurants, retail, and services.

Participants in public meetings noted that the railroad workers in particular represent a missed opportunity for downtown businesses. These workers include employees at the Belen facilities as well as personnel who stop over in Belen temporarily. In the absence of needed businesses downtown, BNSF has developed relationships with motels and restaurants. There is an opportunity to recapture some of this business in downtown.

The split between private and government employment is similar for Belen workers and the County and the State, with about 79% private wage and salary workers, 25% government workers, and 6.5% self-employed.

TABLE 2. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

	BELEN	VALENCIA COUNTY	NEW MEXICO
Population 18 to 24 years old			
Less than high school graduate	24.0%	24.2%	20.9%
High school graduate	30.9%	32.6%	28.7%
Some college or associate's degree	44.1%	41.9%	45.2%
Bachelor's degree or higher	0.9%	1.3%	5.3%
Population 25 years and over			
Less than 9th grade	11.0%	7.7%	7.3%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	14.1%	11.5%	9.0%
High school graduate	34.8%	30.4%	26.4%
Some college, no degree	21.3%	26.7%	23.9%
Associate's degree	5.6%	7.0%	7.5%
Bachelor's degree	8.1%	10.5%	14.7%
Graduate or professional degree	5.1%	6.1%	11.1%
Percent high school graduate or higher	74.9%	80.7%	83.6%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	13.2%	16.6%	25.8%

Source: ACS 2009-2013

MARKET STUDY

TABLE 3. EMPLOYMENT COMPARISON: MAINSTREET, BELEN, VALENCIA COUNTY, ALBUQUERQUE MSA & NEW MEXICO, 2011

	MAINSTREET		BELEN		VALENCIA COUNTY		ABQ MSA		NEW MEXICO	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Grand Total	317	100%	3,152	100.0%	13,624	100.0%	356,283	100.0%	781,226	100.0%
Total Private	a		a		9,593	70.0%	278,965	78.0%	596,921	76.0%
Ag. For. Fish. & Hunting	--	--	--	--	169	1.0%	776	0.0%	10,414	1.0%
Mining	--	--	--	--	30	0.0%	b	--	21,247	3.0%
Utilities	6	2%	15	0.0%	51	0.0%	b	--	4,368	1.0%
Construction	19	6%	45	1.0%	652	5.0%	19,769	6.0%	42,209	5.0%
Manufacturing	--	0%	111	4.0%	665	5.0%	17,655	5.0%	29,557	4.0%
Wholesale Trade	4	1%	21	1.0%	192	1.0%	11,446	3.0%	21,002	3.0%
Retail Trade	51	16%	281	9.0%	2,128	16.0%	40,869	11.0%	90,211	12.0%
Transportation & Warehousing	27	9%	51	2.0%	981	7.0%	8,891	2.0%	16,465	2.0%
Information	6	2%	54	2.0%	74	1.0%	8,195	2.0%	13,463	2.0%
Finance & Insurance	10	3%	75	2.0%	286	2.0%	10,818	3.0%	20,999	3.0%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	4	1%	35	1.0%	121	1.0%	5,014	1.0%	9,648	1.0%
Professional & Technical Services	16	5%	33	1.0%	257	2.0%	28,726	8.0%	53,578	7.0%
Mgt of Companies & Enterprises	--	0%	1	0.0%	83	1.0%	3,326	1.0%	5,075	1.0%
Administrative & Waste Services	1	0%	58	2.0%	220	2.0%	25,230	7.0%	41,636	5.0%
Educational Services	--	0%	745	24.0%	29	0.0%	4,809	1.0%	8,363	1.0%
Health Care & Social Assistance	40	13%	1,081	34.0%	2,147	16.0%	46,118	13.0%	103,616	13.0%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	2	1.0%	11	0.0%	59	0.0%	3,676	1.0%	8,445	1.0%
Accommodation & Food Services	90	28.0%	431	14.0%	1,200	9.0%	33,812	9.0%	75,959	10.0%
Other Services, ex.PA & unclassified	13	4.0%	41	1.0%	250	2.0%	9,827	3.0%	20,667	3.0%
Total Government	28	9.0%	63	2.0%	4,031	30.0%	77,317	22.0%	184,305	24.0%
Federal	D	--	D	--	114	1.0%	15,702	4.0%	32,553	4.0%
State	D	--	D	--	1,301	10.0%	20,621	6.0%	48,404	6.0%
Local	D	--	D	--	2,616	19.0%	40,995	12.0%	103,348	13.0%

Source : US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census for Employment and Wages

a . Government employees in Mainstreet and Belen are those classified under “public administration”. All other government employees are distributed based on the NAICS code under which they work. Thus, teachers are under Educational Services. Library employees are under information. The “D” indicates employees are lumped into Total Government (public administration) or included in one or more of the NAICS industries.

b. Albuquerque MSA Mining is included with construction; utilities are counted with transportation and warehousing.

MARKET STUDY

Looking at the types of jobs in Belen, the largest job categories are Health Care and Social Assistance (34.0%), followed by Educational Services (24.0%). Fourteen percent are employed in the Accommodation and Food Service industry, while nine percent of jobs are in Retail Trade. This job distribution cannot be directly compared to the County and State because certain government workers in Belen and the MainStreet District are classified by the NAICS code in which they work rather than as “government.”

The largest employment sector in the County is Government with 30 percent, followed by Retail Trade and Health Care & Social Assistance with both 16 percent. This is similar to New Mexico overall. Here the largest employment sector is the Government with 24 percent, followed by Health Care & Social Assistance and Retail Trade with 13 and 12 percent.

The unemployment rate in Belen is similar to the County and State. In Belen there are 10.9 percent of people in the Labor Force that are unemployed while there are 11.3 percent in the County and 9.1 percent in New Mexico, according to the 2010 Census.

1.5 JOBS/SKILLS MISMATCH

One of the larger structural issues highlighted by the 2014 BBER economic assessment of Belen is the large number of people who commute to work outside of Belen each day. This is not due to a lack of jobs within Belen, but a jobs/skills mismatch between existing residents and the jobs that are available. As identified in that study, some of the occupations filled by these commuting workers are healthcare support occupations; personal care and service occupations; office and administrative support; farming, fishing and forestry; transportation; and installation and maintenance.

2. MARKET TRENDS

2.1 REGIONAL INFLUENCES

While the economy is recovering in many parts of the US, the New Mexico economy has been much slower to bounce back from the recession. Like other rural communities in New Mexico, Belen is heavily impacted by the state’s slow economic recovery.

The BBER assessment notes that with a larger population and higher incomes, Los Lunas is able to support certain businesses not found in Belen. A number of national chains (e.g., Lowe’s Home Improvement, Chili’s) have located in Los Lunas. However, the Belen Wal-mart and local restaurants like Pete’s draw customers from Los Lunas, meaning that Belen is competitive as a center for certain goods and services. The fact that residents of the County will drive to Belen for specialty items or for convenience creates the opportunity to capitalize on Belen’s position within the region to offer goods and services not available elsewhere in the County.

2.2 LOCAL TRENDS

The MainStreet District is home to a number of businesses and government facilities that draw people to downtown. However, large big box stores such as Wal-mart have diverted customers from downtown to outlying commercial centers, and loss of jobs in Belen has resulted in a decline in the demand for local goods and services. Owners of local businesses that have served the area for generations have retired. These businesses were not passed down or sold to younger owners and the businesses have not been replaced.

Buildings vacated by an existing business often remain in family ownership and vacant. Other businesses are open for limited hours or a few days per week, especially along for the Becker and Dalies corridors. Surface parking lots and vacant parcels create gaps between businesses. The combination of vacant space, lack of business activity, gaps, limited shopping choices, and competition elsewhere in Belen have combined to dramatically reduce downtown’s position as a regional retail center.

2.3 RETAIL MARKET

On the positive side, downtown Belen is a unique place and the “heart” of the local community and beyond. Long-established, cherished businesses draw customers from Belen and regionally, including Pete’s restaurant and the local banks. The MainStreet focus on arts and culture has generated a nucleus of arts related businesses and non-profits that contribute to the character of downtown.

MARKET STUDY

Larger businesses, including banks, a grocery store, an auto parts store, and small shops are located along Main and Reinken. These businesses appear to be healthier, but there are still a number of vacant shops and boarded up buildings on these two major corridors that form the “front door” to downtown. There is an opportunity to focus on home-grown businesses and creative enterprises looking for low-cost locations.

Traditional Retail

Downtown Belen is home to a number of traditional retailers. Unlike many small downtowns, Belen has a grocery store, pharmacy, furniture store, and an auto parts store, which help make the area more attractive shopping destination for local residents.

Destination Retail

A destination store is a retail operation that consumers find attractive for particular reasons and are therefore willing to make a special trip solely for the purpose of shopping at that location. In downtown Belen, Anew on Main draws customers from throughout the region.

Specialty Retail

Specialty stores have a narrow marketing focus, specializing in certain merchandise (toys, shoes, clothing, kitchen products, sporting goods) or a target audience (children, teens, tourists). Art galleries and gift shops are an example of specialty retail. The Harvey House gift shop and the Art League gift shop offer specialty items.

Restaurant and Entertainment

Restaurants in downtown serve local workers at lunch and draw from the region as well. The BBER assessment and focus group participants noted the desire for more restaurant options especially for evening and weekend hours. Both sources identified the railroad employees as potential customers.

2.4 OFFICE, CULTURAL, AND EDUCATIONAL MARKET

Professional Offices

Downtown is the government and banking center of Belen. Downtown offices include accounting services, real estate services, and attorneys. Downtown is also home to government services through City Hall, the state Department of Motor Vehicles, and the state Human Services Department. There is an opportunity to recruit professionals who are seeking a Belen location to downtown and to encourage local professionals to open a business in Belen. Professionals not currently in downtown include architects and engineers.

Cultural Arts

Downtown Belen has existing arts related businesses and non-profits. The City and the MainStreet Partnership are renovating the Old City Hall to provide a venue for performing arts, special events, and art-related activities. The Belen Public Library is located in downtown, as is the Belen Art League and Harvey House Museum. These entities sponsor arts and cultural events in addition to temporary and permanent exhibits and gallery space. Local artists, existing organizations and facilities, and the proposed Old City Hall renovation are the nucleus of Belen’s art community in downtown.

The Harvey House focuses on Belen’s railroad history and includes the Doodlebug – an M190 locomotive that is being restored and is located on 2nd Street just south of Becker.

Cultural/ Educational

The Art League and the Library offer art classes and educational programs related to the arts and Belen’s history and culture.

2.5 LODGING

Existing lodging options in Belen include a Holiday in Express and Oak Tree on Camino del Llano near the freeway and a Super 8 Motel along Main Street. These lodging options do not provide the level of service that some travelers may desire, and may not provide adequate space for visitors to large events.

Lodgers tax data for Belen suggests that the City only receives a small number of visitors each year at the City's three hotels. 2013 lodgers tax returns totalled \$46,119 on a 4.0% tax rate. Total receipts from the lodgers tax have declined since 2008, when receipts averaged about \$80,000 per year. Although receipts have rebounded from a low of \$32,000 in 2012, they have not returned to previous levels, even without accounting for inflation.

However, conservatively estimating that each hotel room costs \$100 per night and 1.5 people stay in each room equates to about 20,000 visitors per year (higher in previous years). Many lodgers may be BNSF employees who stay in Belen between assignments as the railroad has a contract with area hotels to support these employees. The rest are most likely regional travelers who stop in Belen for business or overnight stays on longer trips. Providing incentives and enticements to have these travelers visit downtown could generate additional activity and sales revenue.

In addition, the current lodging opportunities could be expanded to meet the demands of a wealthier market segment. Either a bed and breakfast, downtown boutique hotel, or smaller upscale chain might thrive in downtown Belen and provide additional options for those wishing to stay the weekend, explore downtown or attend a local event. Conservative estimates based on existing visitor counts show that downtown may be able to support a 15-25 room boutique hotel catering to tourists, film crews, Balloon Fiesta attendees, and those visiting for local events.

2.6 RESIDENTIAL

Successful retail businesses depend on successful residential neighborhoods. Retailing, and thus an economically-healthy downtown, cannot survive in an environment of deteriorating neighborhood housing, declining population and home ownership rates, disinvestment, crime, and neglect. Downtown includes a small but attractive residential neighborhood, and downtown is surrounded by attractive, traditional neighborhoods. In addition, there are vacant parcels within downtown, adjacent to the Rail Runner station, and in Belen's old town that are suitable for redevelopment as new housing or mixed-use housing.

As reported in the City's 2013 Affordable Housing Plan, little new residential development has occurred in recent years in Belen. The housing plan noted the momentum for redevelopment and transit-oriented development as proposed in the Belen Rail Runner Station Area Plan. In the Belen market, single family homes are relatively affordable. However, there are few multifamily units. The plan further noted that City resources might best be spent in incentives to redevelop the historic city center and provide for affordable multifamily rentals. Both of these strategies are appropriate to reinvigorating the downtown housing market.

The MainStreet District and the surrounding area are composed of historic neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are a source of market strength in downtown and contribute to the area's historic character. As a result of the area's age, there is a higher percentage of older housing in downtown than the County or the state.

Of 209 housing units in the MainStreet District area, 44.5% are vacant. This compares to a vacancy rate of 14.4% in Belen and 8.3% in Valencia County. The large number of off-market vacancies – i.e. vacant homes that are not for sale or for rent – puts Belen's downtown and adjacent neighborhoods at risk. A proactive approach to stabilizing and revitalizing these vacant homes would benefit both downtown and the larger community.

In Belen, 65% of occupied units are owner occupied. This is lower than the ownership rate of Valencia County or New Mexico, but similar to the national rate. In spite of its decreasing homeownership rate, Belen has a higher percentage of owner-occupied units that are owned free and clear.

A small percentage of home sales in Valencia County are in Belen or Rio Communities. However, housing is affordable in Belen compared to the county, Rio Communities or the greater Albuquerque area.

2.7 MARKET GAPS

The 2014 BBER report looked at the pull factors of Belen's industries. Pull factors measure how much money local businesses draw in from surrounding communities, relative to their size of income. This shows

which business sectors are competitive regionally, and are attracting additional dollars into the community.

This analysis indicates that Belen is strong in business sectors that can be expected given the presence of Walmart and area chain restaurants: retail trade, as well as accommodation and food services, including full service restaurants. Utilities, construction, and information also have high pull factors. Somewhat surprisingly, finance and insurance, health care, and social assistance sectors are also significant. Sectors with extremely low pull factors include Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, mining, real estate, management of companies, educational service, and administration.

These data corroborate the evidence from other indicators in this market study and suggest that Belen has a strong position in retail trade, finance, and health care. As such, these will be the industries that should continue to be the base sectors of the economy, and draw in outside dollars. Although not revealed in pull factors, Belen’s hospitality sector can also be considered to have a market gap, with only two area hotels and few non-chain restaurants catering to travelers.

3. ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES

The BBER community economic assessment identified a number of challenges, opportunities, and strategies for success. Since the assessment was completed, there have been several changes based on new information, all of which are identified below as “updates.” In addition, some of the ideas have been fleshed out with input generated through community meetings.

3.1 CONSTRAINTS & CHALLENGES

- Belen has suffered numerous setbacks, including the loss of the automotive dealerships which used to bring people from miles around to the community. Much of its manufacturing base is gone. The city’s economy is still reeling from the Great Recession.
- Recent demographic information indicates that 27% of Belen

households had income of less than \$15,000 per year between 2008 and 2012.

- Belen has a higher percentage of residents without college degrees and without a high school diploma than is typical in New Mexico. Belen’s low levels of educational attainment and poor showing in standardized testing are issues in attracting investment.
- Many Belen residents commute to jobs elsewhere, which is a detriment to being connected and integrated into their own community. In 2011, only 17.4% of residents worked within the City limits while 44.6% of residents held jobs in Albuquerque.
- There is a perception that some Belen residents and property owners do not support the changes needed to improve the economy.

3.2 OPPORTUNITIES & ASSETS

Agricultural History

- Belen has retained its character as rural farming community, an increasing rarity within the Albuquerque MSA. The area is attracting investment in land.

Small Town Character

- Downtown is a smaller, more easy-going and friendly place than larger “big box” stores or centers. There is an opportunity to specialize in small, local businesses with great customer service and local flavor.
- Opportunities for “local flavor” extend to dining options. The trade area is lacking a diversity of dining options, including restaurants that are open later in the evening.

Higher Education

- Proximity to the UNM Valencia Campus is a major asset.
- Collaborations with UNM Valencia on accelerated learning for high school students and certificate and degree programs to meet future business needs provide an opportunity to develop the local workforce and retain younger residents.

Healthcare

- Healthcare has emerged as a strong and important cluster for Belen. Getting the hospital is important, but maintaining the healthcare infrastructure to serve the local population should also be a priority.

MARKET STUDY

- Whether or not a new hospital locates in Belen, the City can become a medical center for the southern part of the County.

Intermodal Transportation

- The history of Belen as the “Hub City” – a center for rail and transportation – is of great economic and cultural importance. Belen’s comparative advantage rests on its extensive intermodal transportation infrastructure and it should pursue strategies to develop complementary industries. Rancho Cielo is an important ally in this effort.
- BNSF employees represent an opportunity to capture additional business for downtown restaurants, and potentially for lodging, that are offered within walking distance of the BNSF offices.
- Belen has numerous assets in transportation and communications, including excellent ready access to I-25, the Rail Runner station, proximity to Albuquerque and Santa Fe, and, rare in a community of its size, an airport, a radio station, and a local newspaper.
- The presence of the interstate, the Rail Runner and a freight hub provide opportunities for intermodal transportation.
- For personal transportation, better “first and last mile” connections to the Rail Runner station would make downtown more accessible via rail.

Hospitality

- There is an opportunity for a quality boutique hotel or bed and breakfast within or within easy walking distance of downtown. Given the existing number of visitors, a boutique with between 15-25 rooms may be a possibility. In combination with a first floor (or nearby) restaurant, such a hotel would allow travelers to stay overnight and explore all Belen has to offer.

Cultural Tourism

Several downtown assets contribute to the opportunity to enhance cultural tourism. The following are a few examples of existing projects and programs that could be encompassed in tourism promotion:

- Judy Chicago’s New Mexico Women’s Cultural Corridor program;
- New Mexico Tourism trails and the Department of Cultural Affairs trails programs;
- The Harvey House and railroad history, including the Harvey Girls as an example of women shaping culture in New Mexico; and
- Traditional Hispano arts.

Events and Activities

- The farmers’ market in Anna Becker Park is an existing asset that would be improved by an increase in the number of vendors, which might be accomplished by relocating it to a site more centrally-located within downtown.
- Downtown hosts a variety of parades and special events. Marketing downtown through these events should continue and could increase.
- The Belen Public Library hosts a variety of events and activities for all ages. The Teen Hub offers library books and computer workstations within walking distance of the nearby middle and high schools. Free movie nights and summer reading programs provide family-friendly activities downtown.
- Packaging and marketing surrounding attractions – Bernardo Wildlife Management Area, Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge (both 20 minutes south of downtown), and Manzano Mountain Wilderness is an opportunity to draw outdoor enthusiasts to Belen.

Housing

- There is a high demand for affordable rental housing in Belen. Downtown is a suitable location for mixed-use buildings, higher density housing, and live/work spaces.
- The traditional neighborhood in and surrounding downtown cannot easily be replicated in new subdivisions. Maintenance and renovation of the existing housing in these neighborhoods is important to retaining downtown’s residential assets.

Small Business Support

UNM Valencia has a variety of programs and classes that support a strong local workforce and small businesses. These programs include:

- Upward Bound college preparatory program for first generation college bound high school students;
- Dual credit for college courses taken by high school students;
- Medical certificates and degrees in nursing, nursing assistant, and health sciences;
- Computer technology certificates and associate degree programs; and
- Business Management.

V. PLAN VISION & GOALS

“We aspire to celebrate the cultural and historic soul of Belen where businesses, families and the community thrive. We will capitalize upon the warmth, safety and familiarity of our community as a vibrant gathering place for locals and visitors alike.” – The Belen MainStreet Partnership

The Belen MainStreet Partnership Board established a Vision Committee to develop a written Vision Statement that spells out the MainStreet Partnership’s vision for Belen. This vision statement is being developed through interviews with all Board members and a facilitated meeting with the Board. The Board received public input through a number of public meetings prior to the Downtown Master Plan as well as the focus group and public workshops conducted as part of the Downtown Master Plan.

1. PLAN VISION

The Heart of Belen is a unique place that attracts people from all walks of life to visit its historic core and explore its rich history as the Hub City. It is desired to preserve this history in the architecture, the character and identity that the Heart of Belen embodies. It should be a place that the community and visitors will want to stroll through and dwell in, that people want to come to visit its art galleries, attractions, stores, and its public spaces and enjoy its festivals and traditions. The Heart of Belen should be designed in a cohesive fashion so people can recognize its unique character and identity.

2. PLAN GOALS & OBJECTIVES

2.1 FAMILY

1. Family:
 - Create an environment that provides for the needs of the family and keeps the family together here in Belen.
 - Provide opportunities for the entire family so they live in Belen, work in Belen and shop in Belen.

2. Youth:
 - Provide opportunity for young people so they do not want to leave Belen.
 - Opportunities include educational, jobs, recreational and cultural and affordable housing.
 - Create things in Belen that attract youth such as events (musical, theatrical, festivals . . .) and jobs.
3. Aging:
 - Provide for special needs of the aging such as assisted living, long term care, affordable housing and social settings.
4. Young Retirees and Empty Nesters:
 - Provide opportunities for young retirees and empty nesters, including work and volunteer opportunities, recreation and culture, and housing.

2.2 COMMUNITY / CULTURAL

1. Never forget this community. All development shall involve the community and lift it up, it is what makes Belen unique to all of New Mexico. Don't forget the people!
2. Create a vibrant community bustling with people, mom and pop stores on every corner, comfortable for people in the summer and in the winter, a place for art which reflects the people of Belen, and events that celebrate Belen's long history and culture.
3. Create a diverse environment to create a more interesting place that has a better chance of retaining its youth and at the same time it will become more attractive to visitors which will also lead to more pride in the community.
4. Develop/create city pride.
5. Continue and grow events like the Matanza and Follow the Star.

2.3 TOURISM

1. Capitalize on Belen's past and future.
2. RAILROAD: Use the railroad attraction to get people into Belen. Use the railroad as a bonus attraction for people coming here for other reasons (family, business, dining, passing thru for gas.)
3. HARVEY HOUSE: Use in conjunction with the railroad to get people into Belen.
4. WATER TOWER: Use this excellent, existing landmark as a focal point for Belen.
5. OLD CITY HALL: Use this building as a primer for new activities in the MainStreet District.
6. ARTS, PERFORMING ARTS, CULTURAL EVENTS AND FESTIVALS: Promote these functions to draw in another segment of the tourist market.
7. Balance the development of tourism with the benefits to the community.

2.4 EDUCATION

1. Enhance educational opportunities for the youth to create a well-equipped work force.
2. Provide educational opportunities for business owners to help them be more successful.

2.5 PROMOTIONAL

1. Make the public more aware of the MainStreet district.
2. Make the public more aware of the Belen MainStreet Partnership and how we operate.
3. Continue to promote Belen as the heart of New Mexico.
4. Promote Belen as the Hub City.
5. Develop branding, signage and sign ordinances to make the MainStreet district clearly identifiable.

2.6 THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

1. Create places of interest. Suggest the buildings we want in infill lots. Work proactively with owners and developers to achieve excellent projects.
2. Preserve and renovate historic structures before they are all torn down. Long standing buildings and structures (water tower) reflect our past and make Belen unique to New Mexico. Once they are gone a part of our unique character is lost and we move a little closer to becoming a sterile franchise city.
3. New buildings shall reflect the historic buildings in the MainStreet District through their scale, style and building materials.
4. Turn Anna Becker Park into a mixed use district and into a destination for the youth in the community.
5. Make Belen MainStreet Historic District a walkable area to promote business, and facilitate social interactions.

2.7 BUSINESS

1. Support local businesses.
2. Promote the development of new local businesses.
3. Identify businesses that are needed, promote that they are needed and get them located in the MainStreet district.
4. Evaluate the tax base of new businesses and focus on businesses that also provide a better tax base.
5. Nurture the entrepreneurial spirit.
6. Provide entrepreneurial training for potential new business owners.

2.8 AMENITIES

1. Provide more of the following to bolster the local economy and provide reasons for people to stay in Belen”
 - Shopping
 - Recreational opportunities. (Where do people have fun?)
 - Diverse dining choices (after 2:00 pm).
 - Evening entertainment opportunities.
 - Art spaces.

2.9 CITY PRIDE

1. Promote city pride city wide.
2. Do everything we do to a standard of excellence not mediocrity just to get by. This has to be balanced with funding. This will help people focus on what they can be proud of in Belen.

PLAN VISION & GOALS

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VI. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

Implementing the plan vision and goals outlined in the previous chapter will be an ongoing effort that will take the commitment of Belen MainStreet, the City of Belen, residents, downtown businesses, and other stakeholders. To help guide the successful implementation of this plan, a prioritized list of projects and strategies has been developed. This list includes a set of priority catalytic projects that range from small projects that can be implemented through partnerships with the City and the Community's Arts and Cultural District organization using local volunteers and staff, to larger projects that may require Capital Outlay or Legislative funding.

These projects and strategies are tied to a simple evaluation process that looked at the relative cost of the project, timeframe, complexity, and expected benefits. This approach helps determine which projects and strategies are a priority, as well as which have the largest potential to have the greatest impact. Using an approach such as this can also indicate whether the strategy has had the intended benefits after being implemented. Potential funding sources for these strategies are outlined in the appendix.

1. STRATEGIES

Strategies are actions that Belen MainStreet and the City can take to further the goals of this plan. In many cases, these strategies are long-term actions that will take continued commitment to be successful.

STRATEGY 1: ZONING CODE & OVERLAY ZONES

The zoning districts and overlay zones in downtown can be modified to encourage more development that fulfills the goals of this plan.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

Although additional regulatory controls can have positive effects in shaping future development, they can also introduce new barriers or costs that are detrimental to new development in downtown. Providing a mixture of mandatory regulations and recommended best practices is perhaps the best strategy to balance the goals of the city with the needs of property owners. Recommendations to accomplish these goals include:

1. Consolidate and synthesize existing design overlay specifications along Becker Avenue and Main Street to create a broader, district-wide overlay zone that encourages historic preservation, a walkable pedestrian environment, and new development.
2. Establish a recommended set of best practices for this new district wide overlay zone. These best practices should include standards for the treatment of public space in addition to best practices for historic buildings. A series of best practices are included in the *Design Guidelines* section of the document.
3. Consider applying to have downtown Belen designated as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places. This designation does not necessary bring additional regulatory constraints, but can assist in identifying contributing buildings that should be preserved long term, existing architectural styles, and design guidance. It can also open up the opportunity for additional district-wide historic preservation tax credits for building repairs and facade upgrades.

STRATEGY 2: LOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Foremost on the mind of Belen MainStreet and local businesses are strategies to increase local economic development. As was discussed during public meetings, the current mixture of businesses in downtown could be more diverse, with more restaurants and retail establishments. Unfortunately, there is no “magic bullet” to fix larger structural challenges within the economy. Instead, it will take gradual, incremental changes to find ways for Belen to adjust to region-wide economic shifts, leverage assets, and build off small-scale strategic projects.

The good news is that Downtown remains the center of government, banking, arts, and culture in the city. While it may no longer be the center of local day-to-day shopping, existing traditional retail, commercial services, government offices, and professional services will continue to

serve Belen residents and the region. MainStreet also has a major role to play in retention and expansion of established businesses that may need small loans, larger spaces, façade upgrades, or public investment to help attract new customers.

To accomplish local business development, Belen MainStreet and the City should continue to take a “hyper-local” approach to economic development, focusing on existing businesses and local entrepreneurs who wish to expand or start new businesses. Such a strategy focuses on growing multiple small local businesses who may be able hire to additional workers, instead of focusing on wooing one larger employer. Over the long run, the addition of these extra jobs can lead to more sustained growth that helps a wide range of local businesses that provide a diverse mixture of services and products. Some strategies to pursue include:

1. A business incubator that would provide rentable space, technical assistance, and networking opportunities to new businesses.
2. Formalized but temporary markets such as the Farmer’s Market can be established. The existing farmer’s market could possibly be relocated to Becker Ave or the City Hall parking lot. An additional arts oriented market could be established in these areas. Markets such as these provide a crucial opportunity to small scale vendors who do not have permanent store fronts.
3. A small scale micro-loan program to support expansion by local businesses. This can include loans for facade upgrades, signage improvements, outdoor dining spaces, or streetscape improvements.
4. Business training for interested business owners who wish to find ways to expand, diversify or better promote their businesses to a wider market. Many training opportunities are already offered by NM MainStreet, the New Mexico Economic Development Department, and other organizations. Existing business training efforts should be marketed to interested local business owners.
5. A jobs training program partnership with the UNM Valencia Campus. This program could be expanded to provide business and/or job skills training within an existing civic building downtown.

STRATEGY 3: BUSINESS RECRUITMENT

Expanding retail opportunities in Downtown will be an incremental process that will take both local property owners and outside entrepreneurs to be successful. In addition to supporting existing local businesses, Belen MainStreet should continue to actively recruit new businesses to broaden the number of establishments within the downtown district. As with local business development, any business recruitment strategy should focus on multiple small-scale businesses that meet local resident needs or provide products and services that attract tourists. One important consideration is to seek businesses that complement one another and to not cannibalize business from other areas of town. Instead, they should provide an additional venue that supports locals while also drawing in out of town guests.

Retail and Tourism Based Businesses

Belen is a natural tourist destination given its historic character, with potential to be marketed as a place for City dwellers to escape for the weekend. However, as identified in the market study, the City needs quality lodging (e.g., bed and breakfast) and expanded retail and tourism-based business that will generate additional activity. Some ideas for new retail opportunities include:

1. **A Boutique or Small-scale Hotel.** As pointed out in the market study chapter of this document, Belen would benefit from a downtown hotel. Focusing on potential investors who may wish to create a boutique bed and breakfast or small hotel would provide a place for visitors to stay downtown during events, for the weekend, or between an outdoor getaway. See Project J below for more information.
2. **Shops and Cafes.** In addition, to create vibrancy, the district needs more shops, cafes, and other attractions to fill vacant buildings or to be built on vacant lots. Shops such as these can serve the large number of downtown workers (including BNSF workers), as well as visitors. The scheduled opening of a wine shop and tasting room on 2nd and Becker is a great example of new development that should enliven the eastern end of Becker.

3. **Restaurants.** Additional restaurants are also highly desirable, and should cater to those visiting from out of town and staying the weekend. These include mid-range to higher quality restaurants that can support a boutique hotel or travelers from larger cities.
4. **Brewery.** A brewery or similar establishment with later hours would be a complementary use for the district.
5. **Health and Wellness.** A small health and wellness store.

STRATEGY 4: BUSINESS & BUILDING INVENTORY

Although a simple, foundational strategy, one practice that Belen MainStreet and the City should follow is to keep an up-to-date inventory of downtown businesses, building conditions, and vacant spaces. Such an inventory will:

1. Help the City track development, which can help with effective promotion of new businesses or organizations within downtown.
2. Identify future opportunity sites for redevelopment that may potentially be acquired by the City or matched to interested developers. An inventory can also assist in marketing potential spaces online to those who may be interested in starting a business in downtown or redeveloping an older building.
3. Develop a broader understanding of the local business climate in downtown by identifying the needs of existing business such as current customer bases, parking issues, building conditions, etc. This inventory can also assist potential new business owners who may want to expand or renovate, but need help finding additional space or funding.

STRATEGY 5: BUILDING/SITE ACQUISITION

With an up-to-date building inventory, it will be easier to identify potential buildings and/or sites that may be redeveloped by MainStreet or the City. The old City Hall building is one example of a building that the City and MainStreet are already trying to renovate. Although a publicly owned building, other potential sites have been identified on the Opportunities Sites Map as possible sites for future redevelopment. These include:

- **Becker Ave and 2nd St:** The intersection around the Belen Hotel offers an opportunity to concentrate activity within a key block of downtown. Although nearby lots are not owned by the city, the lot north of Doodlebug Park may be a possible site for future redevelopment.
- **City Owned Lot on 5th St and Castillo:** this large lot is owned by the city and could be redeveloped. However, it is not in an ideal location as it is off the main drag on Becker Ave.
- **Sugar Bowl Lanes Block:** the site to the west of Sugar Bowl Lanes is a central location and could support a new building.
- **City Hall Parking Lot:** Participants and public meetings indicated that an addition public space in downtown was desirable to supplement Anna Becker Park which is faraway from downtown and separated by Reinken Ave. One possible site for a new public space is the City Hall parking lot which is already used occasionally for events.
- **Surface Parking Lots:** Downtown has several other parcels that are empty or used for surface parking, and these parcels could be good locations to develop an additional park or plaza space.

One way to market these parcels is through OppSites.com. This website allows municipalities to list parcels that they have prioritized for redevelopment - whether the site is publicly owned, privately owned, for-sale, or off-market - online as well as development goals. This can attract investment from developers nationwide who might otherwise overlook Belen. In addition, this can increase local government transparency while providing a clear roadmap to real estate developers and the community for development the City would like to see.

STRATEGY 6: FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS & VACANT LOTS

Facade improvements are important to maintain the character of downtown and highlight the original features on existing buildings. As was brought up in previous studies and at public meetings, the poor appearance of buildings downtown and vacant lots are a barrier to attracting new businesses or customers. Some of these buildings' facades are in need of repair, while some facades would benefit from additional design details (windows, entrances, awnings, signs, etc) to create more attractive storefronts.

In some cases, existing buildings can be improved with simple, cost-effective facade improvements that repaint, re-stucco, or re-plaster damaged or decaying facades. Facade upgrades can include replacing damaged windows, doors, architectural detailing, tile, or dilapidated cladding. More in-depth facade improvements seek to restore facades to their original condition; for example, restoring a brick facade that has been covered up after construction in an effort to look more “modern.” In other cases, facade upgrades can mean updating aging signage, restoring original entryways, awnings, Such improvements can also be extended to vacant lots, where fencing improvements, landscape maintenance, public art, and temporary uses can create a more attractive space.

To help facilitate facade upgrades, Belen MainStreet should identify potential buildings and continue to speak with the property owners about potential funding sources for these upgrades.

STRATEGY 7: BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT & TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

One way to support future downtown maintenance, hospitality training, and promotional efforts is through a Business Improvement District (BID). As downtown gains new business, local owners may find this option to be attractive, as it also for additional services to be allocated to the downtown district. Revenues collected by the City would be distributed to a business improvement district organization to pay for district maintenance, safety, small scale infrastructure projects, hospitality training, and promotion. Although some owners may not want to contribute additional taxes, the mission of the BID can be kept simple, and provide clear benefits to every business.

TIF District

Using the authority granted by the MRA designation, it may make sense for the city to establish a Tax Increment Finance district (TIF) to collect additional property taxes on future development that can then be used for investments within downtown. Public improvements the TIF could fund include everything from streetscape improvements to public infrastructure or building rehabilitation. The creation of a TIF district only involves the approval of City Council and can be passed at the same time as the MRA designation. within the district itself. Establishing such a district would therefore allow the city to reinvest in downtown improvements as redevelopment occurred. These could include additional streetscape improvements, building renovations, upgrades to community facilities, and or funds for expanded maintenance or operations.

STRATEGY 8: NEIGHBORHOOD INFILL & REVITALIZATION

Within downtown and to the north and east of downtown are existing traditional neighborhoods with historic railroad-era homes as well as newer housing. Most housing is detached single-family, although there are a few small-scale apartment buildings. Prior studies and comments at public meetings indicated support for strengthening these neighborhoods and filling in vacant parcels with new housing that is consistent with the scale of its surrounding context.

Existing homes set the pattern for future infill and redevelopment. Higher-density housing is appropriate east of the Rail Runner, as described in the station area plan and infrastructure/development workshop report. Redevelopment of underutilized properties as residential is desirable on sites adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods.

Examples of new infill projects that are similar in scale and design to existing homes are shown in the photos. These examples are higher density than existing homes but fit into a single-family neighborhood.



STRATEGY 9: HEART OF BELEN

The “Heart of Belen” marketing plan developed in 2006 was established to aid revitalization efforts for the Downtown district and to position it as a unique place that both visitors and the community could enjoy and visit. While much of the initial efforts that the vision had called for had been put in place, the dramatic economic slowdown inhibited some of the projects and their anticipated outcomes. However, a clear promotion strategy that focuses on promoting recent successes in downtown would help attract additional tourists, investors, developers, and business owners. To update the Heart of Belen marketing message, MainStreet and the City can:

- Develop a one-pager on possible development opportunities within Belen, including potential investment sites. This one-pager can detail the strengths of the community, any incentives/support the city may be able to offer, and specific business recruitment goals.
- Develop more events. One of the main challenges facing the Heart of Belen is the lack of activity in Downtown. The Rio Abajo Festival is one successful event, but other events have struggled with attendance. To bring more visitors to downtown, MainStreet should continue to pursue a “signature event” that will draw a large, regional audience. Examples for events include a Christmas market, a wine or beer festival, an art market, or an event utilizing historic assets such as the Belen Harvey House or the Old City Hall. These events can be programmed to take place along Becker Ave, the City Hall parking lot, or other community spaces, including Anna Becker Park. However, these events should have a primary goal of increasing activity downtown and highlighting existing businesses and activities within downtown as a form of promotion.
- The Harvey House and WPA-built Old City Hall are treasures within the MainStreet District, as are other old buildings, like the Onate Theatre and Belen Hotel. These could be part of a walking tour that directs visitors to local attractions and restaurants.



- The Belen arts and culture community should be encouraged to strengthen their connections with similar communities, particularly to the north, perhaps through Judy Chicago’s ‘New Mexico Women’s Cultural Corridor’ program and fostering local strengths in traditional Hispano arts (Santo carving, furniture, etc.).
- Marketing nearby recreational attractions such as the Manzano Mountain Wilderness, Bernardo Wildlife Management Area, Sevilleta National Wildlife Park to drawn outdoor enthusiasts to stop in Belen.
- Copromote with the Rail Runner and Rio Metro for train events, historic tours, future brewery tours, or other events that capitalize on Belen’s Rain Runner Station and “bookend” with the Rail Station in Santa Fe.

2. CATALYTIC PROJECTS

Catalytic projects are designed to be implemented by the City or MainStreet at low cost, and have the potential to spur new private re-investment in Downtown. The projects summarized below are tied to a simple evaluation process that looked at the relative cost of the project, timeframe, complexity, and expected benefits. This approach helps determine which projects and strategies are a priority, as well as which have the largest potential to have the greatest impact. Using an approach such as this can also indicate whether the project has had the intended benefits after being implemented.

2.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. **Funding Sources:** A list of potential funding sources is organized by number (1-28), which corresponds to a full list of sources located in the appendix. Funding sources range from City budget expenditures to private business loans for business expansion.
2. **Relative Cost:** potential cost of project/strategy in relation to other projects. Costs do not have an exact monetary value, but have a range of:
 - \$ - (<\$1 - 1,000)
 - \$\$ - (\$5,000 - \$25,000)
 - \$\$\$ - (\$25,000 - \$100,000)
 - \$\$\$\$ - (>\$100,000)
3. **Priority:**
 - High – identified as high need to address within the next year
 - Medium – should continue to be pursued within the next 3 years
 - Low – long term project idea that can be implemented after higher priority projects are completed
4. **Complexity:**
 - Simple – can be implemented without extensive additional planning or collaboration with outside agencies
 - Moderate – requires coordination with outside agencies and additional planning
 - Complex – requires coordination with multiple outside agencies, extensive planning, and/or the securing or funding
5. **Timeframe:**
 - Short – 1 year or less
 - Medium – 2-3 years
 - Long – 4-6 years
 - Ongoing – strategy/project should be continued indefinitely and respond to changes in downtown

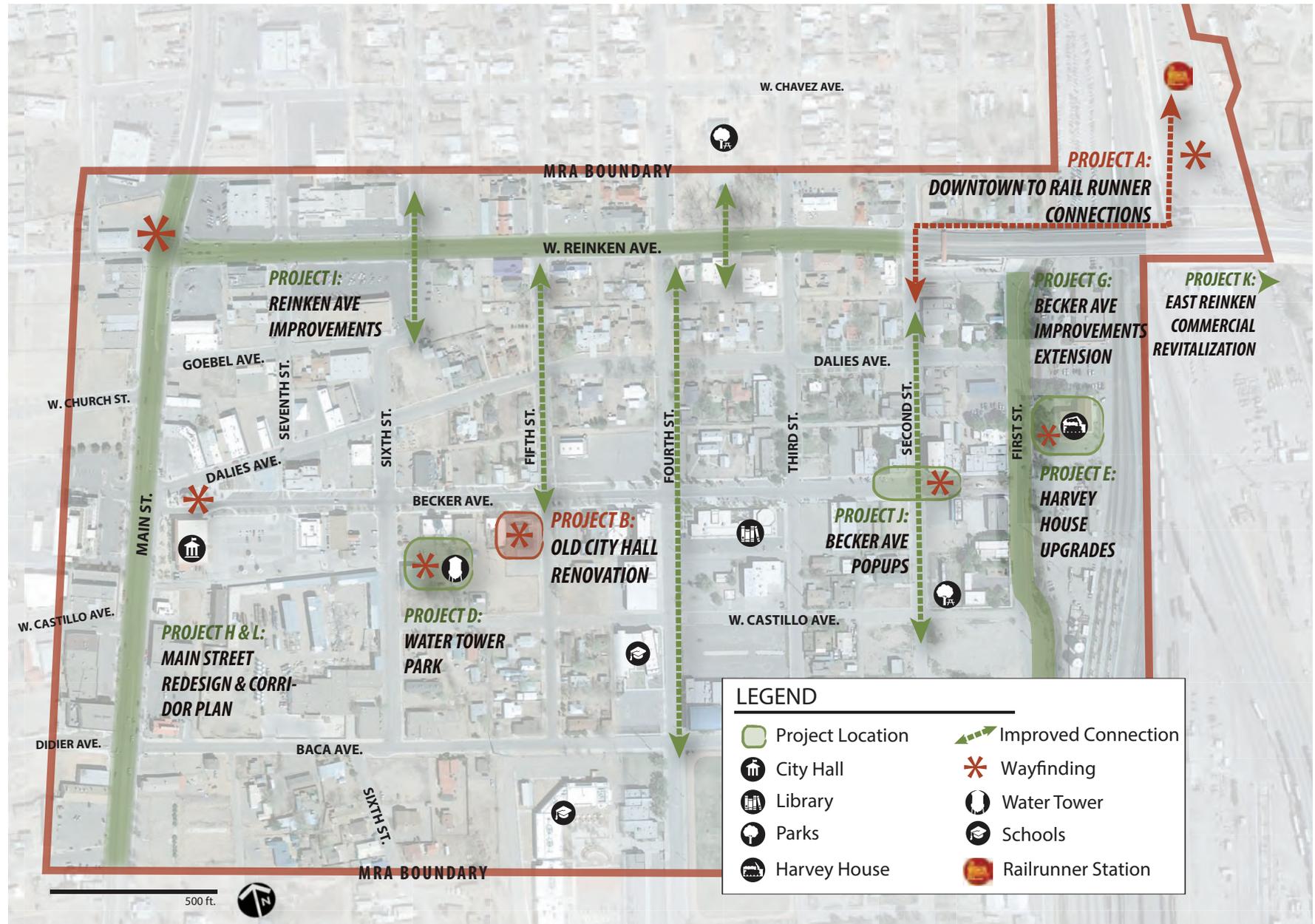


FIGURE 16. PROPOSED DOWNTOWN PROJECTS SITES

TOP PRIORITY PROJECTS

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

PROJECT A: DOWNTOWN TO RAIL RUNNER CONNECTIONS

As detailed in the existing conditions section of this report, the connection between the Rail Runner station and Downtown is hard for people to navigate and does not create a welcoming, accessible entrance to downtown from the station. However, it is desired that the connection between Downtown and the Rail Runner Station be safe, pleasant, and accessible for people of all ages and abilities. In addition, the Rail Runner is a significant public investment that has already been completed and that can be better leveraged by the City as an economic development tool to potentially attract both increased downtown visitors as well as new downtown employers and residents.

Given that the pedestrian bridge has already been constructed, there are several short and long term strategies that can be explored to complement the existing bridge and provide additional connectivity between the station and downtown.



EXISTING PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS OVER RIENKEN AVE.

Short-term Strategies

- In the short term, improvements to transit service may be the most cost effective access solution. For example, the City and MainStreet should work with Rio Metro RTD to improve existing transit service between the Rail Runner station and downtown. Rio Metro bus service operates on Reinken Ave. along the north edge of downtown. The route could be modified to connect to the Harvey House and along Becker/Dalies Streets through downtown. In addition, the City and MainStreet could approach Rio Metro RTD to cost-share on additional downtown bus service and marketing of that service, potentially focused on special events at first. In addition to partnering with RMRTD on enhanced transit service and/or re-routing, Rio Communities is another potential cost-share partner. Rio Communities is currently in the process of redeveloping an old shopping center it purchased on Rio Communities Boulevard (at Goodman Ave) into a Park-and-Ride facility in Phase 1 and a Mixed Use Redevelopment with residential, retail, and municipal offices in Phase 2. As part of the community planning process for the Belen Downtown Plan and the RMRTD Vision Plan, Rio Communities leadership has expressed interest working with RMRTD and Belen to extend a bus transit connection from the Belen Rail Runner station east along Highway 47 to serve Rio Communities' proposed park and ride and future mixed-use development. Coordinating and cost-sharing on these two related ideas for transit service expansion has the potential to expedite implementation, reduced costs, and help preserve traffic volumes on Reinken, which in turns will allow for the proposed capacity reductions and streetscape improvements to Reinken proposed in this Plan.
- Alternatively, the City, MainStreet, and/or Rio Metro RTD could partner to subsidize an on-demand taxi or shuttle service focused on connecting downtown and the train station. The service, which would have response times similar to Uber but would be provided free or at a low fare to riders, could be used to take visitors who arrive on the Rail Runner directly to their downtown destinations.

Longer-term Strategies

- Because Belen is a major freight rail hub, there are multiple tracks and frequent trains throughout the day. Although expensive to build and undesirable from an access and placemaking perspective, pedestrian overpasses are a typical approach that is often used in this situation. In the long term, improvements that make an at-grade crossing easier for pedestrians should be evaluated. This would require negotiations with BNSF to address their operational and safety concerns, as freight railroads often resist at-grade pedestrian crossings. However, there are numerous examples of pedestrian-only at-grade track crossings co-existing safely with freight and/or passenger rail operations.
- A more comprehensive solution would be to develop a planned relocation of the Rail Runner station to closer to and preferably adjacent to the northeast corner of downtown or along the eastern edge of downtown.¹
- Clearly this approach would have significant capital costs and may require a land swap or acquisition. At the same time, it would provide the best solution for improving access between downtown and the Rail Runner station by reducing the distance between the two and eliminating the need to cross the freight tracks, and create downtown-adjacent additional transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities that could partially offset implementation costs of this comprehensive approach.

¹ Due to concerns about safety risks (real or perceived) and maintenance costs, two potential strategies to improve connectivity were considered and rejected by the consulting team: 1) adding glass elevators to the existing pedestrian bridge/ramps superstructure and 2) a pedestrian tunnel connecting the northwest corner of downtown to the east side of the tracks that would connect to/from the Rail Runner station with an at-grade pedestrian path running along the east side of the tracks.



RAIL RUNNER STATION WITH AN AT-GRADE PEDESTRIAN PATH RUNNING ALONG THE EAST SIDE OF THE TRACKS.

ADAPTIVE REUSE

PROJECT B: OLD CITY HALL

The Old City Hall is vacant, but the MainStreet Partnership has secured a series of grants to pay for stabilizing and upgrading the structure in anticipation of its reuse. Reuse as a cultural center has been discussed in existing documents and at public meetings for the Downtown Plan. The building would enhance the arts and cultural functions of downtown by providing space for performing arts, events, and a variety of arts-related activities. Old City Hall is seen as a potential anchor that could activate and spur development in the Downtown Art/Cultural district.

Catalytic Project

Restoration and adapted reuse of Old City Hall and protection of its historic character is desired. The project includes completing renovations and building out the interior with a performing arts space, incubator spaces for fledgling art related businesses, meeting and arts/crafts space for classes, exhibit space, and potentially a small retail space for an arts-related retail business, coffee shop, or similar. Exterior improvements will include landscaping and usable outdoor space around the building. The Architect Assessment of the building contains recommendations for repair and renovation.

The Old City Hall could be part of a general redevelopment of the City-owned properties in the block, including the Water Tower Park.



VIEWS OF OLD CITY HALL



PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP
PROJECT C: DOWNTOWN LODGING

Downtown Belen would benefit from additional downtown lodging catering to regional tourists, film crews, BNSF employees, and those attending local events. To complement Belen’s existing motels, a boutique hotel, small-scale hotel chain, or B&B located in a central location downtown could attract new visitors and offer an alternative lodging choice. Combined with a restaurant, this hotel could generate new activity in downtown and support surrounding businesses.

The demand for boutiques has continued to grow nationally as visitors seek a unique experience regardless of the size of the city they are visiting. Many boutiques succeed based on their themed decor and creative reuse of historic structures. Given Belen’s historic fabric, and cultural connections with agriculture and the railroad, the downtown district offers a unique experience for any both national and local travelers.

The Trinity Hotel in downtown Carlsbad is an example of a boutique hotel in a renovated two-story building. The structure was built in 1892 as a bank and later headquarters of the Carlsbad Irrigation District. The building now includes a fine dining restaurant, nine hotel rooms, and a small retail area in the lobby that sells local wines and New Mexican products.



THE TRINITY HOTEL, CARLSBAD

Catalytic Project

A boutique hotel or B&B, offering unique rooms, high-quality service, a historic character, and a restaurant could increase activity in downtown and support adjacent redevelopment. Given the existing number of annual visitors in Belen, the presence of film crews who often stay for several weeks, and BNSF employees, a small hotel of between 15 and 25 rooms may be marketable to an in-state developer, or national developer that specializes in boutique hotels in historic downtowns.

Ideally, the hotel would creatively readapt an existing downtown building using a theme that speaks to Belen’s railroad or agricultural identity. However, given the costs associated with hotel renovations, and a lack of suitable buildings, a better option may be to construct a new building that reflects the character of surrounding buildings downtown.

To attract a local hotel developer or interested investor, the City and MainStreet should begin to look at possible sites that may be suitable for such a hotel. A site along Main Street is one option to explore, given the street’s central location, visibility, access to I-25 and existing supportive businesses. Once the potential sites are selected and an associated incentive package has been approved, the City should aggressively market the sites and incentives to boutique hotel developers/operators in New Mexico as well as nationally via tools such as OppSites.com and other cost-effective economic development marketing tools. Some sites along Becker Ave may also be suitable, if land can be purchased from current property owners. Developing a straightforward proposal for developers highlighting the assets, annual visitors, existing businesses, connection to the Rail Runner, and the strategic vision of the city could help the City find an interested developer. There are also potential options for a public private partnership between the City and an interested developer. This could involve the exchange of land, or other City investment opportunities enabled by the MRA designation.

LOWER PRIORITY PROJECTS

PUBLIC SPACE

PROJECT D: WATER TOWER PARK

The Water Tower is located behind the Municipal Courthouse next to the Old City Hall on Becker Avenue and is considered a local landmark. The Water Tower stands on a dirt lot and cannot be accessed for recreational purposes. The community would like to see the tower protected and possibly transformed to become the center of a community space. The restoration of the neighboring Old City Hall will encourage new activity in this district. The Water Tower is the overarching feature of the Arts/Cultural District.

Catalytic Project

West Texas is known for its water towers, many of which are similar to Belen's water tower. Cities have embraced these icons and developed parks and plazas to celebrate them. Downtown activities that celebrate the Water Tower as a special landmark of the Downtown district are desired and should be encouraged. The Water Tower should be protected and maintained in its original condition. Identity and interpretive signage should be installed to highlight this landmark and explain its history as part of the history of Belen and to create a symbol of a positive future for downtown that renews the significance of the water tower for a new generation of residents and visitors. In addition, subtly lighting the water tower at night would help enhance its placemaking function for nighttime events and festivals. The water tower parks in the photos to the left illustrate how Belen could develop a public space to highlight its landmark water tower.



WATER TOWER PARK, ROANOKE, TX



PUBLIC SPACE

PROJECT E: HARVEY HOUSE UPGRADES

The Harvey House is an important historic landmark in the Downtown district and should be preserved and protected. Presently, the Harvey House Museum is a magnet for visitors and tourists that draws many people to Downtown. However, because of its location, setback from 1st Street and being hidden from the view by large trees, it is not well connected to its surroundings.

The access to the Harvey House, from the Rail Runner station is difficult (as is the case for more locations within downtown). Overall, greater visibility and connectivity could increase the attractiveness of the Harvey House and potentially increase the number of visitors.

Catalytic Project

This project includes protecting and preserving the historic Harvey House, making it more visible from 1st Street, landscaping the site to include a small plaza, improving pedestrian connections to the site along the acequia, and installing wayfinding and informational signage consistent with an overall wayfinding plan (see next catalytic project). Short term priorities are to repair and renovate the building.

As a long-term goal, access to the Rail Runner should be improved, either through redesign of the overpass or better transit links between the Rail Runner and downtown.

As part of the planning for the Rail Runner station area, a plaza on the south side of the Harvey House was proposed to anchor the east gateway of the Heart of Belen and enhance the potential for community activities at the Harvey House. This is a future project, once the building is renovated.



VIEW FROM 1ST STREET



VIEW FROM REINKEN



PROPOSED HARVEY HOUSE PLAZA

Source: Belen Rail Runner Station Area Infrastructure & Development Workshop

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

PROJECT F: WAYFINDING SYSTEM

There is little directional and informational signage in downtown, although a creating a coordinated wayfinding system has been proposed in several plans. Residents have also expressed the desire to have a better, more effective wayfinding system that will encourage visitors to venture into downtown from I-25, the Rail Runner station, Reinken Avenue, and Main Street.

A wayfinding system does not have to be complicated. Generally, wayfinding systems consist of hierarchy of components that serve a variety of purposes. These components build awareness of downtown by:

- Announcing the presence of downtown at strategic locations (for example I-25 and the Rail Runner station) and direct visitors to main entries into downtown.
- Helping visitors locate parking and important destinations such as City Hall, the library, museums, shopping, and restaurants.
- Highlighting interesting places, like the Doodlebug Park, that are not on a primary street.
- Reinforcing downtown’s image and “brand” as a welcoming, interesting, and desirable place to be.
- Providing interpretive information for visitors.

Temporary Signs - Walk Your City

Wayfinding signs should be easy to maintain and update as things change. To jump-start implementation, Belen MainStreet, the Chamber, and the City can develop a temporary wayfinding system using the Walk Your City method (<https://walkyourcity.org>). This provides a low-cost approach to test out the best locations and information to include on signs and to build momentum for a permanent wayfinding system. Planning and fundraising for the permanent system should proceed on a parallel track with implementation of the temporary system, as should conversations with NMDOT to improve signage on DOT-owned facilities.



EXAMPLE OF HIGHWAY SIGNAGE ADVERTISING DOWNTOWN BELEN



EXAMPLE OF PEDESTRIAN SIGNS IN DOWNTOWN ALBUQUERQUE



EXAMPLES OF WAYFINDING SYSTEM

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

Gateways

Gateways and entries welcome the community to the downtown core. At present there is a gateway plaza at the corner of Becker Avenue and Main Street, however there are no other gateway signs or structures to signify entry into downtown or to distinguish the different character areas. Gateways and entries should identify clearly where the Downtown district begins and establish a unique identity for the downtown core and its distinct character areas. Signage to introduce each area and directional signage to key downtown locations would be helpful for wayfinding purposes and to establish a distinct identity.

Gateways should be designed to reflect the existing character of buildings in downtown Belen. A sense of “gateway” should be created at key entries to Downtown including at 1st St. and Becker St., 3rd St. and Reinken Ave., and Becker St. and Main St. Additionally, an informational kiosk at the existing gateway on Becker and Main Street could aid visitors to orient themselves and offer information about the history of the Downtown. Attractive landscaping and art can be employed to distinguish the points of entry.

In order to not permanently alter the streetscape, banners could be hung to distinguish and mark the Downtown core and its character areas and districts. This will help visitors in wayfinding efforts and create a distinct identity for the area and its sub-areas. Banners can either span the width of the road or be hanging from lightening posts or buildings.



EXISTING GATEWAY AT MAIN STREET AND BECKER



EXAMPLE OF BANNER SPANNING THE ROAD



EXAMPLE OF LIGHT POLE BANNER & INFORMATION KIOSK

District Designation

The Downtown district has five distinct “character areas” that differ greatly in their character and uses. These areas can be used as part of the wayfinding system to help people navigate downtown and experience the different architectural styles and community assets that are located in these districts. The five districts include:

- 1. Main Street Corridor.** The portion of Main Street in the downtown plan stretches from Reinken to Baca Avenue in this plan’s study area (although the Strategic Growth Plan extends the corridor from Aragon to Camino del Llano). Recent streetscape improvements include street furniture, lighting and landscaping. There are some vacant parcels and buildings.
- 2. Residential Neighborhood.** The Residential Neighborhood stretches along Dalies from 1st to 6th Street. This area is predominately single-family dwellings. There are not many vacant units, but some need repairs. Some sidewalks need repair.
- 3. Government District.** The government district is located on Becker between Main Street and 6th Street, and is home several local and state government agencies. Recent streetscape improvements include angled parking, a plaza, street furniture, lighting, and landscaping.
- 4. Arts/Cultural District.** The Arts/Cultural district is located along Becker between 3rd and 6th Street. The area includes a variety of businesses and locally important commercial buildings. Several buildings are vacant. The Belen MainStreet Partnership and the City of Belen are restoring the Old City Hall, with a possible use as a Cultural Center. Recent streetscape improvements include angled parking, street furniture, lighting, and landscaping.
- 5. Railroad District.** The Railroad District is located between the railroad tracks and 3rd Street along Reinken. The District encompasses the Harvey House, Doodlebug Park and the historic Belen and Central hotels. The area is commercial, but more than half of the buildings are vacant. The acequia and walking path along 1st Street form an attractive pedestrian corridor.

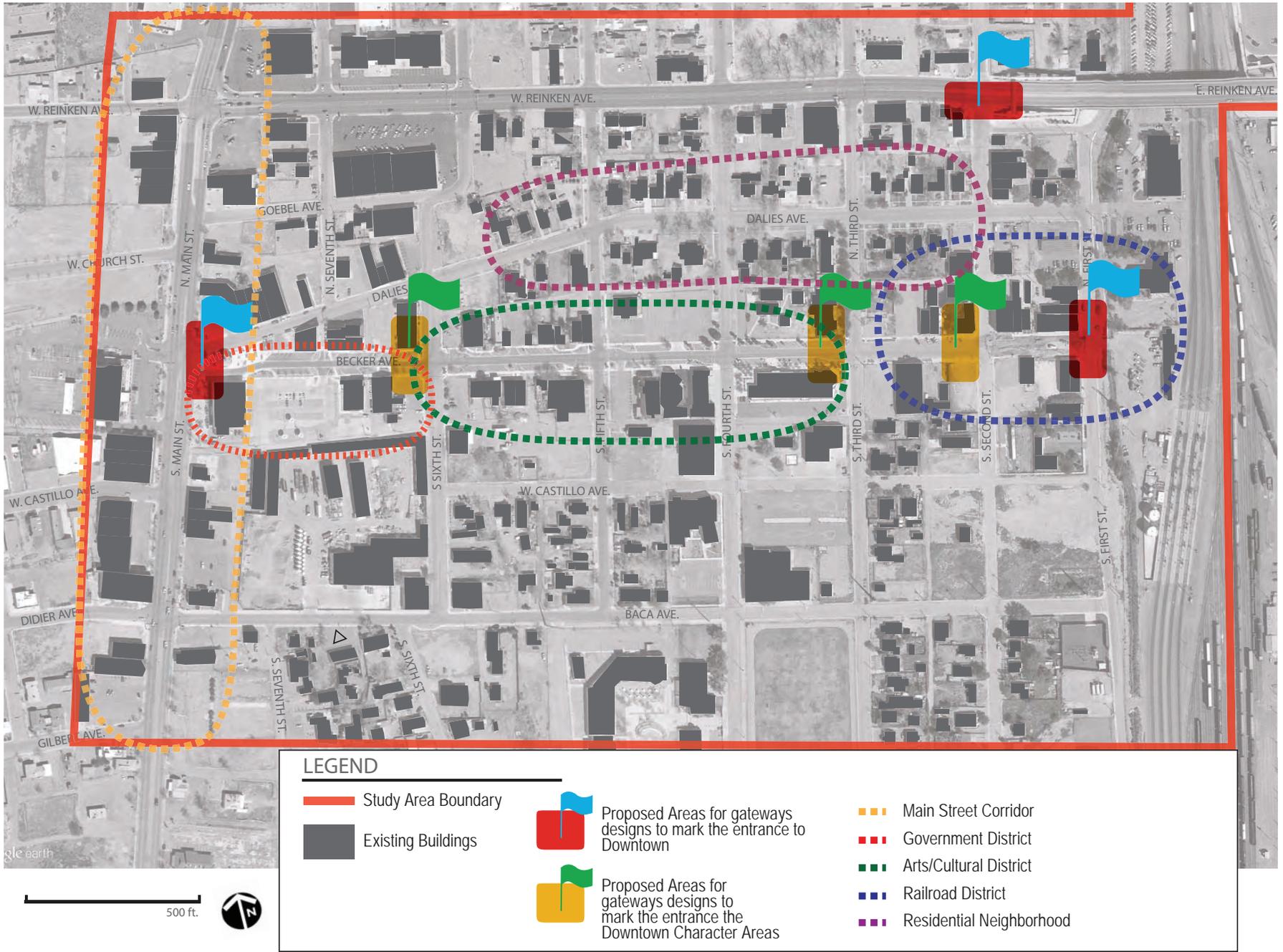


FIGURE 17. POTENTIAL LOCATIONS FOR GATEWAYS AND ENTRIES

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

PROJECT G: DOWNTOWN WALKABILITY ENHANCEMENTS

Participants in public meetings expressed the need for improved pedestrian access within, to, and through downtown along north/south streets and streets adjacent to Becker Ave. Residents and business owners at public meetings commented that although Becker is a very walkable street, north/south streets and other east/west streets are not all pleasant places to walk. There is minimal landscaping, and portions of the sidewalks are missing or in need of repair on many of these streets.

Catalytic Project

A network of well-designed pedestrian routes throughout downtown that provide north/south connections and east/west connections on minor streets is desired. To help improve these connections, this plan recommends extending the improvements that have recently been implemented along Becker to specific north/south streets in a phased approach. The City of Belen, and MainStreet should consider applying for NM MainStreet's Great Blocks Program, which provides funds for streetscape design projects such as the one recently completed along Becker Ave.

Future improvements can include completing sidewalks, adding pedestrian amenities and planting street trees where there is adequate right-of-way. These improvements should follow ADA accessibility guidelines and complete connections between community amenities. Pedestrian improvements will be accomplished over time in phases, likely in conjunction with other streetscape improvements. The highest priorities for streetscape improvements on minor streets are in locations that connect various downtown destinations, including 3rd Street, which connects to the traffic signal at Reinken and Anna Becker Park; Dalies Avenue; and 6th Street between Becker and Dalies. In addition, the pedestrian trail along the acequia on 1st Street is an excellent amenity that should be extended to the south.

Secondary improvements could be made to 2nd Street, between Dalies and Doodlebug Park; 5th Street between Becker and Reinken; and 4th Street between the Belen Middle School, Library, and Reinken.



BECKER STREETSCAPE IS A GREAT START TO A PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY DOWNTOWN



POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS TO NORTH 1ST STREET

Street Furniture & Pedestrian Amenities

Street furniture and pedestrian amenities increase the quality of a space and encourage community activities and informal social interactions. The recent addition of landscaping, seating, and trash containers along Becker are an example, as are the picnic tables and shade structure at the community garden. While these amenities are great improvements, most areas in downtown do not have any shade or seating.

The Becker Avenue Overlay Zone encourages pedestrian activities and gatherings. Continuing the design themes along Becker to other important pedestrian-priority corridors would enhance downtown walkability. These improvements could be installed by the City in the public rights of way or by private businesses that have outdoor public spaces. Maintenance of amenities in public areas could be the shared responsibility of the City, the MainStreet District, a potential Business Improvement District (BID), or a public/private partnership such as an “adopt a block” program.

The examples to the right show how amenities can be incorporated into public rights of way to enhance the pedestrian experience. Some of these are permanent facilities and structures. Others are “pop-up”, low-cost amenities that are installed on a temporary basis.

Lighting

The recent streetscape improvements along Becker Avenue also include pedestrian-scaled lighting. On Main Street, recent improvements include new light poles that also reflect the historic character of the Downtown district. They provide a consistent design element that helps create a distinct image for downtown. However, these improvements have only been implemented along the Becker and Main Street corridors and have thus far not been extended into other areas of Downtown. Continuing the installation of pedestrian-scaled lighting that follows the existing design pattern of lights along Becker throughout downtown would create a cohesive theme for downtown while improving walkability and safety at night.

Street Trees

On essential streetscape improvement that the City of Belen should make a priority is the installation of additional street trees throughout downtown. Planting additional street trees has numerous benefits: it creates a consistent shade canopy for pedestrians; mitigates issues with stormwater runoff; promotes traffic calming and lower vehicle speeds; and would help improve the image of downtown streets. Street trees also create real estate value and support increased pedestrian activity.

The current design overlays along Becker Avenue and Main Street require new development to plant street trees every 30 linear feet of street frontage. These guidelines could be extended to other sections of downtown and modified to increase the density of street trees to every 25 to 20 feet. Alternatively, street trees could be “clustered” together to create a higher density of trees without obscuring business fronts or signage. This option would reduce the benefits of a well defined street tree canopy, however.

Bikeways

A complementary component to creating more walkable places is improving an area’s bicycle facilities. Currently, downtown does not have any formal bicycle infrastructure, although the low traffic volumes on downtown streets lend themselves to a fairly bikeable district. Additional improvements would further support bicyclists and encourage increased bicycling activity, which has numerous secondary benefits including increased downtown activity, higher retail sales, and the opportunity to capture long distance riders who enjoy stopping at local stores and restaurants during longer rides.

Given the low traffic volumes on most downtown streets, designated routes can be established along most roads. These routes can include signage for bicyclists, sharrows (indicated shared roadways), and bicycle parking. For example, routes along Becker and/or Dalies could link to a future bike lanes on Main Street or Reinken. These routes could connect to a north/south connection on 3rd Street, which would link to Reinken at the existing signalized intersection. Such a route would establish a coordinated, signed bike route through downtown that would avoid conflict points (for example, the intersection of Main Street and Reinken).

STREETSCAPE

PROJECT H: MAIN STREET STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

Participants at public meetings expressed a desire to treat Main Street through downtown more like a small-town main street context, completing streetscape and sidewalk improvements where they haven't been built, adding on-street parking wherever possible, providing additional pedestrian crossings, and eliminating the requirement for dedicated free right turn lanes for new development.

As noted in the *Existing Conditions* section of this Plan, Main Street has additional capacity relative to current and likely future traffic volumes, making it a potential candidate for a "road diet". Unfortunately, due the recent installation of improvements on Main Street described above, no major capital projects are proposed in the short term. Given these constraints, the following are short and longer term recommendations for Main Street that can help the address some of the issues raised by residents.

Short Term Recommendations

- The City should work with NMDOT to eliminate or waive the recent requirement for dedicated free right turn lanes into new properties along Main Ave. as they are redeveloped. Alternatively, if the requirement can't be eliminated or waived, the City should work with property owners to help them request an exception to this requirement from NMDOT.
- Additionally, an access management plan may be considered for segments of Main Street to encourage property access to be located on side streets, eliminating curb cuts from Main Street. This can remove "conflict points" created by turning cars, and improve overall walkability for pedestrians.
- As intersection crosswalks are the most dangerous conflict points for vehicles and pedestrians, the City should work with NMDOT to install enhanced crosswalk treatments at all existing crosswalks (such as striping, stamped pigmentation, in-pavement lighting, or even raised crosswalks) in order to reduce collisions. New crosswalks should be added wherever possible with the same enhanced treatments. The City may need to cost-share on the capital and maintenance costs of enhanced crosswalk design treatments.

- The City should work with NMDOT to evaluate the feasibility of installing a raised, landscaped median throughout midblock sections of Main Street to provide access management, crossing islands for pedestrians, and a space to plant trees or other landscaping elements.
- The city may wish to work with NMDOT to lower the posted speed limit to 25 or 30 MPH, which is more appropriate for a main street context.
- In order to address the concerns regarding rear-end collisions that the dedicated free right turn lanes were likely intended to address, this Plan recommends looking for opportunities to narrow lanes wherever possible along Main Street. Several studies have shown that narrowing lanes reduces vehicle speeds and reduces the likelihood of collisions (and the severity of injuries and property damage when collisions do occur).
- The City should work with NMDOT and property owners to increase the density of street trees along the downtown segment of Main Street.

Longer Term Recommendations

In order to continue the momentum of recent improvements and in recognition of excess capacity of Main Street relative to current and likely future traffic volumes, the City should begin working with NMDOT now to develop a design and operations plan for the downtown segment of Main Street.

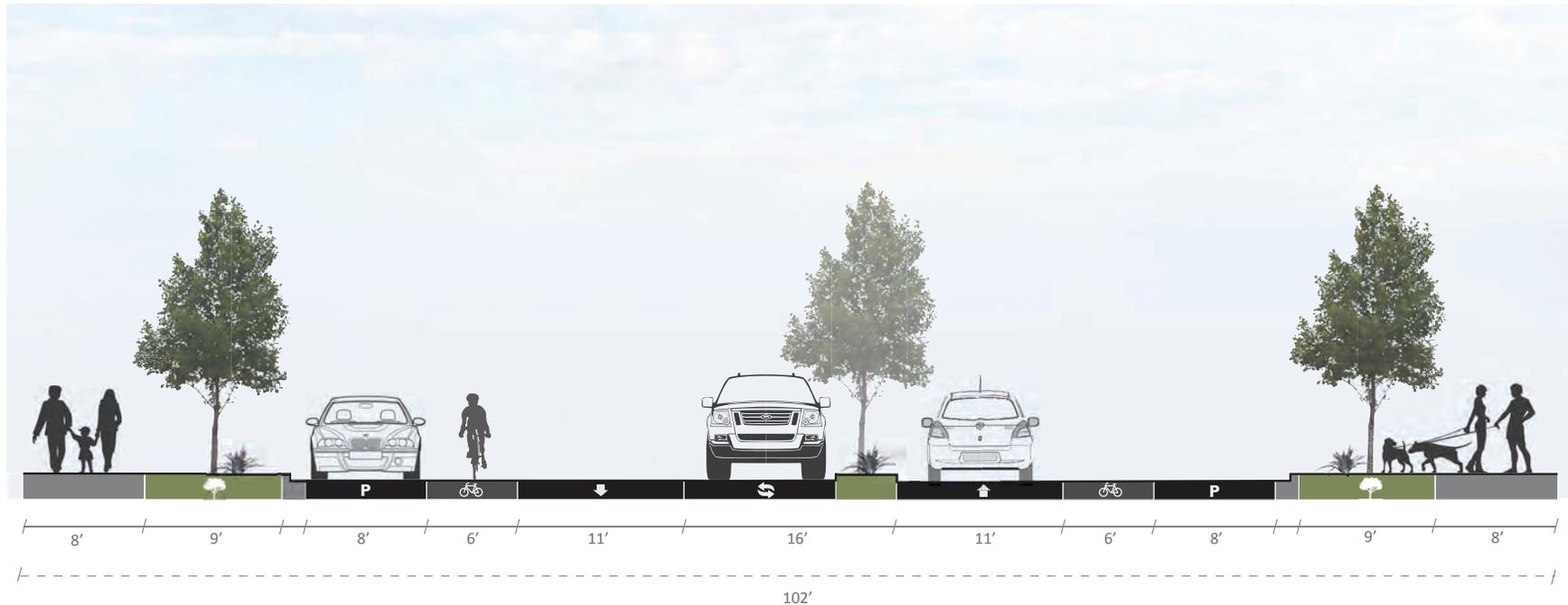
Part of these discussions should consider "devolving" the downtown segments of one or both of these streets back to local ownership. This approach would give the City greater flexibility in the design of these roadways, but could come with some increased financial costs (e.g. on-going maintenance), depending on the terms of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) governing the transfer of ownership from NMDOT to the City of Belen. However, this option would give the city much more flexibility in determining the configuration of the street, and would allow the city to introduce its own wayfinding system, bike facilities, landscaping, and other street features.

Road Diet with Bike Lanes and On-Street Parking

One conceptual design to consider is to perform a “road diet” along the downtown segments of the street. This option would reduce the number of through-lanes to two, retain the existing median/turn lane (raised or at grade), narrow travel lanes to encourage lower speeds, and introduce bike lanes along both sides of the street. Such a configuration would retain the existing on-street parking, and create additional room for expanded sidewalks or landscape buffers. The addition of the bicycle lanes would complete an important connection from the southern Belen to the downtown district. In places where there is not inadequate right-of-way to accommodate on-street parking along both sides, one-street parking could simply move to one side only, while maintaining bike lanes and sidewalk widths.



EXISTING CONDITIONS ALONG MAIN STREET



STREETSCAPE

PROJECT I: REINKEN AVE IMPROVEMENTS

As noted in the *Existing Conditions* section, Reinken Ave is the only river crossing in Belen, and completes an important connection to Rio Communities to the east. However, traffic speeds on Reinken Ave are an impediment to pedestrian access from Anna Becker Park and the surrounding residential neighborhood. In addition, access to the Rail Runner station and neighborhoods east of downtown is a challenge for bicyclists and pedestrians. As described earlier, Reinken Ave also has additional capacity relative to current and likely future traffic volumes. However, like Main Street, due the recent installation of improvements, no major capital projects are proposed in the short term. Given these constraints, the following are short and longer term recommendations for Main Street that can help the address some of the issues raised by residents.

Short-term Recommendations

- The City should work with NMDOT to evaluate the feasibility of installing a raised, landscaped median throughout midblock sections of Reinken to provide access management, crossing islands for pedestrians, and a space to plant trees or other landscaping elements. This strategy could potentially calm traffic while creating a more cohesive visual aesthetic for Reinken.
- The city may wish to work with NMDOT to lower the posted speed limit to 30 MPH, which is more appropriate for a main street context.
- The City should work with NMDOT and property owners to increase the density of street trees along the downtown segment of Reinken Ave. Additional scoping will have to be done to determine if there is any existing space within the right-of-way to accommodate new trees. Alternatively, the city can work with property owners to plant the trees themselves along the edge of their lots or dedicate a small amount of land to provide additional right-of-way for tree plantings.



EXISTING CONDITIONS ALONG REINKEN

Longer-term Recommendations

In order to continue the momentum of recent improvements and in recognition of excess capacity of Reinken Ave. relative to current and likely future traffic volumes, the City should begin working with NMDOT now to develop a design and operations plan for the downtown segment of Reinken Ave. In particular, taking a “road diet” approach to a redesign of Reinken would have the beneficial effect of traffic calming the downtown segments of Reinken Ave., by reducing the *design* speed of the corridor, which could allow for a reduction in the *posted* speed (contingent on a speed study after the redesign of the roadways is completed).² It would also transform the roadway into a complete street that would better accommodate all modes. A few conceptual designs to consider along Reinken are detailed below.

² All of the roadway concepts discussed above will need be reviewed and refined in collaboration with NMDOT and the City of Belen to achieve both agencies’ adopted policy goals that support downtown and community revitalization. If a consensus design approach can be reached, it’s possible that the City of Belen will need to request a design exception to NMDOT’s existing roadway design standards, per the process described in Appendix C of this document.

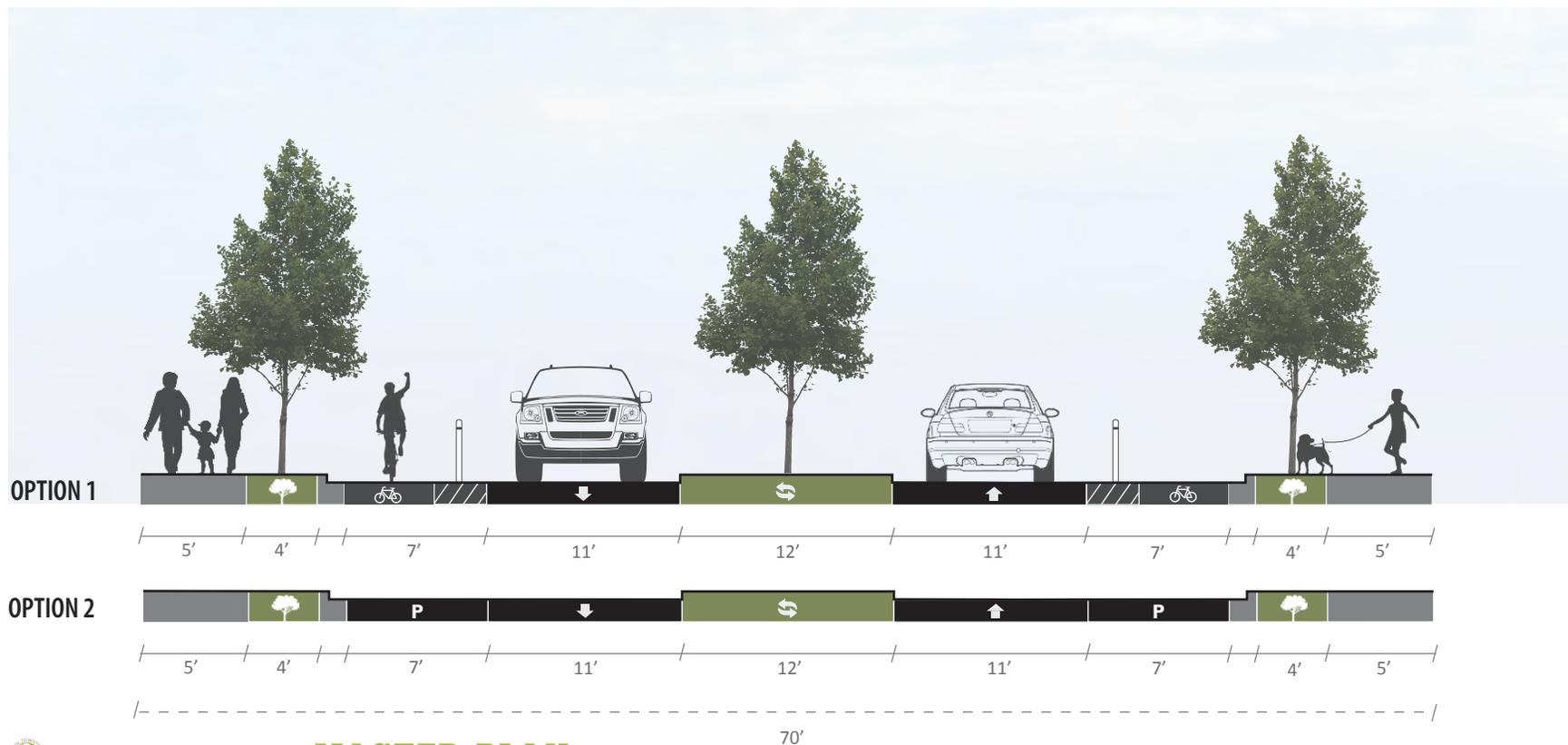
Road Diet with Bike Lanes

The first option would reduce the number of through-lanes to two, retain the existing median/turn lane (raised or at grade), narrow travel lanes to encourage lower speeds, and introduce bike lanes along both sides of the street. The addition of the bicycle lanes would complete an important connection from the Rail Runner station to the downtown district. This option would have the overall benefit of calming traffic and improving walkability between the residential neighborhood north of downtown and shops along Reinken, as well as within the district.

Road Diet with On-Street Parking

This option would reduce the number of through-lanes to two, retain the existing median/turn lane (raised or at grade), narrow travel lanes to encourage lower speeds, introduce on-street parking, and create additional room for expanded sidewalks or landscape buffers. The addition of the on-street parking would help calm traffic and provide a buffer between pedestrians and moving vehicles. However, it would also not allow for bicycle lanes, and may not be needed given the existing mix of businesses along Reinken that have adequate parking provisioned.

An alternative strategy would be to introduce on-street parking along one side of the street, which would allow for the introduction of bicycle lanes in both directions.



PUBLIC SPACE

PROJECT J: BECKER & 2ND STREET POP-UPS

Improvements to Becker Ave have created additional opportunities for streetscape improvements and temporary, “pop-up” uses. One location that is primed for small scale, pop-up uses is the intersection of Becker and 2nd Street, where the Belen Hotel, Central Hotel (soon to be new wine store), and Doodlebug Park all intersect. The current concrete curb extension in front of the Central Hotel was designed to accommodate seating, but is plain concrete at this point that could be improved by movable planters, seating, shade structures or other temporary improvements. These facilities would support the new wine store and provide a view to Doodlebug Park, as well as the entire Becker Corridor.



BEFORE



BEFORE



AFTER



AFTER

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

PROJECT K: COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION EAST OF THE RAIL RUNNER STATION

East of the Rail Runner Station along Reinken Ave. to approximately East River Rd. are a variety of retail stores and Del Rio Shopping Center, which is the largest shopping center in Belen. This center includes Beall's Department Store and Family Dollar and draws customers from Belen, Rio Communities and surrounding areas. Adelante Bargain Square, which burned in 2013, recently reopened with a new store at its original location across the street from Del Rio Shopping Center.



EXISTING COMMERCIAL ALONG EAST REINKEN

Catalytic Project

Residents of Plaza Vieja expressed a desire to see upgrades and revitalization in their neighborhood. The redevelopment of Reinken Ave. would increase commercial traffic along Reinken Ave. near downtown and the Rail Runner station as well as benefitting the adjacent neighborhood.

The proposed redevelopment scheme from the Rail Runner Station Area Infrastructure and Development Workshop is to the right. This project was proposed in conjunction with the redesign of Reinken Ave.



Conceptual Re-Development Plan
East Reinken Avenue Commercial District
Belen, New Mexico 10/21/2009

■ existing buildings
■ proposed buildings

Dekker/Perich/Sabatini

STREETSCAPE

PROJECT L: MAIN STREET CORRIDOR PLAN

The City should work with NMDOT and RMRTD to develop a detailed corridor plan for Reinken and Main. While a corridor plan was beyond the scope of this project, such a plan should be completed in the near term to build off the recommendations put forth in this plan which have broad support in concept from the City, NMDOT, and downtown stakeholders (including residents, merchants, and property owners).

By building off the recommendations in this plan, a corridor plan for Reinken and Main does not need to be excessively complicated or costly. The City and NMDOT should do a corridor study with a focus on the following six (6) elements:

- 1) Developing more detailed roadway design alternatives for the entire length of Reinken and Main (based on the typical cross-sections shown in this plan);
- 2) Validating UNM BBER projections of future growth in Belen and assessing how much of Belen growth can be channeled downtown based on realistic future market demand and future desired zoning regulations;
- 3) Creating a realistic development scenario which shows redevelopment of downtown parcels to accommodate downtown's share of city-wide growth (the development scenario should be done according to desired zoning and urban design regulations for example, showing future redevelopment of existing surface parking lots along Reinken with zero lot line buildings served by on-street parking and shared alley-loaded parking behind buildings);
- 4) Doing a traffic modeling of the roadway design alternatives to arrive at a preferred design alternative for important downtown streets (note that the model will need to acknowledge community members' willingness to accept some vehicle traffic congestion on Reinken and Main in

order to allow for the traffic calming and multimodal improvements that are needed to catalyze revitalization and the historically low vehicle traffic volumes on major downtown corridors);

- 5) Developing a funding plan for capital and operating costs to implement the preferred design alternative for Reinken and Main; and
- 6) Drafting a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the City and NMDOT that details the responsibilities of each party in implementing the reconsiderations of the plan, including cost-sharing agreements.

Please note that a full FHWA Corridor Study with NEPA compliance would most likely not be required for these existing DOT / FHWA federal aid facilities that aren't being expanded, as this process is more typical for a new or expanded roadway. Projects that can document through traffic modeling that the proposed design changes will have low or no environmental impact and can be accomplished within the existing right-of-way are considered "categorical exclusions" from NEPA compliance. For a full list of NEPA categorical exclusions (many of which align with the roadway designs recommended in this plan), see <https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projdev/docuce.asp>.

3. IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

PROJECT/STRATEGY	FUNDING SOURCES	AGENCIES	RELATIVE COST	PRIORITY	COMPLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	OUTCOMES
A Rail Runner Connections	8,11	City of Belen Rio Metro	\$\$	High	Moderate	Long	Improved Walkability Safety and Public Welfare
B Old City Hall Renovation	1,3,5,7,8,9,13, 16,27,28	MainStreet City of Belen	\$\$\$	High	Moderate	Medium	Provides community amenity Additional Visitors Improves Aesthetics Activates Asset
C Downtown Lodging	2,3,6,7,8,9,13 17,27	City of Belen MainStreet Developers	\$\$	High	Complex	Medium	Additional Visitors Promotes Real Estate Generates Taxes and Sales
D Water Tower Park	1,3,7,9,13,16, 17,27,28	City of Belen	\$\$	Low	Moderate	Medium	Provides community amenity Improves Aesthetics Activates Asset
E Harvey House Upgrades	1,3,5,6,7,9,13, 16,17,18,27,28	City of Belen	\$\$	Low	Moderate	Long	Additional Visitors Activates Asset
F Wayfinding	1,3,4,5,6,7,8,9, 13,16,17,27,28	MainStreet City of Belen	\$	High	Simple	Short	Additional Visitors Business Promotion Improved Walkability
G Downtown Walkability Enhancements	1,3,4,5,7,8,9,13	MainStreet City of Belen	\$\$	Low	Moderate	Medium	Improves Aesthetics Improved Walkability Promotes Real Estate Development
H Main Street Redesign	1,2,3,11,12,13	MainStreet City of Belen NMDOT	\$\$\$	Medium	Complex	Long	Safety and Welfare Improved Aesthetics Improved Walkability
I Reinken Avenue Improvements	1,2,3,11,12,13	MainStreet City of Belen NMDOT	\$\$\$	Low	Complex	Long	Safety and Welfare Improved Aesthetics Improved Walkability
J Becker and 2nd Street Pop Up Spaces	3,4,8,9,13,16, 17,27,28	MainStreet City of Belen Business Owners	\$	Low	Simple	Medium	Improved Aesthetics Provides community amenity
K Commercial Revitalization for East Reinken	1,8,10,13,14, 15,19,23	City of Belen Developers Business Owners	\$\$	Low	Complex	Long	Generates Taxes Generates Sales New Businesses Business Promotion
L Main Street Corridor Plan	1,2,3,11,12,13	MainStreet City of Belen NMDOT	\$\$	Medium	Moderate	Short	Safety and Welfare Improved Aesthetics Improved Walkability

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

PROJECT/STRATEGY	FUNDING SOURCES	AGENCIES	RELATIVE COST	PRIORITY	COMPLEXITY	TIMEFRAME	OUTCOMES
1 Zoning & Overlay Zones	-	City of Belen	\$	High	Simple	Short	Activates Asset Improved Aesthetics Promotes Real Estate Development
2 Local Business Development	10,15,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25	City of Belen MainStreet Business Owners	\$	High	Moderate	Medium	Generates Taxes Generates Sales Business Promotion New Businesses Additional Visitors
3 Business Recruitment	10,15,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25	City of Belen MainStreet Business Owners	\$\$	Medium	Moderate	Long	Generates Taxes Generates Sales Additional Visitors New Businesses
4 Building and Business Inventory	-	MainStreet	\$	High	Simple	Short	Activates Asset Promotes Real Estate Development
5 Acquisition of Buildings for Redevelopment	1,3,8,9,13,15,18	City of Belen MainStreet Business Owners"	\$\$\$	Medium	Moderate	Medium	Activates Asset Promotes Real Estate Development
6 Façade improvements	3,9,18,19,20,24,25,27,28	City of Belen MainStreet Business Owners	\$\$	High	Simple	Short	Activates Asset Improved Aesthetics Promotes Real Estate Development
7 Business Improvement District (BID) and TIF	-	City of Belen Business Owners	\$	Low	Moderate	Long	Improves Aesthetics Business Promotion
8 Neighborhood Infill and Revitalization	8,10,14,18,19,20,21,26	City of Belen Developers	\$\$\$	Low	Moderate	Long	Generates Taxes Promotes Real Estate Development
9 Heart of Belen Promotion	4,5,6,7,8	MainStreet City of Belen	\$	High	Simple	Short	Additional Visitors Business Promotion New Businesses

4. FUNDING SOURCES

4.1 CITY BUDGET AND TAXATION AUTHORITY

1. Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan (ICIP)

Agency: City of Belen

Type: Capital Outlay

Description: The City of Belen may fund infrastructure projects through the existing city budget and its infrastructure capital improvements plan. Although city funds are limited, they may offer be used as matching funds to secure larger grants and/or loans by outside agencies (e.g. matching road funds for a street reconfiguration on a state highway).

2. General Obligation (GO) Bonds

Agency: City of Belen

Type: Bond

Description: For future large scale community facilities or infrastructure projects, the City of Belen may issue a general obligation bond to pay for improvements.

3. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District

Agency: City of Belen

Type: Tax Funds

Description: The City of Belen, with the powers granted by the Metropolitan Redevelopment District designation, may elect to establish a downtown tax increment financing district (TIF) or tax increment development district (TIDD). Both policies use expected future gains in property and/or gross receipt taxes (the tax increment) to pay for current improvements, such as streetscape improvements, public infrastructure, or building rehabilitation. Although similar tools, TIDDs may more flexible in Belen, as they also collect the additional increment in gross receipts taxes that may be generated by the addition of new business locating in Downtown (or higher overall sales).

4. Business Improvement District (BID)

Agency: City of Belen/Business Owners

Type: Additional Tax Funds

Description: A majority of property owners in downtown may elect to establish a business improvement district (BID) to pay for district maintenance, safety, small scale infrastructure projects, hospitality training, and promotion. Revenues are collected by the City and provided to the business improvement district organization to support downtown business needs.

5. Quality of Life Tax

Agency: City of Belen

Type: Additional Tax Funds

Description: The City Council may adopt a quality of life tax increment to support arts and cultural programs identified in this plan, including additional promotional events.

These programs can be administered by local arts and cultural non-profit. This tax increment must be approved by a majority of voters.

6. Lodgers Tax

Agency: City of Belen

Type: Tax Funds

Description: The City may use the existing lodgers tax for promotion of downtown's attractions and events to visitors. The tax may also be used to acquire, establish, and operate tourist-related facilities.

7. Local Options Gross Receipts Tax (LOGRT)

Agency: City of Belen

Type: Additional Tax Funds

Description: As part of the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA), residents in Belen may vote to raise the local gross receipts tax to help fund additional economic development projects within the city. The tax is collected by the State as part of the statewide gross receipts tax and redistributed to the community for local projects. In general, LOGRT provides the community with a source of additional revenue to fund additional services or projects related to arts and cultural activities as well as district revitalization.

8. Public Private Partnerships (P3s)

Agency: City of Belen and Local Developers

Type: Partnership

Description: The City of Belen may consider establishing public private partnerships with interested developers who seek additional financial support or incentives to develop community facilities, including additional affordable housing or retail and office space. Although public private partnerships take many forms, the City may enter agreements with interested organization that may wish to develop or operate a city owned property such as the old city hall building.

4.2 CAPITAL OUTLAYS

9. NM MainStreet Capital Outlay Fund

Agency: New Mexico MainStreet

Type: Capital Outlay

Website: <http://nmmainstreet.org/>

Description: New Mexico MainStreet receives money from the State Legislature each year that may be requested by MainStreet Communities to implement identified priority catalytic projects in a MainStreet district. Program funds are competitive, and are ranked using an objective scoring system. Applying for these funds for fully developed projects (such as a district wayfinding system), is also a great way to highlight Belen MainStreet's commitment to implementing district-wide projects.

10. LEDA Capital Outlay Requests

Agency: New Mexico Economic Development Department

Type: Capital Outlay

Website: <http://gonm.biz/business-resource-center/edd-programs-for-business/finance-development/leda/>

Description: The New Mexico Economic Development Department administers Local Economic Development Act capital outlay (LEDA CO) funds to local to help stimulate economic development efforts. LEDA funds are provided on a reimbursable basis only and must be used to fund those projects that create “stable, full-time, private sector” jobs in targeted industries.

11. Transportation Alternatives Program & Transportation Improvements Program (TIP) Funds

Agency: NMDOT / MRCOG

Type: Capital Outlay

Website: <http://dot.state.nm.us/en/Planning.html>

Description: The New Mexico Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a Federal-Aid funding program. TAP funds can generally be used for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and activities, in addition to other projects, related to economic development, increased safety, and increased accessibility. The New Mexico Department of Transportation has a competitive process to afford TAP funds, based on how well each project proposal addresses the goals of the program. Such funds could be used for a reconfiguration of Main St or Reinken Ave to include bike lanes or pedestrian improvements. Projects must also be included on MRCOG’s Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), which also has a competitive scoring process.

12. Cooperative Agreements Program (COOP) Local Government Road Fund

Agency: NMDOT

Type: Capital Outlay

Website: <http://www.torcnm.org/downloads/Final%20Approved%20TorC%20Downtown%20Master%20Plan%2010.2014.pdf>

Description: The New Mexico Department of Transportation sets aside money each year for local government road improvements. This program assists local governments to improve, construct, maintain, repair, and pave highways and streets with matching funds from NMDOT.

4.3 COMMUNITY GRANTS

13. Small Cities Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

Agency: New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration

Type: Community Grant

Website: http://nmdfa.state.nm.us/CDBG_Information_1.aspx

Description: Community Development Block Grants can be used to fund planning projects and the construction of public buildings, community facilities, infrastructure, and housing. Funds are administered by the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration, with a \$500,000 grant limit per applicant. Five percent of matching funds must be provided by the applicant.

14. HUD Hope VI Mainstreet Housing Grant

Agency: US Department of Housing and Urban Development

Type: Community Grant

Website: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/hope6/grants/mainstreet

Description: HUD offers housing grants to local governments with less than 50,000 people and less than 100 units of public housing. In general, the grant funds may be used to build new affordable housing or reconfigure obsolete or surplus commercial space into affordable housing units. The grant funds cannot be used on general infrastructure or commercial development. Main Street housing units must be affordable to the initial residents that occupy the Main Street housing project.

15. Rural Business Development Grants (RBDG)

Agency: USDA

Type: Community Grant

Website: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants>

Description: Rural Business Development Grants are available to rural communities under 50,000 in population. Grant funds may be used to finance and facilitate the development of small, private, business enterprises which includes any private business which will employ 50 or fewer new employees and has less than \$1 million in projected gross revenues. Programmatic activities are separated into enterprise or opportunity type grant activities.

16. McCune Foundation Grants

Agency: McCune Charitable Foundation

Type: Community and Organization Grants

Website: <http://nmmccune.org/apply>

Description: The McCune Charitable Foundation awards grants to communities, non-profits, public schools, and government agencies that are engaged in community-based projects related to the Foundation’s nine foundational priorities. This includes projects that build capacity in the non-profit sector, promote economic development, education and childhood development, healthcare, local food, the arts and community engagement, natural resources, urban design, and rural development are all considered. The average grant award is \$15,000, with some as large as \$25,000.

17. National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grant

Agency: National Endowment of the Arts

Type: Community and Organization Grants

Website: <http://arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town/introduction>

Description: The National Endowment for the Arts offers the “Our Town” Grant to

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

fund creative placemaking projects that showcase the distinct identity of their community. The grant will pay for cultural planning efforts, design of projects, and arts engagement efforts. The grant will not fund construction, renovation, or purchase of facilities. Projects must involve a partnership with a local non-profit organization. Grants range from \$25,000 to \$100,000.

4.4 COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS LOANS

18. MainStreet Revolving Loan Fund (MSRLF)

Agency: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division

Type: Business/Organization Loan

Website: <http://nmmainstreet.org/Coalition/Members/pdfs/revloanfund-leg.pdf>

Description: The MainStreet Revolving Loan Fund provides low cost loans to property owners within MainStreet districts who seek to restore, rehabilitate, or repair their properties. The MSRLF can help fund improvements to historic and non-historic buildings, including façade improvements and structural repairs. Owners must agree to repay the loan and to maintain the eligible property as restored, rehabilitated or repaired for a specified period but in no case less than 5 years. Funding amounts vary, but the maximum loan amount is \$75,000. The fund is administered by the Historic Preservation Division.

19. NM Community Development Loan Fund (The Loan Fund)

Agency: The Loan Fund

Type: Business/Organization Loan

Website: <http://www.loanfund.org/>

Description: The Loan fund is a private, non-profit lender that provides \$5,000 - \$500,000 loans to small businesses and non-profits. The Loan Fund will finance equipment, inventory, building renovations, operating capital and business expansion expenses. As a private lender, the Loan Fund seeks to support low-income individuals and communities that need additional “bridge funding” to establish or expand their organizations.

20. ACCION New Mexico

Agency: ACCION New Mexico

Type: Business/Organization Loan

Website: <http://www.accionnm.org/>

Description: ACCION is small-scale micro-lender that makes loans to small businesses that may not qualify for traditional bank loans, and also provides business support services. Loans are primary intended for low-income borrowers and minority entrepreneurs. Since being founded in 1994, ACCION has financed the start-up or expansion of more than 2,300 new businesses in New Mexico with loans totaling more than \$23 million.

21. The Public Project Revolving Fund (PPRF)

Agency: New Mexico Finance Authority

Type: Community Loan

Website: <http://www.nmfa.net/financing/public-project-revolving-fund/about-the-pprf-program/>

Description: The PPRF is an up to \$200,000 revolving loan fund that can be used to finance public infrastructure projects, fire and safety equipment, and public buildings. Both market rate based loans and loans to disadvantaged communities at subsidized rates are made from PPRF funds. Such funds could be used for larger infrastructure projects in the future, including upgrades to the existing public safety buildings in downtown.

22. Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP)

Agency: New Mexico Economic Development Department

Type: Job Training/Business Grants

Website: <http://gonm.biz/business-resource-center/edd-programs-for-business/job-training-incentive-program/>

Description: New Mexico has one of the most generous training incentive programs in the country. The Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP) funds classroom and on-the-job training for newly-created jobs in expanding or relocating businesses for up to 6 months. The program reimburses 50-75% of employee wages. Custom training at a New Mexico public educational institution may also be covered.

23. New Markets Tax Credits

Agency: New Mexico Finance Authority

Type: Business Loan

Website: <http://www.nmfa.net/financing/new-markets-tax-credits/>

Description: New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC) loan funds are intended to help business investment in low-income census tracts. The fund will help finance the development of commercial, industrial and retail real estate projects (including community facilities), and some housing projects. Loans for up to 25% of the project are available at low interest rates. NMTC loans are combined with other sources of funding that is secured by the applicant and managed by Finance New Mexico.

4.5 TAX CREDITS

24. The State Income Tax Credit for Registered Cultural Properties

Agency: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division

Type: Tax Credit

Website: <http://www.nmhistoricpreservation.org/programs/tax-credits.html>

Description: The State Income Tax Credit for Registered Cultural Properties program was established in 1984 to encourage the restoration, rehabilitation and preservation of cultural properties. Since then, more than 800 projects have been approved for New Mexico homes, hotels, restaurants, businesses and theaters that benefited from one of

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

the few financial incentives available to owners of historic properties. In a recent five-year period, the statewide program saw approved rehabilitation construction projects totaling \$7.4 million, spurred by the catalyst of \$1.4 million in taxpayer-eligible credits. To be eligible, buildings must be listed on the State Register of Cultural Properties. The maximum tax credit is \$50,000; if listed in an Arts and Cultural District the maximum is \$100,000.

25. Preservation Loan Fund - Historic Buildings Only

Agency: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division

Type: Business/Organization Loan

Website: <http://www.nmhistoricpreservation.org/programs/loan-fund.html>

Description: The Historic Preservation Division makes 3 percent fixed rate loans in cooperation with commercial banks and preservation organizations to restore and rehabilitate historic properties listed on the State Register of Cultural Properties. Loans are for a maximum of \$200,000.

26. Low-income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)

Agency: Mortgage Finance Authority

Type: Tax Credit

Website: <http://www.housingnm.org/developers/low-income-housing-tax-credits-lihtc>

Description: The Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC) provides federal income tax credits to individuals or organizations that develop affordable housing through either new construction or acquisition and rehabilitation. The tax credits provide a dollar-for-dollar reduction in the developer's tax liability for a 10-year period. Tax credits can also be used by nonprofit or public developers to attract investment to an affordable housing project by syndicating or selling the tax credit to investors. In order to receive tax credits, a developer must set aside and rent restrict a number of units for occupancy by households below 60 percent of the area median income. These units must remain affordable for a minimum of 30 years.

4.6 DONATIONS/SPONSORSHIP

27. Sponsorships

Agency: Miscellaneous

Type: Donation

Description: Although they may often be considered insubstantial or time consuming, sponsorships from local businesses including banks, large retail chains, and other donors can be an effective way to raise money for small scale projects. Often, this is enough to fund façade improvements, basic building rehabilitation efforts, additional streetscape amenities (trees, furniture, etc.) and events. Some sponsorships may also involve the donation of materials or equipment. Belen MainStreet should seek out additional sponsors for MainStreet events in the future, including the US Bank in Main St, BNSF, area hotels, Walmart and others that may desire to have their businesses advertised in return for a donation.

28. Crowdfunding

Agency: Miscellaneous

Type: Donation/Small Scal Investment

Websites: many, including Kickstarter.com; Indiegogo.com; gofundme.com; StartSomeGood.com; Causes.com; Fundrise.com; Patchofland.com

Description: Crowdfunding is a way for individuals from around the world to pool their assets to fund projects or organizations they support. Most crowdfunding rely on internet platforms that allow donors to connect with projects they are interested in funding. Crowdfunding can be used to support a wide variety of projects that individuals feel are worthy of funding, including many of smaller-scale MainStreet projects such as façade treatments, public art installations, a downtown wayfinding system, etc. Although donations amount vary, they can be used as a supplement to larger funding sources. In some cases, these efforts can also be the impetus to moving a conceptual project to one that can actually be implemented.

In addition, there are several Real Estate Crowdfunding sites that are not strictly about donations, but allow individuals to contribute small-scale investments in actual development projects. This is one way to allow local community members to invest in small increments (\$500 or so) in downtown revitalization). These sites include: Fundrise.com and patchofland.com.

VII. DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design guidelines are intended to guide future design decisions and foster a vibrant and resilient community. Guidelines can help preserve cultural and historic assets. Design guidelines, when drafted based on the historic and cultural character of an area, encourage development that is compatible with the architectural styles and assets present in a community. Design guidelines can be instrumental in creating a sense of place, preserving and enhancing the existing character of the built environment, and encouraging quality development that a community can be proud of.

The City of Belen Zoning Code includes overlay zones for Main Street and Becker Avenue, which require a site plan and staff review for approval. These regulations are currently being reviewed by City staff, and the Planning and Zoning Commission. Updates to the overlay zones may include design regulations that address buildings' scale, massing, facades, and relationship to the street. However, because there is a diverse array of architectural styles, materials, and building types within downtown, design guidelines will be applied case by case.

To support the City's update of these overlay zones and guide future designs, these guidelines describe best practices that should be considered by the City and property owners in the early stages of projects. The guidelines provide general recommendations to property owners, developers, the Belen MainStreet Partnership, and the City of Belen to help inform development projects in the future. They are not intended to be applied as an ordinance, but rather a series of considerations that apply to buildings and public spaces throughout downtown.

1. PUBLIC SPACES

Creating human-scaled, well-designed public places is an art form, although there are some generally agreed upon principles that can be applied. One straightforward approach was developed by Danish architect Jan Gehl, who has written extensively on livability, especially as it relates to public spaces. Gehl has named 12 quality criteria for public spaces that help create places that are attractive and meaningful to their users. Each quality consideration is organized into one of three categories – protection, comfort, and delight – to reflect the essential needs of the space's users. These criteria are not prescriptive; they are general guidelines that can be applied to any place, including future developments in Downtown Belen.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Protection

The first consideration for any public place is to ensure there is protection against risk, injury, insecurity, and unpleasant sensations. This includes 1) protection against traffic and accidents; 2) protection against crime and violence; and 3) protection against unpleasant sensory experiences such as harsh weather, pollution, noises, etc.

Comfort

After protection has been ensured, there are six qualities of public spaces that promote comfort, including opportunities to 1) walk, 2) stand/ stay, 3) sit, 4) see, 5) talk/listen, and 6) play. In practical terms, this translates into adding active central spaces, benches, movable furniture, trees, plants, and other elements that satisfy basic human needs to rest, see and be seen, and communicate.

Delight

Finally, there are three qualities that allow people to take delight in a place. These include: 1) providing appropriately scaled buildings and details; 2) creating opportunities to enjoy the positive aspects of the climate; and 3) providing positive sensory experiences through high quality design details, fine views, etc. Once again, having these qualities helps enhance the social aspects of a place, contributes to walkability, and leads to more memorable experiences.

1.1 BLOCK PATTERN

The existing gridded block pattern in downtown promotes a high degree of walkability, with existing blocks being generally short in length and providing a large number of connections. The alleyways through some downtown blocks, for example, create alternative routes for cars and pedestrians, as well as access to a number of properties. Future developments should preserve this existing block pattern and create connections between the building and street where possible.



EXAMPLES OF CONVIVIAL PUBLIC PLACES

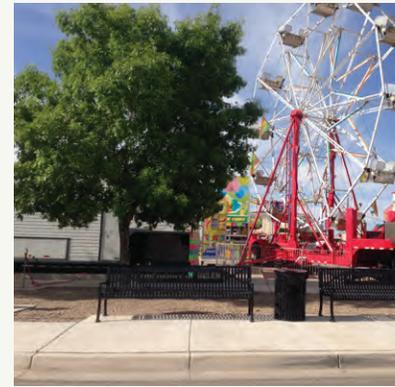


A NEWLY REDISCOVERED PUBLIC SPACE WITH POPUPS - CIVIC PLAZA, ALBUQUERQUE

1.2 PARKING & ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Many of the roads within downtown have on-street parking, which is complemented by ample surface, off-street parking lots throughout the Downtown District. In addition, a number of vacant and empty parcels are being used for parking as well. This has created a discontinuous street frontage, discouraging pedestrian activities. Some of the larger surface parking lots are used infrequently on Sundays for mass, and are otherwise unused. While the availability of parking options is important, surface parking lots should not dominate Downtown. Accordingly, parking should be strategically-located to provide accessible parking to existing businesses, but also not discourage walking between key destinations.

- On-street parking is desirable as it narrows the street and slows traffic. The continuation of the current pattern of angled on-street parking, with off-street parking in locations not visible from the road is also desirable.
- Require any new surface parking lots to be screened with edge treatments (e.g. landscaping, high-quality fencing that is porous for visibility but also can be a canvas for public art installations). For existing surface parking lots, the City can install the edging themselves along the property line in the public right of way.
- Some of the surface parking spaces such as the City Hall parking lot can be transformed to serve the community as gathering spaces, to play basketball, or to exercise. This would transform the parking lot from a single use to a in a multi-use space and provide for additional public space.
- Parking lots should provide pedestrian connections between parking spaces and the fronts of buildings. Where possible, walkways and connections should be constructed that allow pedestrians to safely walk across (and through) each parking lot.
- Promote bike parking at new businesses and community facilities.
- Develop an access management strategy for new surface parking lots that limits access from major pedestrian thoroughfares and instead channels traffic through side street entrances.



CITY HALL PARKING LOT AS AN EVENT SPACE



PARKING DAY - RETHINKING PARKING SPACES



PARKING LOT AS PLAY SPACE

1.3 STREET TREES & LANDSCAPE DESIGN

As highlighted in the implementation section of this document, street trees and other landscape elements have numerous benefits that enhance walkability and create a pleasant downtown experience. Future public developments (such as future streetscape improvements) should incorporate high quality landscape designs that feature native, xeric plants, and adaptable, hardy, and easy to maintain street tree species. Whenever possible, trees should be placed close together (30 feet on center) to form a continuous canopy when fully grown. In addition, trees should be placed between the curb and sidewalk to create a defined, protected buffer between the street and pedestrian routes. A short list of recommended species includes:

Street and Shade Trees

- Honey Locust* *Gleditsia triacanthos*
- New Mexico Locust* *Robinia neomexicana*
- Plains Cottonwood* *Populus deltoides*
- Rio Grande Cottonwood* *Populus wislizeni*
- Texas Red Oak* *Quercus buckleyi*
- Berrinda Ash* *Fraxinus velutina* ‘Berrinda’
- Vanderwolf Pine* *Pinus flexilis* ‘Vanderwolf’
- Afghan Pine* *Pinus eldarica*
- Pinon Pine* *Pinus edulis*
- Chinese Pistache* *Pistacia chinensis*
- Escarpment Live Oak* *Quercus fusiformis*
- Valley Forge Elm* *Ulmus americana* ‘Valley Forge’
- Netleaf Hackberry* *Celtis reticulata*

Ornamental or Accent Trees

- Desert Willow *Chilopsis linearis*
- Purpleleaf Plum* *Prunus cerastifera*
- Soap tree Yucca *Yucca elata*
- Flameleaf Sumac* *Rhus lanceolata*
- Vitex* *Vitex angust-castus*
- Honey Mesquite *Prosopis glandulosa*
- Western Redbud* *Cercis occidentalis*
- Chokecherry* *Prunus virginiana*

Shrubs

- Apache Plume *Fallugia paradoxa*
- New Mexico Olive* *Forestiera neomexicana*
- Beargrass *Nolina microcarpa*
- Rubber Rabbitbrush *Chrysothamnus nauseosus*
- Threadleaf Sage *Artemesia fillifolia*
- Red Yucca *Hesperaloe parviflora*
- Ocotillo *Fouquieria splendens*
- Prickly Pear *Opuntia spp.*
- Rosemary *Rosemarinus officinalis*
- Pale-leaf Yucca *Yucca pallida*
- Threelobed Sumac *Rhus trilobata*
- Thompson Broom *Baccharis X 'Starn'*
- Curl-leaf Mt. Mahogany *Cercocarpus ledifolius*
- Texas Sage *Leucophyllum spp.*
- Oregon Grape Holly* *Mahonia aquifolium*
- Butterfly Bush *Buddleia davidii*
- India Hawthorn* *Raphiolepis indica*
- Fernbush *Chamaebatiaria millefolium*
- Cherry Sage* *Salvia greggii*

Grasses and Groundcover

- Galleta *Hilaria jamesii*
- Buffalo Grass *Buchloe dactyloides*
- Blue Grama *Bouteloua gracilis*
- Western Wheatgrass* *Agropyron smithii*
- Blue Fescue *Festuca ovina*
- Purple Threeawn *Aristida purpurea*
- Alkali Sacaton *Sporobolus airoides*
- Sand Dropseed *Sporobolus cryptandrus*
- Buffalo or Tam Juniper *Juniperus sabina* ‘Buffalo’ or ‘Tamariscifolia’
- Giant Sacaton *Sporobolus wrightii*
- Deergrass *Muhlenbergia rigida*
- Karl Foerster Feather Reed Grass* *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* ‘Karl Foerster’

* Indicates a plant with medium water requirements.
All others have low water requirements.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

1.4 LIGHTING

Lighting within downtown should be scaled to pedestrians and conform to the Night Sky Protection Act to preserve night sky views and energy. Lighting does not have to be a mundane design afterthought, but can be used to highlight buildings at night and promote the image of Belen. For instance, updated lighting at the water tower could be used to attract tourists and motorists to the heart of downtown. In addition, light displays along Becker Ave or Main Street could create a strong sense of cohesion among character areas within downtown, while also providing an “artsy” creative feel to the district.

1.5 PUBLIC ART

Public art is the expression of art displayed publicly, reflecting the spirit, character, and personality of a place. Public art is evident today at the Main Street gateway and near art galleries on 5th and Becker Avenue. Art of all types contributes to the rich culture and history of downtown, and can greatly improve and augment the visual qualities of this area. Public art does not have to be large scale, and can utilize temporary installations, and pop-up uses that showcase the work of local artists.

- Future public art should speak to the culture and history of Belen and be compatible with the scale and style of the downtown. Such art can provide an additional wayfinding mechanism by creating distinctive landmarks within downtown.
- The style and medium of public art should remain flexible and encompass murals, sculptures, statues, street painting, ephemeral art, land art, and other forms that effectively express the identity of Belen.
- Programs like 1% for Art, where a portion of the budget for a new capital project is devoted to public art, make a difference over time as other public improvements are made. Such a program could be introduced to Belen to encourage the installation of more public art over time.
- The Art/Cultural District on Becker Avenue between 3rd and 6th Street and public streetscapes, parks and plazas are priority areas for public art.



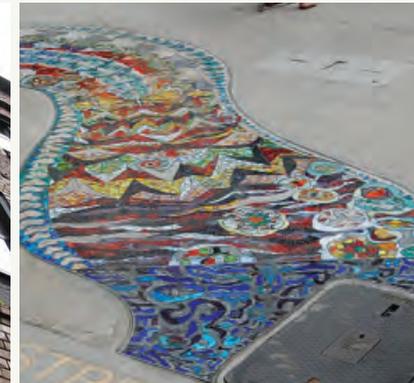
EXISTING LIGHTING ALONG
BECKER AVE



PEDESTRIAN SCALE LIGHTING IN
DOWNTOWN LAS CRUCES



INFRASTRUCTURE AS ART



WALKWAYS AS ART



EXAMPLES OF EXISTING PUBLIC ART

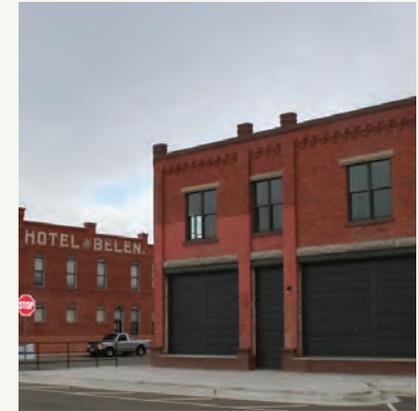
2. BUILDINGS & PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

Downtown Belen’s historic resources provide a framework for the development and redevelopment of downtown properties. These existing structures establish the context for future development that is compatible in scale and massing with the existing downtown. Participants in public meetings and focus groups were clear about their appreciation of the existing community character and concern that there not be dramatic changes. The following guidelines highlight important features that establish downtown’s character, should be considered during future development.

2.1 BUILDING TYPES/ ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

The existing buildings in downtown range from the historic structures of the Railroad District to modern buildings that house newer government and private offices. As a result the styles vary considerably from one block to another. Distinctive historic styles in the character areas are described below. New development should be consistent with the height, setbacks, and character of the surrounding development. The Becker Overlay Zone addresses some of these compatibility concerns. The following point out key features of architectural styles in the district.

Decorative Brick Style. Within the downtown district, especially along Becker Avenue and the northern portion of Dalies Avenue, there are a number of buildings built in decorative brick style. Some, including the Belen Hotel are still mostly original; others have been modified over the years. Brick detailing is an attractive feature to incorporate into new development in areas where buildings are predominantly brick. When existing buildings are renovated, decorative brick details should be retained.



DECORATIVE BRICK STYLE

Pueblo Revival. The Pueblo Revival style is common in Works Progress Administration (WPA) era buildings. The Old City Hall is a prime example of the Pueblo Revival style. When existing buildings are renovated, the existing distinctive features of this style should be retained.



PUEBLO REVIVAL

Residential. The residential area in the northeast part of the study area includes blocks of small bungalow style buildings. Pitched roof Victorian and flat roof Pueblo Revival styles are common. Renovation of these structures should retain the original features of the existing buildings, including materials and detailing. New construction should be compatible in scale and materials to neighboring structures.



HOUSES WITH PITCHED ROOFS

2.2 BUILDING SETBACK

Building setback differs in areas of the Downtown District. Along Main Street and Becker Avenue most buildings are located at or within a few feet of the back of the required average sidewalk width. Structures may form a continuous built edge or street wall, a row of buildings that have no side yards and consistent setback at the thoroughfare edge. Examples of this can be found along portions of Main Street. This building form creates greater walkability and makes the pedestrian experience safer and more pleasant. The building setback along Dalties and Castillo, on the other hand, is larger and structures are located further away from the sidewalk. This setback often also features a vegetative buffer, or parkway, between the sidewalk and street curb. The buffer that parkways create, increase the perception of pedestrian that walking conditions are safer and also allow for additional space for public uses.

Commercial: Along Main Street, Becker and Reinken, generally in the core commercial areas, the building setback should be the same as other structures in the block. In historic blocks, buildings are located at or within a few feet of the sidewalk. Continuation of this pattern in these blocks will create a continuous built edge. Parking should be on-street or to the side or rear of the building to maintain the continuity of the building facades.

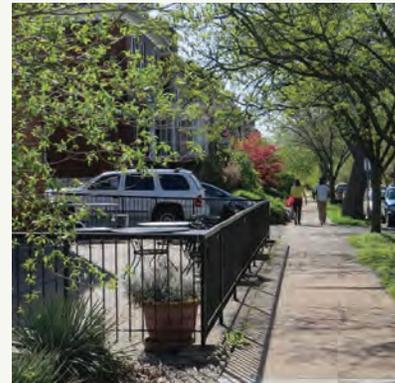
Residential: New residential construction should be similar in height and setbacks to other houses in the block in the traditional neighborhoods surrounding the commercial core. Along Dalties and Castillo, parkways provide a buffer between the street and sidewalk, which creates a pleasant pedestrian experience in the residential neighborhoods.



EXISTING RESIDENTIAL SETBACK



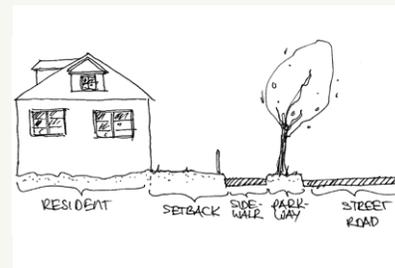
EXISTING COMMERCIAL SETBACK



EXAMPLE RESIDENTIAL SETBACK



EXAMPLE COMMERCIAL SETBACK



RESIDENTIAL SETBACK



COMMERCIAL SETBACK

2.3 BUILDING SCALE, HEIGHT, & MASSING

Scale is the relationship of a building in terms of size, height, bulk, intensity, and aesthetics to its surroundings. The context set by existing development within a block is a key factor in determining how well a new building blends in with the existing neighborhood. In downtown most of the buildings are one or two stories, but there are also taller structures on Main Street. Most areas in the Downtown district have a maximum building height of 45 feet. The different Character Areas have distinguishable building scales. In the Railroad District most of the structures are between one and two stories, while the Arts and Cultural Character District is composed of mainly one-story structures, and the Government District features one to two story buildings.

Main Street and Reinken provide the best locations for new buildings that exceed two stories in height. No change to the maximum heights allowed by the zoning code or overlay zones are proposed, but the design of new construction should take into account transitions between very different heights in adjacent buildings. The portal of the Old City Hall is an example of using variations in the heights of building components to transition between one and two stories. A similar approach could be used as a transition where a three-story building is adjacent to a one- or two-story building.



EXISTING BUILDING HEIGHT COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR - MIXED 1-2 STORY



EXISTING BUILDING HEIGHT RESIDENTIAL AREA - MIXED 1-2 STORY



EXISTING BUILDING HEIGHT GOVERNMENT DISTRICT - 1-2 STORY, LARGE FOOTPRINT



EXISTING BUILDING HEIGHT RAILROAD DISTRICT - 1-2 STORY, FOLLOW S25" LOT PATTERN SMALL SCALE



EXISTING BUILDING HEIGHT ARTS/CULTURAL DISTRICT - 1 STORY WITH LARGE INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS INTERMIXED

2.4 BUILDING FACADES

Massing describes the relationship of the building’s various components to each other. Architectural elements such as windows, doors, and roofs as well as interior floor plans can affect building mass. Massing enhances the visual interest of a structure and how it engages with its surroundings. Successful massing can also encourage the interaction of a building with pedestrians by creating a street frontage that is interesting to passersby and welcomes people into the building.

Transparency is created through display windows, glass doors, or open entryways that create allow pedestrians to glimpse activity inside the building. Interesting retail displays are a prime example of creating interest in windows. View into busy restaurants or fitness centers are other examples. In the commercial areas, a number of storefronts are boarded up and or the overall percentage of a facades transparency is low. This influences the passerby negatively and consequently discourages walkability.

As with height and setbacks, building massing of new buildings should be compatible with the existing buildings in a block. The transitions and visual relationships between new and older buildings should be harmonious. A conscious effort to achieve compatibility between new and old structures is needed. This can be achieved by repeating the massing and scale of existing building or using architectural details to mimic the massing and scale of adjacent buildings.

Ground floor display windows are encouraged in new construction, especially along the commercial corridors of Becker Avenue and Reinken. In existing buildings existing windows should be retained. Ideally, existing windows that are in poor condition will be renovated and put back in place. If windows are deteriorated to the point where they cannot be salvaged, new windows that are similar should be used.



EXISTING STREET FRONTAGE



EXAMPLE OF INCREASED TRANSPARENCY Source: Belen Downtown Vision, DPAC Studio, UNM School of Architecture and Planning, New Mexico Main Street Program 2011



EXAMPLE OF INTERACTION OF BUILDING THROUGH GREATER FAÇADE TRANSPARENCY



EXAMPLE OF TRANSPARENT FAÇADE

2.5 AWNINGS, PORCHES & PORTALES

Awnings above the windows and doors are an important historic element, and still apparent in the current streetscape. Porches and portales are also present in the residential areas of Downtown. Entrances and porches are often the focal point of buildings and structures, particularly on the primary facades. Together with their functional and decorative features, entrances and porches can be extremely important in defining a building's overall architectural style and can help provide interest along a streetscape and diversity within compact developments. Entries can also serve as sheltered areas (such as porches or canopies) to provide protection from the elements.

Awnings, porches and portales should be preserved. New constructed awnings, porches and portales should be designed in harmony with the building they are attached to, and the surrounding architectural style. Main entries shall be focal points of the building. Older awnings, porches and portales should be preserved and maintained. Shade elements in general are encouraged to provide visual interest and shade.



EXISTING AWNINGS

2.6 MATERIAL/COLOR

Many of the older building in the Downtown area are made of brick. However, many of these have been modified and stucco covers the original brick. The stucco of most buildings is kept in earth tones or white, while the brick occurs mostly in a reddish color. Accordingly, the color palette found downtown is primarily earth tones and red. While some buildings are adobe, most are plastered to simulate adobe construction.

Façade renovations in the Downtown area should retain the earth tone color palette typical of the Downtown district and should preserve existing patterned brickwork and decorative touches on the facades. New construction should reflect the existing color palette as well as existing materials. Along the Becker corridor brick is encourage and specifically called for in the Becker Avenue Overlay Zone.



EXISTING BUILDINGS ORIGINALLY CONSTRUCTED OF BRICK AND STUCCOED



EXISTING BUILDINGS



EXISTING BUILDINGS

2.7 SATELLITE DISHES & UTILITIES

The Downtown district consists of a mix of older, historic, and newer buildings. Buildings in the district have appliances including but not limited to, swamp coolers, air conditioners, satellite dishes, and photovoltaic solar panels installed on their exterior walls or roofs. In addition, large satellite dishes are mounted behind the Belen City Hall on Becker.

To maintain and enhance the historic character of the Downtown district, all fixtures and appliances that obstruct the historic character of the Downtown district should be installed and placed out of sight from the primary public street frontage (i.e. excluding alleys, minor streets, etc.)

Ground-mounted dishes or antennas should be mounted as low to the ground as possible and screened by landscaping or fencing using materials that are appropriate and are in harmony with the character and architectural style of the Downtown district. Dishes or antennas should be a neutral color, black or gray in most circumstances. Other colors may be considered neutral if: a) they blend with the surrounding dominant color (such as a white dish against a white house); b) if the color helps to camouflage the dish or antenna; and/or c) if the color is neither bright, reflective, nor metallic. The installation of dishes and other appliances should be done without altering or damaging a historic building.



EXISTING SATELLITE DISH



EXISTING SOLAR DISH

3. HISTORIC AND SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS

There are a number of historic buildings and buildings that are significant to the downtown. These include buildings that played a role in local history as well as those of national significance. These buildings make the downtown a special place. Historic and significant buildings have meaning because of their architecture, design elements, history, and people who occupied them. Residents want to maintain the historic character of the Downtown district. Consequently historic buildings and significant building should be protected and renovated in an appropriate manner.

The Secretary of the Interior has developed Standards and Guidelines that guide preservation, restoration, renovation and reconstruction in historic properties in *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (1995)*. There are also standards for incorporating sustainability into rehabilitation in a way that does not damage the integrity of the building. The standards are regulatory for the Federal Historic Tax Credit Incentives Program. Guidelines are advisory. These documents are available for download from the National Park Service at:

1. <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-guidelines.pdf>
2. <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/sustainability-guidelines.pdf>
3. <http://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives/taxdocs/about-tax-incentives-2012.pdf>

These general guidelines, cited on the following pages, provide excellent suggestions for any owner of a historic property. The guidelines recognize that new construction should not mimic older buildings, but should take care to preserve important features and the overall character of existing buildings.



EXISTING SCHOLLE BUILDING, CURRENTLY VACANT AND BOARDED UP



EXISTING HISTORIC BRICK BUILDINGS ON BECKER AVENUE



EXISTING ONATE THEATER

3.1 STANDARDS FOR HISTORIC AND SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS

The following are standards for the rehabilitation and renovation of historic properties as described by the National Parks Service (NPS).

Standards for Preservation

1. A property will be used as it was historically, or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color, and texture.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will

be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Standards for Restoration

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use which reflects the property's restoration period.
2. Materials and features from the restoration period will be retained and preserved. The removal of materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize the period will not be undertaken.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate and conserve materials and features from the restoration period will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
4. Materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods will be documented prior to their alteration or removal.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the restoration period will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated features from the restoration period will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials.
7. Replacement of missing features from the restoration period will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence. A false sense of history will not be created by adding conjectural features, features from other properties, or by combining features that never existed together historically.
8. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
9. Archeological resources affected by a project will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

10. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

Standards for Reconstruction

1. Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture, and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property.
2. Reconstruction of a landscape, building, structure, or object in its historic location will be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts which are essential to an accurate reconstruction. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
3. Reconstruction will include measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features, and spatial relationships.
4. Reconstruction will be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements substantiated by documentary or physical evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other historic properties. A reconstructed property will re-create the appearance of the non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color, and texture.
5. A reconstruction will be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation.
6. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

APPENDICES

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VIII. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A MRA DESIGNATION REPORT

Belen MainStreet District Conditions Analysis and MRA Designation Report

January 6, 2015

Prepared by

Sites Southwest Ltd. Co.

For the City of Belen, New Mexico and the Belen MainStreet Partnership

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Introduction

The City of Belen has designated Downtown and its Main Street District as the “heart of Belen” and has recognized the importance of a healthy mix of commercial, cultural and government activity to the City’s economic well-being in its Comprehensive Plan as well as in a number of special studies completed after the Comprehensive Plan was adopted. The City has . . . capital improvements, zoning, etc. However, there remain a large number of vacant and underutilized properties in the District.

The State of New Mexico has a number of statutes that are intended to help municipalities in New Mexico promote economic development and redevelopment in areas where such activity is inhibited by a variety of factors. The Urban Development Law (§3-46-1 to §3-46-45 NMSA 1978), the Community Development Law (§3-60-1 to §3-60-37 NMSA 1978), and the New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (§3-60A-1 to §3-60A-48 NMSA 1978) all enable municipalities to implement strategies and projects to eliminate blight. Because the Urban Development Law and the Community Development Law are closely associated with specific Federal renewal programs, the preferred approach for Los Ranchos to accomplish its goals for the Village Center is through the powers conferred by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code.

The New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (§3-60A-1 to 3-60A-48 NMSA 1978) provides cities in New Mexico with the powers to correct conditions in areas or neighborhoods within municipalities which “substantially impair or arrest the sound and orderly development” within the city. These powers can help reverse an area’s decline and stagnation; however, the municipality may only use these powers within designated Metropolitan Redevelopment Areas.

This report evaluates the land within downtown Belen for potential designation as a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA). The study area boundaries are those of the Belen Mainstreet Partnership.

Designation of a MRA is based on findings of “slum or blight” conditions, as defined in the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (§3-60S-8). The criteria set by the Code for a “blighted” area include physical conditions and economic conditions.

As defined in the Code,

"Blighted area" means an area within the area of operation other than a slum area that, because of the presence of a substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures, predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility or usefulness, unsanitary or unsafe conditions, deterioration of site or other improvements, diversity of ownership, tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land, defective or unusual conditions of title, improper subdivision or lack of adequate housing facilities in the area or obsolete or impractical planning and platting or an area where a significant number of commercial or mercantile

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businesses have closed or significantly reduced their operations due to the economic losses or loss of profit due to operating in the area, low levels of commercial or industrial activity or redevelopment or any combination of such factors, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth and economic health and well-being of a municipality or locale within a municipality or an area that retards the provisions of housing accommodations or constitutes an economic or social burden and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals or welfare in its present condition and use.

Analysis Summary

The City of Belen in its Comprehensive Plan stressed the importance of Downtown as the “heart of Belen” – the cultural and economic center of the City. The City has invested in streetscape improvements and owns key properties that now constitute redevelopment opportunities – the Becker streetscape and Old City Hall being prime examples of public investment.

The Downtown Belen Partnership has helped in cleaning up some vacant lots – creating a community garden on one of these lots – and working with the City to secure funding for rehabilitation of the Old City Hall.

The analysis contained in the report shows that in spite of public investment and the work of the Belen Partnership, the following conditions exist that inhibit new development and redevelopment and have substantially impaired the sound growth of Downtown and, therefore, the economic health and well-being of the City of Belen as a whole.

Deteriorated or deteriorating structures, including a number of vacant buildings

There are 37 vacant buildings in the study area. In addition, there are vacant lots, surface parking in excess of what is needed for the commercial activity in the area and underutilized properties with very small buildings on large lots. Of the property area in the study area, excluding public rights of way, 12% is vacant lots, 11% is vacant buildings, and 17% is surface parking or underutilized parcels. This represents 43% of parcels and 39% of land area.

Deterioration of site or other improvements

Buildings are generally maintained in decent condition, but there has been little recent obvious investment in older buildings. In most cases, vacant buildings are secured by boarding up windows, but there are signs of neglect, including peeling paint, faded signs, and similar. The disadvantage is that this creates a poor image of the study area. The advantage is that redevelopment is less difficult because needed repairs are likely cosmetic.

Diversity of ownership, which while typical of a downtown, make coordinated redevelopment efforts difficult

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The study area encompasses approximately 74 acres in 224 parcels. There are 145 separate owners in addition to the City of Belen, the Belen Board of Education, the State of New Mexico and Valencia County. This calculation groups families as one owner, although properties may be owned by different family members. Government is the largest landowner with 10 acres. The median ownership for non-government is .23 acres, and ownership ranges from a single parcel of .03 acres to multiple parcels up to 9 acres. The diversity of ownership makes it difficult to implement a coordinated redevelopment effort.

Low levels of commercial or industrial activity or redevelopment

The economic analysis shows low levels of commercial activity and the conditions analysis shows low levels of redevelopment. A community economic assessment conducted by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of New Mexico found that employment within the study area has declined dramatically over the past ten years, and total employment is 1/3 the level it was in 2002. Contributing to this decline is the virtual disappearance of retail trade from the downtown, with employment decreasing from 554 jobs in 2006 to 50 in 2011. The number of vacant buildings

Summary of Findings

The area within the boundary of the Belen MainStreet Partnership, Belen's MainStreet district and the subject of this designation report, is the City of Belen's downtown and has historically been the center of commerce for the City. It is the City's civic center and its center of arts and culture. It also is home to some of the City's most significant historic buildings, including the Belen Hotel and Harvey House, both of which are on the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Cultural Properties.

According to existing City policies, including the City's Comprehensive Plan and its Strategic Growth Plan, the downtown area should be a walkable, mixed use district with an attractive mix of commercial, civic, residential and arts and cultural activity. As one of five key centers of economic activity, this area has been envisioned as a center for residents and tourists – an area that supports a diverse range of jobs and generates revenue for the City.

Physical conditions of many downtown properties have impaired and arrested the sound growth of downtown and the economic health of the City as a whole. The presence of so many vacant buildings and vacant lots in the heart of the City is a detriment to the City's fiscal well-being and to the ability of the City to meet the needs of its residents.

In spite of supportive policies and public investment in government office buildings, parks and streetscape improvements, there is evidence of declining private investment and decreasing economic activity or redevelopment. Over the past ten years, retail trade virtually disappeared from

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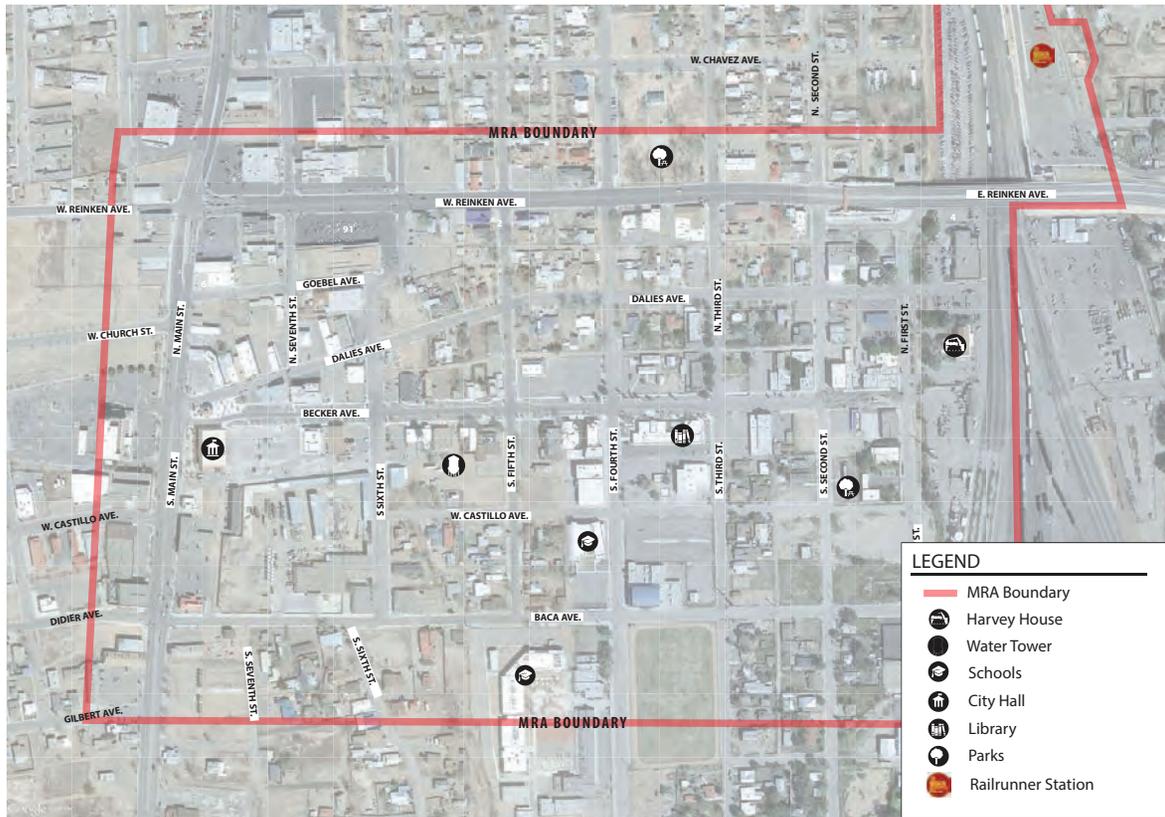
downtown, and the number of retail jobs remains less than 10 percent of the number of retail jobs in 2006. The number of jobs in downtown is 1/3 the number in 2002.

The following analysis demonstrates that the property included in the analysis exhibits a combination of factors that contribute to blight in the study area. The redevelopment and development of the study area is necessary in the interest of the welfare of the residents of the municipality. The powers granted to municipalities in New Mexico through the Metropolitan Redevelopment Act are intended to enable municipalities to promote economic activity in areas like the study area, where growth and development is hindered by physical and other conditions. Based on the findings of the designation report, a development/redevelopment plan should be carried out to aid in the elimination and deterrence of blight.

Boundaries of the Study Area

The boundaries of the study area are the same as the boundaries of the Belen Downtown Partnership MainStreet district, as shown in Figure 1. The northern boundary is mid-block on the north side of Reinken; the east boundary is the railroad tracks; the south boundary is mid-block on the south side of Becker (roughly along the south side of City Hall extended to the east), and the west boundary is mid-block west of Main Street. The district extends south on both sides of Main Street to Gilbert Avenue.

Figure 1. Study Area Boundary



A list of properties included in the study area, with address and legal description, is in the Appendices.

Existing Conditions Assessment

City Policy

Several City documents lay out policies for the MainStreet district and identify needs and redevelopment goals. These documents recognize the importance of downtown to the City's identity, culture and economic well-being.

Belen Comprehensive Plan 2003.

The Comprehensive Plan is more than 10 years old, but it identifies the Belen Center, which includes the MainStreet district, as the location of much of Belen's commercial land use. Comprehensive Plan goals and policies support the development and redevelopment of the MainStreet district. The Comprehensive Plan notes that there is sufficient vacant land for future new development and many older structures, some of which are historic, that are suitable for redevelopment. The Plan recognizes the potential for development of downtown because of the area's unique character and qualities as the heart of Belen.

A survey of community residents and key stakeholder interviews identified the following issues:

- Belen should retain its character, culture, friendly atmosphere and historic structures.
- Stakeholders were concerned about the condition of the local economy, community and appearance, and the need to provide services to a growing population.

Goals related to the downtown include:

Land Use Goal A: Preserve and enhance the unique character and historical culture of Belen.

Objectives:

- Provide support and incentives to preserve historic structures such as: the Belen Hotel, the Central Hotel, the Harvey Housing, the Felipe Chavez House [not within the district] and other historic residences.
- Redefine and regulate the designated historic district which is currently located near the railroad terminal.
- Promote and support the development of a combined historic and cultural district to accommodate the local arts community.
- Use zoning and other regulatory ordinance to maintain historical and cultural elements in the community.
- Development architectural design standards that are appropriate for the community and promote quality history and prosperity.

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Land Use Goal C: Maintain the appearance of a clean and scenic community

Objectives:

- Encourage the restoration or re-building of old abandoned buildings in the community that are structurally sound. Intervene as soon as possible on buildings if owners are not maintaining them.

Land Use Goal F. Provide adequate housing for all residents of the City of Belen.

Objectives:

- Provide opportunities for multi-family housing units to be located in areas where higher density is acceptable and designed in a manner that would be compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods.

Economic Development Goal O: Support and promote the local business community.

Objectives:

- Preserve and protect historic and cultural attractions (Harvey House, Belen Hotel, railroad depot) as a means of attracting tourism.
- Encourage tourist-oriented businesses such as restaurants, galleries, and small specialty shops to locate in the downtown area and along Belen's Main Street.

The City has accomplished a number of the goals related to the MainStreet district, including the designation of a MainStreet district, recognition and preservation of historic structures, and efforts to stabilize and redevelop the old city hall. However, in spite of these policies and action, the MainStreet district has not rebounded economically.

City of Belen Strategic Growth Plan

The Strategic Growth Plan, adopted in 2010, identifies the Belen Center as one of five centers of economic activity in the City. It notes that this is the central business district for Belen as well as the civic focal point of the community and the location of established residential neighborhoods. The future of Becker Avenue, which is promoted as the “heart of Belen”, is envisioned as an entertainment area with sores, restaurants, galleries and civic buildings. The district’s focus for the local arts community, historic character, development pattern, distinctive architectural styles and

connection to the Rail Runner are seen as assets. The Strategic Plan identifies the Downtown Corridor (Main Street through downtown) and a portion of the Reinken/River Road Corridor as important in linking downtown to other activity centers and the region.

Goals for the Belen Center promote a walkable area in combination with mixed use development, with the ultimate goal of a vibrant downtown area for both residents and tourists. The strategy is to encourage development and redevelopment within the district and surrounding the Rail Runner station.

While the City and the Belen MainStreet Partnership have worked to achieve the vision for Belen Center, the research conducted for the designation report indicates that the interventions enabled by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Act would help stimulate development and redevelopment that is not happening on its own.

Zoning

The study area is predominantly zoned C-1, General Commercial and C-R, Commercial/Residential. To the west parcels in the study area are zoned General Commercial and the east Commercial/Residential. Parcels along the railroad lines to the east are zoned Manufacturing/Commercial, M-C. Some parcels to the north of Reinken or highway 308 are zoned residential with a designation of the R-1 and R-2 zone. In addition to the standard zones, a Main Street Overlay Zone applies along Main Street, and the Becker Avenue Zone applies along Becker Ave. The intent of the overlay zones is to protect the character of development along two of the study area's major streets.

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Reinken Ave or Highway 309 serves as a major transportation corridor, which transitions at the t-intersection of Main Street and Reinken Ave to the northwest of the study area, and continues as Highway 314 along Main Street. Reinken is lined with a number of businesses and the Anna Becker Park fronting it on the north side.

The heart of the study area is traversed by Dalies Ave, a street with residential character and Becker Ave, a corridor identified by the City of Belen as an important historical and commercial asset.

Dalies Ave is fronted by residential properties along most of its length; however on the west end Dalies Ave is lined by distinct businesses including the old Buckland Pharmacy that has been in operation since 1908, the Shar'n Care Pharmacy, Bank of America, the Onate Cinema and a newly constructed pavilion at the intersection of Dalies Ave with Main Street. A parcel owned by the City, that presently accomodates a community garden and shade structure fronts Dalies Ave at the corner with Sixth Street. A historic Sears Kit house is located at the intesection of Dalies and Sixth Street.

Becker Ave. contains a number of historical buildings as well as commercial and government owned buildings along its length from Main Street to the railroad. Government entities include City Hall, the Belen Police Station and the State Departement of Health. Commercial businesses include and a State Farm office and smaller businesses. East of Sixth Street, the north side of Becker is fronted by a number of vacant buildings, and on the south side is an Art Gallery and the City's icononic Water Tower. The City of Belen has identified this tower as a landmark that serves as a symbol for the entire city. Next to the Water Tower is the old City Hall, one of the most historically significant buildings in the study area. This building once served as jail, police station and library; however, it is presently unoccupied and in need of rehabilitation. The City and the Belen MainStreet Partnership have secured grant funds to incrementally stablize and rehabilitate this building.

To the east of the old City Hall between Fourth and Third Streets is a modern building that houses the State Human Services Department and Motor Vehical Division and the First Baptist Church of Belen are on the south site of Becker. The north side of the street is a large parking lot belonging to the Baptist Chruch. The Belen Public Library is east of Fourth Street on the south side, and on the north side is a student training center owned by the Belen Board of Education and the Brooks Appartement Complex.

Between Third and Second Street on the north side are a vacant lot, a large surface parking lot, the American Legion and the Becker Street Pub. On the south side are surface parking, a vacant lot and the 12 Lane Bowling Alley, which is not operating presently.

The intersection of Becker and Second Street is framed on the north side by the historic Belen Hotel and the Central Hotel building. Across the street are two empty pracels and a building occupied by Through the Flower, a non-profit run by the artist and feminist Judy Chicago. Along Becker on the north side are are vacant retail buildings.

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First Street houses the iconic Harvey house, abutting the railroad to the east. The land and other buildings along the railroad fronting First Street are owned and operated by the BN&SF Railroad. On the corner of First Street and Dalies is a large surface parking lot and Pete's New Mexican restaurant.

Buidling and Site Conditions

A field survey was conducted in December 2014 to document building conditions and occupancy, identify vacant parcels and identify deteriorated site conditions. The field crew walked the district during normal business hours on a weekday, documenting conditions in writing and through photographs. When it was not obvious from the street whether a business was open, a member of the crew checked the door and noted whether there seems to be a functioning business on the property.

The field survey information was then matched to County assessor parcels. The survey noted 37 vacant buildings as well as 36 vacant lots and 25 parcels that are underutilized given their location in Belen's downtown core. These parcels represent 43 percent of the parcels in the study area and 39 percent of the land area.

Occupied buildings and vacant lots tend to be well kept. However, within the study area the large number of parcels are either vacant or underutilized contribute to an atmosphere of neglect and decline.

Figure 2 shows the locations of vacant lots and vacant buildings, surface parking and underutilized parcels. As illustrated by the map, the study area is dominated by vacant lots and buildings, surface parking and parcels where only a small fraction of the property is utilized.

Figure 2. Building Occupancy and Use of Land

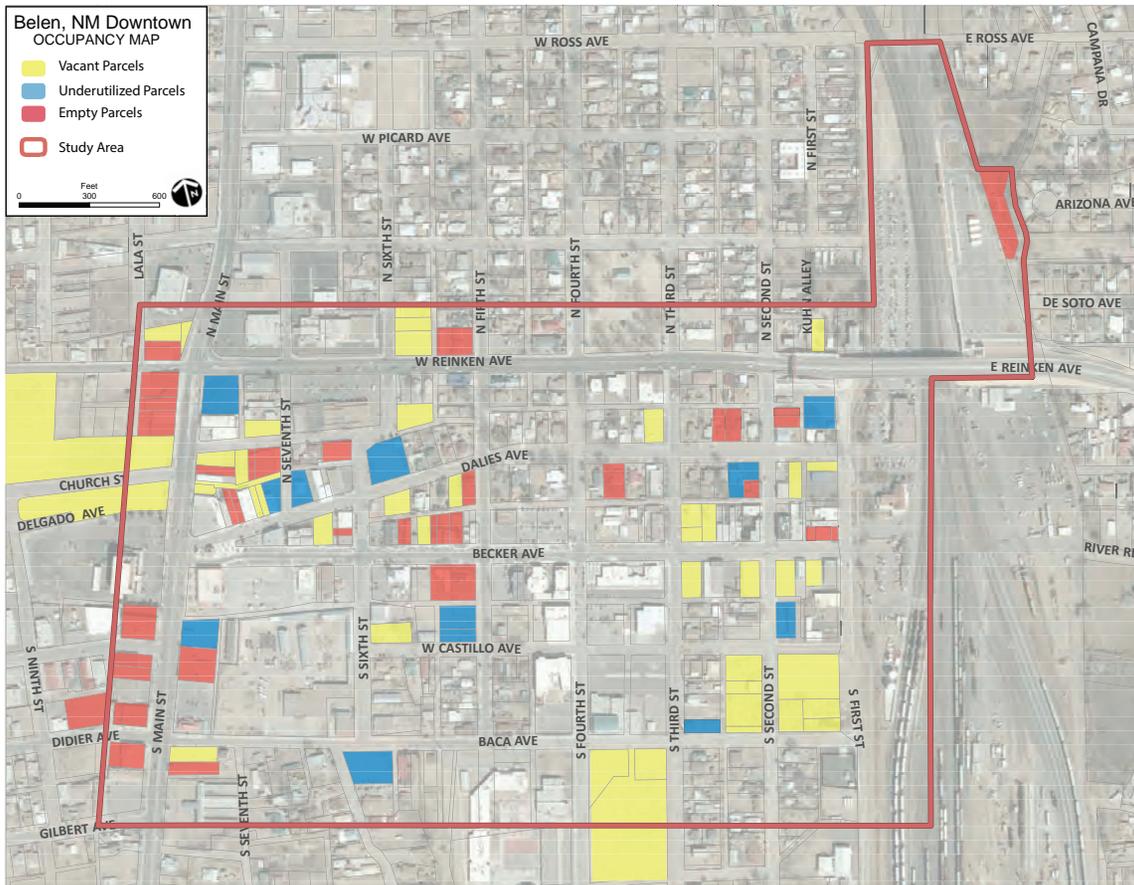
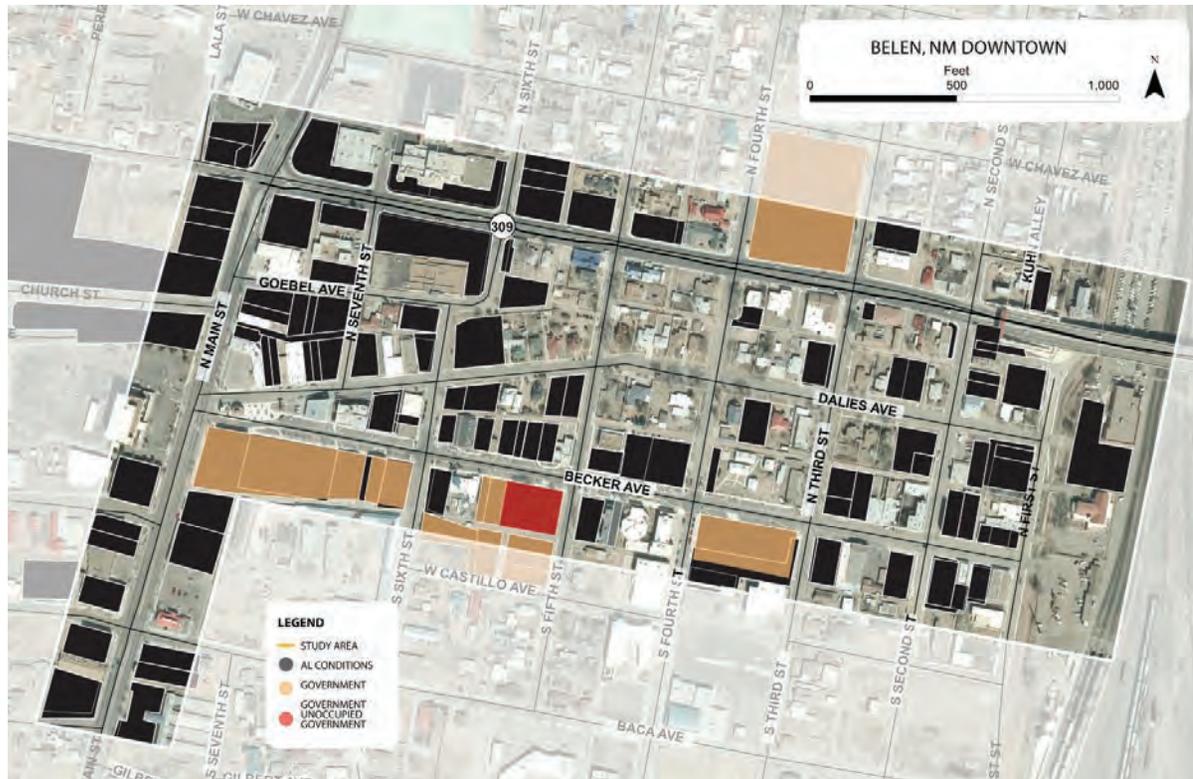


Figure 3 provides a picture of the combined impact of vacant land, vacant buildings, surface parking and underutilized parcels on economic activity in the study area. The parcels shown in black in some way indicate a low level of investment in downtown. These represent nearly 40 percent of the land area, excluding rights of way in the study area.

Figure 3. Combined Impact of All Conditions Indicating a Low Level of Commercial Activity



The photos on the following pages illustrate the conditions of vacant and deteriorating buildings and vacant lots.

Figure 4. Vacant Commercial Buildings



Figure 5. Vacant and Deteriorated Residential Structures and Sites



Figure 6. Vacant Lots



Figure 7. Underutilized Parcels



Economic Conditions

The University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research conducted a community economic assessment of Belen MainStreet in early 2014. The community economic assessment made the following observations about Belen and the area within the MainStreet boundary.

For the City of Belen:

- Belen’s population has grown notably more slowly than Valencia County and New Mexico overall, including recent population declines. The slow growth and recent decline were attributed to lack of job prospects and the fact that Belen was particularly hard hit by the recession that began in 2008-2009.
- Belen’s population exhibits a lower level of educational attainment than the County and the State. Fewer children are enrolled in pre-school programs, and test scores indicate that Belen’s elementary school students lag students in the County in reading, math and science, and high school students lag the State in math and science.
- The poverty rate in Belen is nearly twice that of the State, and median income in Belen is 30% below Valencia County’s median income. The percentage of households in Belen that live on less than \$10,000 per year is more than double that of Valencia County or the State. Low earnings are attributed to low wage jobs and a high percentage of population not in the workforce.
- The housing markets in Belen and in Rio Communities are less active than in the County as a whole – a small fraction of the homes sold in Valencia County are located in Belen or Rio Communities, even though housing in Belen is very affordable in comparison to the greater Albuquerque area.
- The number of wage and salary jobs in Belen has fluctuated from year to year, but overall increased from 2002 to 2011. Of particular recent interest is the selection of Belen as the location for a new

For the MainStreet District:

- The MainStreet district is older than the population of the City – with a much lower percentage of residents under 44 and a much higher percentage aged 45 to 64.
- Of an estimated 209 housing units within the MainStreet district in 2010, 93, or 44%, were identified as vacant. Of these, 75 were for sale and 5 for rent. This compares to a vacancy rate of 14.4% in Belen and 8.3% in Valencia County.
- The number of wage and salary jobs in the MainStreet district dropped significantly from 2002 to 2011, with the most dramatic decline in retail trade. The total number of retail jobs in the MainStreet district in 2011 was estimated to be less than 10% of the number of retail jobs in 2006. Industries with increased employment are construction and transportation/warehousing, which could be an indicator of land uses shifting from retail and services to more industrial type uses. However, total employment in these categories is relatively small, not making up for the loss of retail jobs.

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- A survey conducted by the UNM School of Architecture¹⁶ in conjunction with their study *Walkable Belen* found that residents go downtown to shop at the Farmer’s Market, see parades, visit government offices, go the library, do their banking, shop for groceries (Lowes), go to the drug store, see their CPA, visit their doctor, go to the gym, and so forth. For many, the trips are daily; for others weekly; for a few, monthly. They might go more often if there were more options for cafés, places to get a cup of coffee, additional art galleries, outside patios, stores with local arts and crafts, youth centers, and/or more places to go with kids. Things they don’t like are the empty buildings and the empty lots, and quite a few opined that there was “no business, nothing to do” in the downtown area.

In spite of the low level of economic activity in downtown, and the indicators of economic decline, there are opportunities associated with the City’s role as a commercial center for its region and strong cultural and historical values. Designation of the MainStreet district as a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area would enable the City to actively invest in ventures that could turn the downtown’s fortunes around.

Findings

Analysis Summary

The City of Belen in its Comprehensive Plan stressed the importance of Downtown as the “heart of Belen” – the cultural and economic center of the City. The City has invested in streetscape improvements and owns key properties that now constitute redevelopment opportunities – the Becker streetscape and Old City Hall being prime examples of public investment.

The Belen MainStreet Partnership has helped in cleaning up vacant lots – creating a community garden on one of these lots – and working with the City to secure funding for rehabilitation of the Old City Hall.

The analysis contained in the report shows that in spite of public investment and the work of the Belen MainStreet Partnership, the following conditions exist that inhibit new development and redevelopment and have substantially impaired the sound growth of Downtown and, therefore, the economic health and well-being of the City of Belen as a whole.

Deteriorated or deteriorating structures, including a number of vacant buildings

There are 37 vacant buildings in the study area. In addition, there are vacant lots, surface parking in excess of what is needed for the commercial activity in the area and underutilized properties with very small buildings on large lots. Of the property area in the study area, excluding public rights of way, 12% is vacant lots, 11% is vacant buildings, and 17% is surface parking or underutilized parcels. This represents 43% of parcels and 39% of land area.

Deterioration of site or other improvements

Buildings are generally maintained in decent condition, but there has been little recent obvious investment in older buildings. In most cases, vacant buildings are secured by boarding up windows, but there are signs of neglect, including peeling paint, faded signs, and similar. The disadvantage is that this creates a poor image of the study area. The advantage is that redevelopment is less difficult because needed repairs are likely cosmetic.

Diversity of ownership, which while typical of a downtown, make coordinated redevelopment efforts difficult

The study area encompasses approximately 74 acres in 224 parcels. There are 145 separate owners in addition to the City of Belen, the Belen Board of Education, the State of New Mexico and Valencia County. This calculation groups families as one owner, although properties may be owned by different family members. Government is the largest landowner with 10 acres. The median ownership for non-government is .23

acres, and ownership ranges from a single parcel of .03 acres to multiple parcels up to 9 acres. The diversity of ownership makes it difficult to implement a coordinated redevelopment effort.

Low levels of commercial or industrial activity or redevelopment

The economic analysis shows low levels of commercial activity and the conditions analysis shows low levels of redevelopment. A community economic assessment conducted by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of New Mexico found that employment within the study area has declined dramatically over the past ten years, and total employment is 1/3 the level it was in 2002. Contributing to this decline is the virtual disappearance of retail trade from the downtown, with employment decreasing from 554 jobs in 2006 to 50 in 2011. The number of vacant buildings

Summary of Findings

The area within the boundary of the Belen MainStreet Partnership, Belen’s MainStreet district and the subject of this designation report, is the City of Belen’s downtown and has historically been the center of commerce for the City. It is the City’s civic center and its center of arts and culture. It also is home to some of the City’s most significant historic buildings, including the Belen Hotel and Harvey House, both of which are on the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Cultural Properties.

According to existing City policies, including the City’s Comprehensive Plan and its Strategic Growth Plan, the downtown area should be a walkable, mixed use district with an attractive mix of commercial, civic, residential and arts and cultural activity. As one of five key centers of economic activity, this area has been envisioned as a center for residents and tourists – an area that supports a diverse range of jobs and generates revenue for the City.

Physical conditions of many downtown properties have impaired and arrested the sound growth of downtown and the economic health of the City as a whole. The presence of so many vacant buildings and vacant lots in the heart of the City is a detriment to the City’s fiscal well-being and to the ability of the City to meet the needs of its residents.

In spite of supportive policies and public investment in government office buildings, parks and streetscape improvements, there is evidence of declining private investment and decreasing economic activity or redevelopment. Over the past ten years, retail trade virtually disappeared from downtown, and the number of retail jobs remains less than 10 percent of the number of retail jobs in 2006. The number of jobs in downtown is 1/3 the number in 2002.

The analysis demonstrates that the property included in the analysis exhibits a combination of factors that contribute to blight in the study area. The redevelopment and development of the study area is necessary in the interest of the welfare of the residents of the municipality. The

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powers granted to municipalities in New Mexico through the Metropolitan Redevelopment Act are intended to enable municipalities to promote economic activity in areas like the study area, where growth and development is hindered by physical and other conditions. Based on the findings of the designation report, a development/redevelopment plan should be carried out to aid in the elimination and deterrence of blight.

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Properties in the Belen Downtown MRA Area

County Assessor Account Number	Parcel Number (UPC)	Street Address	Legal Description
R069191	1007028311359		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: ALL OF BLOCK Block: 15 2.82 ACRES MAP 100
R071123	1007028349340		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 15 Block: 14 0.11 ACRE MAP 100
R070201	1007028303270		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 16 Block: 27
R069286	1007028333265		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 19 Block: 26
R071317	1007028374259		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 10 Block: 25 PETE'S CAFE
R069287	1007028335265		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 18 Block: 26
R069288	1007028338265		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 17 Block: 26
R069289	1007028341265	208 A BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 16 Block: 26
R071276	1007028374268		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 7B AKA THE SOUTH 22.7' OF LOT 7 Block: 25 0.06 ACRE MAP 100
R070545	1007028183308	608 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 10 Block: 31
R070593	1007028323269		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 22 THRU 24 THE NORTH 90 FEET OF Block: 26
R069563	1007028325285	223 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 10, 11, & 12 Block: 26
R069886	1007028329307	224 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 20, 21, & 22 Block: 23 0.22 ACRE MAP 100
R070290	1007028331284		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 8 & 9 Block: 26
R071423	1007028335319	212 N 3RD ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 8 THE SOUTH 20 FEET OF AND ALL OF LOTS 9 & 10 Block: 23 0.22 ACRE MAP 100
R071050	1007028336306	220 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 18 & 19 Block: 23 0.15 ACRE MAP 100
R071414	1007028321263		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: LOTS 22 THRU 24 THE SOUTH 50 FEET OF Block: 26
R071016	1007028340353		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 24 THRU 27 Block: 14 0.32 ACRE MAP 100 1998 REV
R070243	1007028329266		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 20 & 21 Block: 26
R069145	1007028335326	215 W REINKEN AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 6 & 7 & NORTH 5 FEET OF LOT 8 Block: 23 0.19 ACRE MAP 100
R070711	1007028161371	300 S MAIN ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: ALL BLOCK (LOTS 1-13) INCLUDING ALLEY Block: 19 1.01 ACRE MAP 100
R071163	1007028210376	319 N 6TH ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 6 A TRIANGULAR PORTION OF & LOTS 7, 8, & 9 Block: 18 0.25 ACRE MAP 100
R068983	1007028228357		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 29 THRU 32 Block: 17 0.35 ACRE MAP 100
R069270	1007028229363		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 27 & 28 Block: 17 0.16 ACRE MAP 100
R068982	1007028230369		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 25 & 26 Block: 17 0.16 ACRE MAP 100
R069305	1007028346264	200 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 13, 14, & 15 Block: 26
R068981	1007028346304	212 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 14 & 15 Block: 23 0.15 ACRE MAP 100
R070574	1007028353303	200 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 11, 12, & 13 Block: 23 0.22 ACRE MAP 100 D.C. 1-19-86

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Properties in the Belen Downtown MRA Area

County Assessor Account Number	Parcel Number (UPC)	Street Address	Legal Description
R070066	1007028357351	311 N 2ND ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 9 & 10 & N1/2 OF ALLEY ADJACENT TO LOT 10 Block: 14 N1/2 OF ALLEY 10' X 140' SOUTH OF LOT 10 0.19 ACRE MAP 100
R070738	1007028302289	311 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 4, 5, & 6 Block: 27 DC FOR MARY PUCKETT 348/1587
R070155	1007028305341	216 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 16 & 17 Block: 23
R071022	1007028308269		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 13, 14, & 15 Block: 27 2ND HOUSE 1000 SQ. FEET
R071023	1007028311288		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1, 2, & 3 Block: 27
R071433	1007028178320		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 4, 5, & 6 Block: 31 2ND HOUSE 1402 SQ FT DC FOR PREME ULIBARRI 359/16631
R070153	1007028240321	209 N 5TH ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 6 & 7 Block: 20 0.16 ACRE MAP 100
R070906	1007028240334	211 N 5TH ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 3, 4, & 5 Block: 20 0.24 ACRE MAP 100 2ND HOUSE 357 SQ FT
R124839	1007028245363	309 N 5TH ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 10 & 11 & NORTH 20FT OF LOT 12 Block: 17 0.22 ACRE MAP 100
R070885	1007028251296	423 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 10, 11, & 12 Block: 28 2ND HOUSE SQ FT 530
R069279	1007028255318	422 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 20, 21, & 22 Block: 21 0.22 ACRE MAP 100
R069530	1007028260295	415 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 7, 8, & 9 Block: 28
R069420	1007028260315	412 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 18 & 19 Block: 21 0.15 ACRE MAP 100
R069542	1007028261330	212 N 5TH ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 8 SOUTH 1/2 OF AND ALL LOTS 9 & 10 Block: 21 0.20 ACRE MAP 100
R069421	1007028266314	408 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 16 & 17 Block: 21 0.15 ACRE MAP 100
R069721	1007028266357	308 N 5TH ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 27, 28, & 29 Block: 16 0.24 ACRE MAP 100
R070147	1007028267364	314 N 5TH ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 24, 25, & 26 Block: 16 0.24 ACRE MAP 100
R070466	1007028271293	401 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1 THRU 6 Block: 28 2ND HOUSE SQ FT 494
R069629	1007028271315	404 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 14 & 15 Block: 21 0.15 ACRE MAP 100 1992 SPLIT
R070387	1007028278326	219 N 4TH ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 4 & 5 Block: 21 0.16 ACRE MAP 100
R069724	1007028280355	307 N 4TH ST	BECKER ADDITION #2 Lot: 11, 12, & 13 Block: 16
R069786	1007028280362	311 N 4TH ST	BECKER ADDITION #2 Lot: 9 & 10 Block: 16 0.16 ACRE MAP 100 2010 REV
R070776	1007028287291	319 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 10, 11, & 12 Block: 27
R069969	1007028363261	110 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 17 & 18 Block: 25
R069617	1007028347319	211 W REINKEN AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 4 THE WEST 5 FEET OF AND ALL OF LOT 5 Block: 23 0.13 ACRE MAP 100 STUDIO D
R070588	1007028356335	200 W REINKEN AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 11 THRU 14 THE SOUTH 66 FEET OF Block: 14 0.15 ACRE MAP 100 ORTEGA'S GARAGE

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Properties in the Belen Downtown MRA Area

County Assessor Account Number	Parcel Number (UPC)	Street Address	Legal Description
R069178	1007028291272		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 17 THRU 24 Block: 27
R069456	1007028175308	618 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 13 & 14 Block: 31
R069188	1007028180308	610 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 11 & 12 Block: 31
R069274	1007028188308		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 7, 8, & 9 Block: 31
R070762	1007028188366		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 11 THRU 16 & A PORTION OF LOTS 10 & 17 & THE EASTERLY 50 FEET OF LOTS 18 THRU 23 & PORTION OF 20FT ABANDONED ALLEY WAY BETWEEN SAID LOTS Block: 18 0.80 ACRE MAP 100
R069237	1007028189319	607 GOEBEL AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1, 2, & 3 Block: 31
R071201	1007028193339	601 W REINKEN AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1 THRU 18 INCLUDING ALLEY IN BLOCK Block: B
R071505	1007028242340	511 W REINKEN AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1 & 2 Block: 20 0.16 ACRE MAP 100
R070369	1007028244354		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 12 SOUTH 5FT OF & LOTS 13 THRU 16 Block: 17 0.37 ACRE MAP 100
R216031	1007028250279	424 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 21 THRU 24 Block: 28
R069537	1007028258278		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 18, 19, & 20 Block: 28
R070552	1007028262337	415 W REINKEN AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 6, 7, & NORTH 1/2 OF LOT 8 Block: 21 0.20 ACRE MAP 100
R069758	1007028264349		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 30, 31, & 32 Block: 16 0.24 ACRE MAP 100
R069538	1007028268276		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 13 THRU 17 Block: 28
R168107	1007028276315	400 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 11, 12, & 13 Block: 21 0.22 ACRE MAP 100 DAVIS FLORAL 1992 SPLIT
R070042	1007028278332	401 W REINKEN AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1, 2, & 3 Block: 21 0.24 ACRE MAP 100
R069759	1007028278347	418 W REINKEN AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 14, 15, & 16 Block: 16 0.24 ACRE MAP 100
R070602	1007028281377		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1 & LOT 2 Block: 25
R068876	1007028358262	114 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 19 & 20 Block: 25 CABOOSE BAR & GRILL
R137086	1007028358340	300 N 3RD ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 28 THRU 31 Block: 14
R069763	1007028360279	114 N 2ND ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 15 & 16 Block: 25
R070051	1007028366278		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 13 & 14 Block: 25
R070586	1007028370256	106 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 11 & 12 THE WEST 48 FEET OF THE WEST 92 FEET Block: 25
R071277	1007028375263	105 N 1ST ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 8 & 9 Block: 25
R070587	1007028375272		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 3 THRU 6 AND 2.30 FEET OF LOT 7 AKA LOT 7A Block: 25
R069481	1007028378255		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 11 & 12 EAST 27 FEET OF Block: 25
R070463	1007028375255		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 11 & 12 THE EAST 44 FEET OF THE WEST 92 FEET Block: 25 MAP 100
R069837	1007028246369	315 N 5TH ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 8 & 9 Block: 17 0.16 ACRE MAP 100

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Properties in the Belen Downtown MRA Area

County Assessor Account Number	Parcel Number (UPC)	Street Address	Legal Description
R071465	1007028337283	215 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 6 & 7 Block: 26
R071416	1007028345285	211 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1 THRU 3 THE NORTH 1/2 OF AND ALL OF LOTS 4 & 5 Block: 26
R069076	1007028167386		CTS ADDITION D-5-18A & D Lot: 1 THRU 5 Block: 6 0.59 ACRE MAP 100 2008 REV
R139462	1007028222297	101 S MAIN ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1 THRU 13 & MAJOR PORTION OF UNPLATTED LAND WITHIN BLOCK Block: A 3.89 ACRES +/-
R071346	1007028135250	118 S Main St	Tract: 76A1A S: 18 T: 5N R: 2E 0.24 ACRE MAP 100
R070449	1007028348278		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1 THRU 3 THE SOUTH 1/2 OF Block: 26
R221824	1007028199253		Tract: 67A & PORTON OF TRACT 67B S: 18 T: 5N R: 2E TOTAL 0.36 ACRE MAP 100 2013 REV
R070134	1007028288285	315 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 7, 8, & 9 Block: 27
R069089	1007028120209		LAND OF BELEN CORPORATION Tract: A .30 AC MAP 100 D-5-18D 1995 REV
R070406	1007028108207	302 S MAIN ST	S: 18 T: 5N R: 2E MAP 100 TRS 96B1B .02 AC TR 98A .17 AC CLEAR CHOICE WINDOWS 2008 REV
R070319	1007028109210		S: 18 T: 5N R: 2E MAP 100 TRS 96A .20 AC TR 97 .02 AC NO. VA-83-367-CV
R070723	1007028114238	220 S MAIN ST	SCHOLLE ADDITION #3 Lot: 1 THRU LOT 8 PIZZA HUT STORE# 12960
R070223	1007028140233	606 BACA AVE	Tract: 69A2 (0.06 AC), TRACT 69A3 (0.35 AC), TRACT 69B (0.05 AC), TRACT 70 (0.45 AC), TRACT 71A (0.14 AC), TRACT 71B (0.10 AC), TRACT 71C (0.09 AC) TRACT 72A (0.32 AC), TRACT 72B (0.06 AC), TRACT 73 (0.18 AC), TRACT 74 (0.24 AC), TRACT 76A1B (3.00 AC),
R069179	1007028298231		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 13 THRU 17 Block: 36
R069541	1007028283239		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 18 & 19 Block: 36
R221828	1007028293249	333 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1 THRU 12 Block: 36
R069566	1007028355318	201 W REINKEN AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1, 2, 3 & ELY 20' OF LOT 4 Block: 23 0.25 ACRE MAP 100 SOCIETY CLEANERS
R071425	1007028376347		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 25 & 26 Block: 13
R069406	1007028372336		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 29, 30, & 31 Block: 13
R068918	1007028379335		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 27 & 28 Block: 13
R069120	1007028386334		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 12 THRU 16 THE WEST 50 FEET OF Block: 13
R070882	1007028393338		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 5 THRU 8 & WEST 90 FEET OF LOTS 9 THRU 16 & NORTH 12 FEET OF LOT 11 & TRACT OF LAND ADJACENT TO EAST BOUNDRY OF LOTS 5 THRU 8 60 X 100 FEET Block: 13 2ND IMPROVEMENT-1470 SQ.FT SALVAGE VALUE
R070269	1007028401335		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 9 THRU 16 THE EAST 40 FEET OF & UNPLATTED LAND 60' X 200' ADJACENT IMMEDIATELY EAST AND ADJOINING SAID LOTS Block: 13

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Properties in the Belen Downtown MRA Area

County Assessor Account Number	Parcel Number (UPC)	Street Address	Legal Description
R070246	1007028122258	116 S MAIN ST	SCHOLLE ADDITION #3 Lot: 14, 15, 16, & 17 0.35 ACRE 2012 REV
R071349	1007028118247		SCHOLLE ADDITION #3 Lot: 9 THRU 13 0.42 ACRE JEWELRY STORE PHOTOGRAPHY PRINT SHOP 2012 REV
R069255	1007028224338	519 W REINKEN AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: B Block: 20 0.11 ACRE MAP 100 REPLAT OF LOTS 8 9 10 11 & N 15' OF LOT 12
R069521	1007028307310	312 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 16 & 17 Block: 22 0.15 ACRE MAP 100
R071138	1007028291313	324 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 22, 23, & 24 Block: 22 0.22 ACRE MAP 100 DC 271-2523
R069265	1007028297312	320 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 20 & 21 Block: 22 0.15 ACRE MAP 100
R069604	1007028367309		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: B Block: 24 0.04 ACRE MAP 100 (REPLAT OF LOT 13 - 15)
R069063	1007028380295	108 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 10 & 11 Block: 24 DC ATTACHED TO SCHEDULE 2ND HOUSE
R069764	1007028367301	204 N 2ND ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 16 THRU 19 THE NORTH 45 FEET OF SOUTH 100 FEET OF Block: 24 0.10 ACRE MAP 100 CULP'S
R069356	1007028244317	500 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: A Block: C 0.26 ACRE MAP 100 (REPLAT OF LOTS 1 & 2)
R069355	1007028232316	504 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: B Block: C 0.20 ACRE MAP 100 REPLAT OF LOTS 1 & 2
R071015	1007028210313	601 GOEBEL AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 5 & 6 Block: C 0.19 ACRE MAP 100
R068903	1007028227315	508 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 3 Block: C 0.17 ACRE MAP 100 D/C 286-722 D/C 321-6024
R068917	1007028221314	512 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 4 Block: C 0.24 ACRE MAP 100
R070049	1007028331243	219 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 4 THRU 9 Block: 37
R069870	1007028337231	113 S 2ND ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 13 Block: 37 DC 271 7178
R070918	1007028320233	114 S 3RD ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 18 & NORTH 15 FEET OF LOT 19 Block: 37 1990 REV
R071075	1007028220295	511 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 8, 9, & 10 Block: 29
R070639	1007028227294	507 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 5, 6, & 7 Block: 29
R070516	1007028162340	207 N 7TH ST	GOEBEL ADDITION Lot: 16 & 17 Block: 2 IMPROVEMENT ONLY 1207 SQ. FT. 2ND HOUSE
R069253	1007028220339	523 W REINKEN AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: A Block: 20 0.15 ACRE MAP 100
R071521	1007028230337	515 W REINKEN AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: C Block: 20 0.11 ACRE MAP 100
R069254	1007028222324		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 13 THRU 15 AND SOUTH 10' OF LOT 12 Block: 20 0.26 ACRES +/- VA-90-87-DR
R070453	1007028315309		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 13, 14, & 15 Block: 22 0.22 ACRE 2008 REV
R070135	1007028302311		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 18 & 19 Block: 22 0.15 ACRE MAP 100 2008 REV PARKING LOT
R069209	1007028302326	315 W REINKEN AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 6 THRU 9 Block: 22 0.29 ACRE MAP 100
R069543	1007028314324	300 N 3RD ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1 THRU 5 Block: 22 0.36 ACRE MAP 100

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Properties in the Belen Downtown MRA Area

County Assessor Account Number	Parcel Number (UPC)	Street Address	Legal Description
R070729	1007028293323	222 N 4TH ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 10, 11, & 12 Block: 22 0.22 ACRE MAP 100
R069276	1007028369315		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: A Block: 24 0.18 ACRE MAP 100 (REPLAT OF LOT 13 14 15)
R069271	1007028368305	208 N 2ND ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 16 THRU 19 THE NORTH 30 FEET OF Block: 24 0.07 ACRE MAP 100
R069762	1007028382309		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 5 THRU 9 Block: 24 0.34 ACRE MAP 100
R069766	1007028367296		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 16 THRU 19 THE SOUTH 55 FEET OF Block: 24 0.13 ACRE MAP 100 RUSTY'S AUTO
R069756	1007028180268		LAND OF AMERICAN REP BANCSHARE INC Tract: F .24 AC D-5-18D 1997 REV
R069754	1007028145265		LAND OF 1ST NAT'L BANK OF BELEN Tract: A, B, C, & D1 1.95 ACRES MAP 100 1997 REV
R069757	1007028172269		LAND OF AMERICAN REP BANCSHARE INC Tract: D2 D-5-18D 1997 REV
R069755	1007028175269		LAND OF AMERICAN REP BANCSHARE INC Tract: E D-5-18D 1997 REV
R069190	1007028261225	509 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1 THRU 7 Block: 34
R221825	1007028225247		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 15,16,17 Block: 34
R069208	1007028212247		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 20, 21, & 22 Block: 34
R221827	1007028214263	513 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 8 & 9 Block: 34
R221826	1007028210263		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 10 Block: 34
R069539	1007028260254	401 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1 THRU 7 Block: 35
R069540	1007028262238		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 13 THRU 17 Block: 35
R070541	1007028246257	100 N 5TH ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 9 THRU 12 Block: 35
R071158	1007028258257		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 8 Block: 35
R071419	1007028246246		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 18 Block: 35
R070608	1007028343242		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1, 2, & 3 Block: 37
R070050	1007028319248		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 10,11,12 Block: 37
R069246	1007028185277	101 N 6TH ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: D Block: 30 0.06 ACRE MAP 100 1995 REV
R069245	1007028178290		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 4, 5, & 6 Block: 30 (PARKING LOT) UND 1/4 INT AS PER WARRANTY DEED FILED BOOK 274-1263 D-5-18A
R171689	1007028188284	601 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: A (0.08 AC) & LOT B (0.05 AC) Block: 30 TOTAL 0.13 ACRE MAP 100 1995 REV
R181135	1007028186280	103 N 6TH ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: C Block: 30 0.05 ACRE MAP 100 1995 REV
R069458	1007028167287	701 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: A Block: 30 0.13 ACRE MAP 100
R141637	1007028164279	614 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Block: 30 Tract: B1 0.03 ACRE MAP 100 1987 REV
R141636	1007028168279	610 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Block: 30 Tract: B2 0.04 ACRE MAP 100 1987 REV
R069189	1007028156290	634 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 11 THRU 18 Block: 30

APPENDICES

Properties in the Belen Downtown MRA Area

County Assessor Account Number	Parcel Number (UPC)	Street Address	Legal Description
R171690	1007028178290		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 4, 5, & 6 Block: 30 (PARKING LOT) UND 1/4 INT AS PER WARRANTY DEED FILED BOOK 274-1365 D-5-18A
R171691	1007028178290		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 4, 5, & 6 Block: 30 (PARKING LOT) UND 1/4 INT AS PER WARRANTY DEED FILED BOOK 307-8023 D-5-18A
R181136	1007028178290		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 4, 5, & 6 Block: 30 (PARKING LOT) UND 1/4 INT AS PER SPECIAL WARRANTY DEED FILED BOOK 299-7324
R069866	1007028211284		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 25 & 26 Block: 29
R158099	1007028200277		LAND OF FERNANDO & LYDIA CHAVEZ Tract: A 0.07 ACRE MAP 100 1988 REV PARKING LOT
R069516	1007028237281		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 15 Block: 29
R069511	1007028235282	502 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 16 Block: 29
R071080	1007028231282	506 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 17 & 18 Block: 29
R071514	1007028226282	508 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 19 & 20 Block: 29
R071185	1007028222283	512 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 21 Block: 29 MH ID #M224719
R071079	1007028219283		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 22 & 23 Block: 29
R070985	1007028215283	518 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 24 Block: 29
R069584	1007028207285	528 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 27 & 28 Block: 29 CORDOVA BUILDING
R070907	1007028212295		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 11 THRU 14 Block: 29
R211037	1007028205295		Tract: PARK SITE S: 18 T: 5N R: 2E 0.10 ACRE MAP 100 2002 REV NEW ASSESSMENT
R069199	1007028239296	501 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1 & 2 Block: 29
R071498	1007028232296		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 3 & 4 Block: 29
R070400	1007028135305	104 N MAIN ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 20 THRU 23 MAJOR SOUTH PORTION OF Block: 32 LESS 37 FEET ON NORTH END OF LOTS
R069520	1007028152320		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: D Block: 32 0.15 ACRE MAP 100 1994 REV
R069509	1007028149222		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: C Block: 32 0.19 ACRE MAP 100 1994 REV
R069562	1007028140321	114 S MAIN ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Block: 32 Tract: B AND THE NORTHERN 3.95 FEET OF TRACT A 0.12 ACRE MAP 100
R070874	1007028139318	110 S MAIN ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Block: 32 Tract: A THE SOUTH 26.2 FEET OF
R070259	1007028160320		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1 THRU 4 Block: 32
R070249	1007028155320		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 5 Block: 32
R071444	1007028140310		S: 18 T: 5N R: 2E BELEN TOWNSITE BLK 32 S1/2 OF LOT 9 .06AC
R069260	1007028161307	700 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 11 & 12 Block: 32 BCF BUSINESS
R069262	1007028157306	702 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 13 Block: 32

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Properties in the Belen Downtown MRA Area

County Assessor Account Number	Parcel Number (UPC)	Street Address	Legal Description
R071089	1007028154306		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 14 Block: 32 BCF PARKING LOT
R071190	1007028150305		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 15 & 16 Block: 32 ONATE THEATER
R069788	1007028146305	712 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 17 Block: 32
R070954	1007028143306	716 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 18 Block: 32
R070796	1007028135314		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 21 THRU 23 THE NORTH 37.42 FEET OF & PORTION OF LOT 20 & TRACT ON LOT 19A 10 FEET ON THE NORTH 20.26 FEET ON THE EAST 30.50 FEET ON THE WEST AND 14.32 FEET ON THE SOUTH Block: 32
R070700	1007028140306	718 DALIES AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 19 THE SOUTH 125 FEET OF Block: 32
R069535	1007028132376		GOEBEL ADDITION Lot: 1, 2, & 3 Block: 3
R070657	1007028128369	301 S MAIN ST	GOEBEL ADDITION Lot: 4, 5, & 6 Block: 3
R068947	1007028142370		Tract: 278 S: 18 T: 5N R: 2E 0.06 ACRE MAP 100
R069579	1007028120342		GOEBEL ADDITION Lot: 7 THRU 10 Block: 1 MAP 100 DAVID'S 1999 REV
R070946	1007028125359	MAIN STREET	GOEBEL ADDITION Lot: 1 THRU 4 Block: 1 1997 REV
R070870	1007028122349		GOEBEL ADDITION Lot: 5 & 6 Block: 1
R071226	1007028109343		GOEBEL ADDITION Lot: 19 Block: 1
R068946	1007028055350		S: 18 T: 5N R: 2E MAP 100 TR 50-A-1-B 5.94 AC
R068948	1007028090310		S: 18 T: 5N R: 2E MAP 100 TR 50A1C2 .81 AC D-5-18A
R167350	1007028161334		GOEBEL ADDITION Lot: 18 & 19 Block: 2
R070837	1007028163345	209 N 7TH ST	GOEBEL ADDITION Lot: 13 THE SOUTH 10 FEET OF AND ALL OF LOTS 14 & 15 Block: 2 CHRISTIAN FAITH
R070039	1007028148350		GOEBEL ADDITION Lot: 1 THRU 6 Block: 2
R070928	1007028144335	204 N MAIN ST	GOEBEL ADDITION Lot: 9 & 10 Block: 2
R071026	1007028146340		GOEBEL ADDITION Lot: 7 & 8 Block: 2
R070170	1007028357342	307 N 2ND ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: LOTS 11 THRU 14 THE NORTH 59 FEET OF & SOUTH 10 FEET OF ALLEY Block: 14 0.16 ACRE MAP 100
R069187	1007028110190		LAND OF BELEN CORPORATION Tract: B 1.60 ACRES MAP 100
R070760	1007028193387	620 W REINKEN AVE	CTS ADDITION D-5-18A & D Lot: 10 THRU 13 Block: 6A BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 17 THRU 23 THE WEST 100 FEET OF Block: 18 1.42 ACRES MAP 100
R070364	1007028369228	109 S 1ST ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 5 THRU 12 Block: 38 0.62 ACRE MAP 100 1995 COMB
R070715	1007028356239		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 14, 15, & 16 Block: 38 0.24 ACRE MAP 100
R071223	1007028353223		BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 17, 18, & 19 Block: 38 0.24 ACRE MAP 100
R070716	1007028362238	107 BECKER AVE	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 13 Block: 38 0.13 ACRE MAP 100
R069292	1007028371240	101 S 1ST ST	BTS ADDITION D-5-18 Lot: 1 THRU 4 Block: 38 0.28 ACRE MAP 100

APPENDICES

Properties in the Belen Downtown MRA Area

County Assessor Account Number	Parcel Number (UPC)	Street Address	Legal Description
R069311	1007028135383	315 N MAIN ST	LAND OF CENTRAL TOWNSITE COMP ADD 1 Block: 13 Tract: A 1.55 AC MAP 100 2004 REV D-5-18A WALGREEN-BELEN NM
R069620	1007028091236	213 S MAIN ST	LAND OF JOE MAESTAS Tract: C1 0.29 ACRE MAP 100 AKA TRACT E
R176216	1007028089231	221 S MAIN ST	DIDIER ADDITION Lot: 9 THRU 13 Block: 1 LAND OF JOE MAESTAS Tract: B & C2 0.71 ACRE MAP 100
R069619	1007028095253	203 S MAIN ST	SCHOLLE ADDITION Lot: 1 Block: 1 0.17 ACRE MAP 100
R069560	1007028094248	209 S MAIN ST	SCHOLLE ADDITION Lot: 2 & 3 Block: 1 0.17 ACRE MAP 100 DC 335/5241
R069266	1007028100267	822 W CASTILLO AVE	SCHOLLE ADDITION Lot: 1 Block: 2 0.38 ACRE MAP 100
R070006	1007028083215		LAND OF TOMMY GARCIA & JAMES MANESS Tract: A .30 AC 1994 REV D-5-18D
R070041	1007028077199	325 S MAIN ST	LAND OF WILLIAM & CYNTHIA MARTIN Tract: E .70 AC D-5-18D 2000 REV

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX B PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT



Stakeholder Focus Groups, February 24, 2015

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Presentation
3. Business and consumer surveys
4. From your perspective –
 - What are downtown's assets?
 - What issues should the City and the Belen Mainstreet Partnership address?
 - What defines the "heart" of Belen?
 - What needs to happen for downtown Belen to be successful?

Stakeholder Focus Group Input

February 24, 2015

Assets/Catalysts Time: 9:00 am

- Other Downtowns slow traffic; we speed up traffic through our downtown
 - Reinken to Baca traffic calming
- Wayfinding/Signage/Gateways
- SAMS manual is referred to by DOT
- Reinken may remain faster auto-centric
- Billboards on I-25, business signage
- Parking on Main for businesses
- Case Studies: Taos, Ruidoso?
- District 3 requesting deceleration lanes for every change of ownership
- Have traditionally worked with DOT at monthly meetings; Jill Mosher liaison
- Relinquishment is a complex issue but a possibility
- ADA issues need to be addressed
- Vacant buildings have always been an issue
- A vacant building fee was proposed; currently they are required to register
- Nothing to do after 2PM in downtown
- There isn't a full-service grocery
- Car dealerships were downtown until about 10 years ago
- Are we too far south from ABQ to be a bedroom community like Los Lunas?
- BNSF objections to Rail Runner Station in Harvey House because of operations issues
- AMTRAK used to stop and there were several businesses within walking distance
- BNSF employees park long-term but live mostly in other towns
- BNSF owns the diner next to station (Meals Paid for) – 24 hours
- BNSF use shuttle vans to take workers from Hilton to BNSF offices
- No lodger's tax paid for rooms leased to RR workers because these are contract stay

Historic Preservation

- Can we provide low- or no-rent leases to businesses that want to start up in downtown?

Magic Wand

- We need jobs because our population is declining due to kids moving away for work

APPENDICES

- We need economic development incentives to get businesses to locate and restore downtown buildings (low-rent leases, façade grants)
- Attract retirees – they don't need jobs but do have money to spend on services/goods to create spillover economic development (e.g. Sunrise Bluffs)
- A rail hub would be a catalyst along with more housing for commuters
- Housing is a top priority
- Senior housing, artists housing, housing for families, increased tourism around historic assets
- Knock down historic/old buildings that aren't being used/maintained
- Focus on government facilities/workers, art/culture workers, and hotel/history in the railroad district
- Hospital (will prime the pump for senior housing)

Assets/Catalysts Time: 10:30 am

- Historic buildings are both assets and liability – need to bring these back
- Good existing pedestrian infrastructure (sidewalks, lighting, etc.)
- Local business and property owners can be partners in revitalization, but some have inflated expectation of value which prevents people coming in to reinvest
- History of a thriving downtown, we need to recapture that vitality
- Off-street parking requirements have been eliminated
- Potential anchors are high-visible corners
- Regional businesses may want to have a local retail outlet
- Infrastructure (sewer, etc.) is old/sub-standard which prevents new businesses (e.g. next to chamber)
- Some of the local businesses don't have experience capacity to market/operate to capture high-end +/- non-local customers
 - Chamber
 - Main St. Partnership
 - UNMVC Small Biz Development Center
- Farmers market in Ana Becker Park, could move to Becker Ave.
 - Would help with spillover spending downtown
- Restore/re-open boarded up buildings
- Market hall with little kiosks with low or no-cost lease to incubate local start-ups
 - Las Vegas, NM
- BNSF as a partner in developing a downtown hotel
- Lights needed, not just signage
- Belen has spread out over the years and the energy that used to be downtown has diffused
 - Buildings/businesses are too far away from each other
 - Is Becker or Main St. out actual “Main St.?”

APPENDICES

- DOT highway runs through town and we have no control over design/operations
 - It's killing our downtown
- Plan for Station Area Development
 - Visitor Center
 - Brewery
- Small towns in Colorado have had success in working with DOT on traffic calming their Main Streets
 - Ft. Collins
 - Colorado Springs
 - Artesia
- Local zoning code prevents signs that hand over the sidewalk, prevents pedestrians from finding businesses
- There is very little bicycling infrastructure in downtown Belen
- Pending marketing campaign of proximity of station to downtown, interpretive walk already exists
- Bringing tourists in but also communicating with tourist on how to get across tracks
- Existing transit is dial-a-ride; need to have scheduled fixed-route bus service/shuttle
 - Or car sharing/ridesharing
- Biggest assets are historic buildings
- Trying to attract a wine festival
 - Timed with grape harvest at nearby wineries (3 in Valencia County)
- Wayfinding
- Average age in Belen is 2-3 years less than national average age, even though we're perceived as an older community
 - We need to focus on providing activities/facilities for young kids/families
- We need to focus on Becker because it's our true "Main St." but doesn't have high visibility/traffic
- Many legacy property owners have inflated asking price expectations/not motivation to redevelop
- Traffic volumes are an asset for Biz viability
 - Traffic speeds are excessive and dangerous, much faster than posted 35 mph
- Becker has parking but Main does not
- Some of the shorter streets should be one-way
 - Castillo
 - Goebel
- Government buildings downtown bring workers
- Need to cluster businesses, focus on areas with high visibility for convenience retail/services
 - Destination of retail/services can be located in less visible areas
- We need a visual showing our future vision
 - Can use in marketing to attract investment and dispel negative perceptions
- Need to slow down traffic

APPENDICES

- **Wayfinding signage is a critical need**
- We aren't in a position to tax to generate resources for implementation
 - We don't have a single person that has capacity/accountability to implement
 - Who's going to own the Map?
- There are some services that even locals don't know about; need to market internally and externally better

Magic Wand

- Need to work directly with property owners
 - Help them understand potential
 - How they contribute to legacy/values
 - Connect them with partners

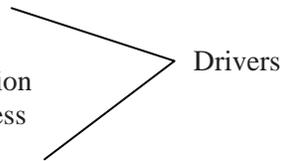
APPENDICES

Assets/Catalysts Time: 1:00 pm

- Doodlebug train
- Railroad
 - Employees
 - Tourism
 - Reason for town's existence
- Historic theater
- Bowling alley (closed)
 - Owners retired/passed
 - Heirs didn't want to run business
 - Same owners as Café that's closed
- Telephone switching station
 - By Lowe's
 - Allows for fast downtown internet

Issues/Problems

- Crime/Vandalism
 - Burglary
 - Squatting
 - Drug Addition
 - Homelessness
 - Poverty
- Loss of retail
 - Walmart/Lowe's opening
 - Solo Cup closing
 - Death of older business owners
 - Los Lunas' chains
 - Isleta casino gambling reduced discretionary spending
- Building owners not doing maintenance
 - Threaten to demo if code enforcement action is pursued
 - Sitting on building "waiting on the economy"



APPENDICES

What Needs to Happen for Success?

- Bring tourism
 - Winery
 - Harvey House Night of Bug Lights
- Improvement Transportation
 - Convert Dial-A-Ride to shuttle/circulator
- Leverage arts/culture cluster
 - Pick a them and build on it
 - “Belen” = Bethlehem
 - German Heritage
 - Old Town
 - “Follow the Star” event is good, but can’t sell anything (so no economic development)
 - Movies/Film Festival
- Hospital
 - Will attract retirees and visitors
 - Spillover businesses/jobs
 - Increase of # of doctors/specialists
- Retirees that don’t retire (veterans)
 - Start businesses
 - Volunteer on community initiatives
- Housing Downtown
 - Deterioration is creeping from downtown into adjacent neighborhoods

What Defines “Heart of Belen”

- Bank
- Becker + Dailies
- Buckland Pharmacy
- Library
- Grocery Store
- Walkable
 - Access to lots of services
 - Concern about crime (vs. reality)
- We’re not a big city, not a bedroom community, we have our own personality

APPENDICES

- Heartbeat = Rail Station/yards

Magic Wand

- A comprehensive redevelopment plan that allows for vacant lots/buildings to be purchased by City and redeveloped
- A plan that would actually be implemented
- Change in attitudes/perceptions
 - “In Belen?” (new marketing slogan?)
 - Yes, in Belen
- Broaden perspectives/horizons
 - Educate youth in the job options/services/amenities
- Build a civic culture of engagement
- Get positive stories/messages out
- Retail asset inventory + strategic plan/leakage study
- Educate locals on the importance of buying local for tax base/vitality
- To convince more people that railroad is the heartbeat of Belen

APPENDICES

Assets/Catalysts Time: 2:30 pm

- The old Pelican (Doodlebug)
 - Needs protection from elements and visitor kiosk
- Platform built outside the Harvey House to allow for rail fans to get unobstructed views/photos
- Documentation of locomotive restoration and park to induce Rail Fan tourism
 - Case Studies: Rockford, IL and Mason City, IA
- Belen Art League
 - Needs signs directing visitors
- Need wayfinding signage/maps generally
 - Freeway (used to have one)
 - Downtown
- Connect architecturally the Harvey House to Rail Runner or Old Pelican
- Highway signage of historic landmarks
- Rail Runner wouldn't allow Belen Brochure on trains or a sign with map or a schedule that's better
- Bugg lights display was a success
- Reinken overpass bridge was planned to have a viewing platform
 - At a minimum, removal of chain link fence would allow for photography
- Women's cultural trail from Santa Fe to Belen
- Promotion/marketing is critical
 - People end up here by accident more than any other reason
- Lack of lodging options of quality
 - Chavez House was B&B, but closed
 - La Virada
 - Super 8 and RV park are the only options
- Need to make vacant properties more affordable
 - Case study: Paducah, KY created a land trust that bought underutilized properties and made them available for free to artists making 3-year commitment to rehab buildings
- Properties sitting vacant due to owners doing nothing with them through inertia or inflated expectations of value
- Buildings owned by City are often leased out to social services, non-profits/agencies
- Library has a kitchen/bistro that could be leased

Magic Wand

- Restaurants open past 8 pm
 - Pete's stayed open late during bug lights
 - Food trucks
 - Open library for people to eat inside and other city facilities
- More special events like Rio Abajo days downtown
 - Bring 4th of July back downtown
- Get private business more involved in revitalizing downtown
- For the City to have its own marketing/PR person full-time and coordinated with existing efforts (Chamber, etc.)
- Move forward to make the old City Hall an art center
- Civic leaders to come up with event (or series of events) that would build civic pride (like the state championship football game)
 - "I  Belen" signs
- To piggyback on other large communities events to borrow people from those events along the corridor
- For the citizens of Belen to know of the local amenities to be able to explain to visitors what there is to do here
- Banners on Becker St. light poles on the history of the area for a historical walk



Community Charrette, April 15, 2015

AGENDA

- 5:30 to 6:00 – Open House
 - 6:00 – 6:20 – Presentation
 - 6:20 to 7:20 – Interactive planning session – Breakout Groups
 - 7:20 to 7:30 – Group presentations
-

The community charrette for the Downtown Master Plan was held at the Belen Public Library. There were 30 members of the public present as well as the consultant team. The participants included residents, business owners, property owners, City staff and members of the Belen MainStreet Partnership Board. The first half hour was an open house where participants could view posters of existing conditions and issues identified through February stakeholder focus groups and background research. Following a presentation and general discussion, the participants broke into small groups and rotated through the four stations: Market Re-emergence, Design and Physical Planning, Housing and Development Issues.

The ideas from the charrette are summarized for each station. Key ideas that were mentioned in multiple groups are:

- The downtown should capitalize on themes related to the “heart of Belen”, including historic Belen and the City’s railroad history. Tourism is seen as an important opportunity for the downtown.
- Capital improvements related to the railroad include an observation deck at the Harvey House and development of the site of the
- Housing is a big opportunity. Mixed use with residential above shops, live-work for artists, housing for UNM students who could take the Rail Runner, and housing for young professionals were mentioned as target market for housing.
- Residents of Plaza Vieja want to see that area improved and become a part of the revitalization of the downtown area.
- Proximity to the Rio Grande and bosque and the State’s proposed state park and trail along the river is an advantage. Bike routes that connect downtown to the river along Reinken were mentioned.
- Downtown should have more activities for kids, and the activities that exist should be better promoted. In addition to adding kid-friendly things to do at Anna Becker Park, a playground/splash park in downtown was mentioned.
- People want to see boarded up buildings put to productive use. Free rent in public buildings or in private buildings in exchange for building renovations were mentioned as incentives to get new businesses in these buildings. This could be done through public/private partnerships.

APPENDICES

- More landscaping along Main Street is desired as well as pedestrian improvements and more landscaping throughout the downtown.
- Informational signage to direct people from the Interstate to downtown and the Harvey House Museum and from Main Street to the interior to downtown is recommended.
- Better connections to the Rail Runner station would make it easier for visitors who arrive on the train to get to downtown. These include better pedestrian access and better transit service.

OPEN HOUSE AND PRESENTATION



BREAKOUT GROUPS

Market Re-emergence

- *Business opportunities – assets and weaknesses, opportunity sites, opportunities for small businesses*
- *Arts and Culture – opportunities to expand arts and cultural events, entertainment, related businesses, adaptive reuse of vacant buildings*

Market Re-emergence (Group 1)

Challenges

- Demographics
- Lack of tourist attractions that are open evenings/weekends
- Lack of hotel rooms in or near downtown
- Property owner expectations on sales prices too high
- Vacant & boarded up buildings
 - Lack of concern by property owners

Opportunities

- Tourism
- Retirees
- Local businesses
- Example: downtown Bernalillo
- Vacant property ordinance enforcement
- Public-private partnerships
 - Redevelopment efforts
 - Grant applications
 - Rent-free to local businesses in a public or private building if the lease holder will help fix the building up



Market Re-emergence (Group 2)

Challenges

- Underutilized lot @ Main & Reinken
- Boarded up buildings on Main St.
- Wall on a private property near Beck & 5th is a crime/litter hotspot – unsafe
- Rents are too high for small/local businesses due to owner expectations
- Promote Belen to retirees, students and millennial's as a place to live and have a business focusing on:

APPENDICES

- Community
- Festivals
- Safety
- Family-friendliness
- Better cost of living/less expensive
- Rail Runner connection for commuters to either work or higher education facilities

Opportunities

- Get more restaurants downtown and bars (especially with longer business hours)
- Nightlife
- Reopen the bowling alley
- Below-market rate rents for local business in public buildings
- Movie theater
- Old city hall renovations
- City-owned building: evening movie night (example: Balloon festival movies in the park)
- Performing arts center

Market Re-emergence (Group 3)

Challenges

- No signage on Main St. to direct people to businesses in the “interior” of downtown
- No signage that indicates where Downtown and Old Town start
- Not enough lighting.
- Velocity level too high on Reinken
 - Need traffic calming
 - Flashing scoreboard-like signs to indicate what speed people are going
- Downtown is lacking:
 - Pedestrian infrastructure
 - Park (especially one that can entertain kids)
 - Trees
 - Sidewalks
- The area in and around downtown has some scary neighborhoods (especially dogs at night)
- No activities to attract people to visit downtown at night
- Mobile home parks to the north of Downtown are perceived as unsafe areas.
- New businesses are perceived as run down when located in a in an old building

APPENDICES

Opportunities

- Business opportunities on Reinken (river road) (example: shopping center)
- Reinken should be a freeway exit (current exit is outside of downtown)
- Develop more tourism – not just during events, but every weekend
- We need more mixed use buildings downtown with residential above shops
- Rail Runner Station transit oriented development (TOD) – create a gateway to downtown that says “Belen is beautiful”

Design and Physical Planning

- *Historic Preservation – assets and threats to resources, opportunities, adaptive reuse of vacant buildings*
- *Design – existing architectural styles, scale and massing, examples and discussion of preferred styles*
- *Signage and wayfinding*

Challenges

- Unsafe areas need to be cleaned up
- Lack of greenery/landscaping
- Bad economy
- Low wages
- Federal government regulations
- Quality of workforce
- Nightlife

Opportunities

- Art camp
- Plaza Vieja/”Old Town”
- Develop the church site as a museum
- First St./Castillo site: train observation/interactive platform
- Old City Hall: multi-media facility/performing arts center
- Mixed-use: Residential above existing buildings for young singles/young families
- Art Center @ Reinken



General Notes

- Big issue on Main – need more parking adjacent to some buildings that don’t have parking lots
 - Parking behind buildings if there is room
 - Angled parking on Main
- Big crime issue – chicken & egg - crime because of run down neighborhoods, empty buildings; area is deteriorating because of crime

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- Solution is revitalization
- Transportation/pedestrian access from Rail Runner needs to be improved
- Slow down traffic on Reinken
- Promote pedestrian access to and in downtown

Housing

- *Infill in residential areas, opportunities for residential development and redevelopment within and near the study area, creating a market for new downtown housing*

Housing (Group 1)

- Apartments for UNM students who can commute on Rail Runner would be ideal in downtown
- Second story housing on retail buildings
- Design – fit in with style of existing homes
- Issue with flood area - all of downtown
 - Need detention ponds
- Magic Wand – if someone builds, build to avoid flooding
- Fix streets, paving, sewers - Reinken & Ross
- Provide utilities to improve nearby neighborhoods – Old Town

Housing (Group 2)

- Recognize & clean up Old Town east of the railroad for visitors
- Identify it – signage on bridge by Rail Runner
- Revitalize – not necessarily new
- Connection to river – bicycling
- On south side – renovations, sidewalks trees – make more inviting
- Like mixed-use, not large apartment complexes but live-work
- Need more active parks – more for kids to do in Anna Becker and other parks
- Need more activities in downtown for kids
- PR – let people know what’s already available for kids
- Magic Wand
 - Improving housing – better impression of Belen for visitors – fix what’s there
 - Historical signage – Old Belen
 - Old boarded up buildings reused or replaced



APPENDICES

- Freeway entrance at Reinken

Housing (Group 3)

- Lack of housing
- Need housing
- Like mixed-use – Scholle building and the F&E building have second stories that could be renovated as housing
- Kuhn Hotel – block – art camp, studios, downstairs rooms above; owner spent 35k roof, 150k total plumbing & electrical done, but building is being vandalized
 - Break-ins are a problem
- Improve area under the overpass; this could be an interesting public space
- Better use of BNSF parking lot
- Crime – citizen patrol – neighborhood watch
 - Go to “coffee with the chief” to talk about issues
- Walkway along the ditch bank
- Opportunity – Brooks Apartments could be renovated for seniors, they are close to library, grocery store, park, City Hall, pharmacy

Housing (Group 4)

- Rooms/live-work for artists along Becker & Dalies
- Anna Beck Park – disc golf
- Bargain movie theater – would have to build
- Dance hall
- Magic Wand
 - Contest to get better landscaping and replace damaged trees

Development Issues

- *Transportation – state highways, opportunities for improving walkability, connection to Rail Runner*
- *Other issues – drainage, utilities*

Development Issues

- Make Main Street more attractive
- Streetscapes on Main Street
- Mainstreet corridor designation
 - What's the Theme?
 - Historic
 - Railroad
- Transportation to all of Belen from Rail Runner to east
- Improve signalization on East Reinken at Main Street
- Drainage & issues on Ross & Wisconsin on Gabaldon
- Center lane on Reinken
- More pedestrian crossings on Reinken
- More trees on Becker
- Encourage pedestrian movements
- Business & development to encourage pedestrians
- Improve Rail Runner access to downtown
- Bike rentals
- Tree lined avenue on Reinken
- Wayfinding
- Establish themes for different areas
- How do industrial areas south of downtown fit in?
- Extend boundary of the study area to the east to include the Rail Runner station, Old Town
- Student housing/apartments
 - Kuhn hotel
- Street festival to induce/build/grow pride in Belen
- Facade improvements on Main Street
- Power poles on Baca are massive and make the area look and feel industrial
- Trees on Reinken have been damaged by a tornado and need to be pruned



FINAL THOUGHTS

- Railroad observation deck with sound would be a great attraction. People love railroads, and tourists would come for that
- UNM housing – tie to Rail Runner keep youth in Belen
- Housing above buildings
- Improve Plaza Vieja
- River Park – take advantage of the proximity to the Rio Grande and Bosque, proposed state park and trail
- Bike lanes on Reinken to link to the river
- Playground/splash park in downtown
- Bowling alley

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX C NMDOT DESIGN EXCEPTION PROCESS

NMDOT is a multimodal transportation agency, acknowledging in official documents that “multimodal transportation choices invigorate the economy and connect people in small towns and cities and facilitate transportation of goods and people.” As a multimodal transportation agency, NMDOT does not prioritize private autos over other modes.

Instead it seeks a balanced approach that accommodates all modes on urban roadways as appropriate to the surrounding land use context. In so doing, NMDOT has committed itself to a “complete streets” or “context-sensitive” approach to design and operations, telling the communities it serves that “we’ve strengthened our commitment to traffic safety, environmental excellence, and complete planning, design and engineering services.” [emphasis added]

In addition, NMDOT’s core Mission Statement recognizes that transportation infrastructure isn’t just about mobility, but that the agency has a responsibility to help communities achieve non-mobility benefits from transportation, including “promoting economic development and preserving the environment of New Mexico.”

However, as is true of many organizations, design guidelines don’t always keep pace with forward-thinking policy statements like the ones quoted above from NMDOT’s websites. For example, the NMDOT current design guidance that requires that dedicated right turn / deceleration lanes be installed to access redeveloped properties along NMDOT roadways dates from the 2001 Access Management Manual (http://dot.state.nm.us/content/dam/nmdot/Infrastructure/Access_management_Manual.pdf).

In particular, Table 17.B-2 (“Criteria for Deceleration Lanes on Urban Multi-Lane Highways) of the Access Management Manual requires dedicated right turn / deceleration lanes in conditions where a right turn is expected to occur at 4 minute intervals (calculations provided upon request). This is an excessively conservative a standard for an urban, downtown context where frequent right turns are expected, design speeds are slower, and best practice is to keep roadway widths as narrow as possible and walking distances as short as possible in order to increase pedestrian level of service and quality of service.

To address the current concern of NMDOT requiring dedicated right turn / deceleration lanes for every property that redevelops along Reinken and Main, the Town of Belen may need to submit a design exception request to NMDOT formally asking permission to vary from NMDOT’s current design standards.

In addition, in order to implement additional roadway design changes for Reinken and Main as proposed in this Plan and to be refined further in the next step Corridor Plan, may require the Town of Belen to develop a to submit a design exception request to NMDOT.

The process for submitting a design exception request to NMDOT are described in detail in the NMDOT’s 2006 Design Exception & Design Variance Procedures (IDD-2006-04; http://www.dot.state.nm.us/content/dam/nmdot/Plans_Specs_Estimates/Design_Directives/2006/IDD-2006-04.pdf).

The design exception process recognizes the “flexibility provided in the design standards and policies” in order to contribute to transportation facilities that are “sensitive and responsive” to the roadway’s surrounding land use context and operational characteristics.

Conversations during this planning process with NMDOT staff and transportation consultants that have submitted design exception requests to NMDOT in the past indicate that NMDOT is open to considering design exceptions in acknowledgment of the flexibility described above that the agency has to exercise professional engineering judgment to vary from the design standards when the context warrants it. The basic approach and information that needs to be documented in the design exception request is as follows:

- Emphasize in the request that the proposed design isn’t ignoring ASSHTO Green Book design standards.
- Focus on identifying a) what in the proposed design aligns with AASHTO Green Book, b) where the design varies from AASHTO Green Book, c) where the 2006 IDD provides a rationale for the exception / variance that is being proposed.
- Reference how the design aligns with some of the new design guidance for urban roadways that has emerged since 2006 (e.g. NACTO Urban Street Design Manual) and note that that FHWA and several DOTs have endorsed these design guidelines for use as a supplement to the AASHTO Green Book.

A sample design exception request is included in this Appendix.

Footnote: Source for all quotes: NMDOT “About Us” website (http://dot.state.nm.us/en/About_Us.html)