

CITY of ALBUQUERQUE

TWENTY SECOND COUNCIL

COUNCIL BILL NO. R-16-49 ENACTMENT NO. _____

SPONSORED BY: Isaac Benton, by request

1 RESOLUTION

2 DESIGNATING THE NORTH CORRIDOR METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT
3 AREA, MAKING CERTAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS PURSUANT TO THE
4 METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT CODE, AND AUTHORIZING AND
5 DIRECTING THE METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY TO PREPARE
6 A METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE NORTH CORRIDOR
7 METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA.

8 WHEREAS, Section 3-60A-8 NMSA 1978 of the Metropolitan Redevelopment
9 Code ("MR Code") (Sections 3-60A-1 through 3-60A-48 NMSA 1978) states: "A
10 municipality shall not prepare a metropolitan redevelopment plan for an area
11 unless the governing body by resolution determined the area to be a slum
12 area or a blighted area, or a combination thereof, and designated the area as
13 appropriate for a metropolitan redevelopment project."; and

14 WHEREAS, the City of Albuquerque ("City") and the Metropolitan
15 Redevelopment Agency ("MRA") of the City's Planning Department and their
16 employees and agents, have for some time, engaged in a study of blighted
17 areas within the City and have submitted their findings and conclusions
18 concerning the area detailed in the North Corridor Metropolitan
19 Redevelopment Area ("North Corridor MR Area") Designation Report, which is
20 attached as Exhibit A to this Resolution and incorporated herein by reference;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 30-60A-8 NMSA 1978 of the MR Code, the
23 Council caused to be published in the Albuquerque Journal, a newspaper of
24 general circulation, a notice containing a general description of the proposed
25 North Corridor MR Area and the date, time and place where the Council will
26 hold a public hearing to consider the adoption of this resolution and

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1 announcing that any interested party may appear and speak to the adoption of
2 this resolution; and

3 WHEREAS, the Albuquerque Development Commission held an advertised
4 public meeting on February 18, 2016, took testimony from the public, and
5 recommended to the Council the designation of the North Corridor MR Area,
6 as set forth in the Designation Report attached to this Resolution as Exhibit B;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, the Council has considered the Designation Report, including
9 Findings, Determinations and Conclusions in addition to the questions and
10 comments submitted by members of the public concerning the proposed
11 North Corridor MR Area.

12 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF
13 ALBUQUERQUE:

14 SECTION 1. The City Council makes the following Findings of Fact with
15 respect to the designation of the North Corridor MR Area:

16 A. The North Corridor MR Area is shown on the map attached hereto as
17 Exhibit A. The boundary of the North Corridor MR Area includes
18 properties that are not residentially zoned for single family use within
19 the area bounded by Granite Avenue on the south, the railroad tracks
20 on the east, typically one property deep on the west side of 4th
21 Street, and the commercial properties that line Montañó Road. There
22 are additional commercial properties included at the intersections of
23 major roads with 4th Street and along 4th Street to the northern City
24 limits.

25 B. The North Corridor MR Area has exhibited the following conditions:
26 (1) Business Turnover: The North Corridor MR Area displays high
27 levels of business turnover and a total reduction in the number of
28 businesses operating in the area since 1999; (2) Crime: The area has
29 been subject to property and violent crime; (3) Public Infrastructure:
30 Much of the existing infrastructure has started to deteriorate, has out-
31 lived its usefulness or is out of date; (4) Private Property: Some
32 private property in the North Corridor MR Area is uninviting, unkempt
33 or unappealing, and there are vacant lots interspersed among

developments; (5) Household Income: Based on Block Group Data from the US 2010 Decennial Census, the median income within and near the North Corridor MR Area is significantly below the City's area median income. These conditions have led to the North Corridor MR Area having the following conditions of blight as defined by the MR Code: (1) A significant number of commercial or mercantile businesses that have closed or significantly reduced their operations due to the economic losses or loss of profit due to operating in the area; (2) Low levels of commercial activity or redevelopment or any combination of such factors; (3) Conditions that substantially impair or arrest the sound growth and economic health and well-being of a municipality or locale within a municipality; or (4) 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.

- C. The rehabilitation, conservation, redevelopment or development, or a combination thereof, of and in the North Corridor MR Area is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals or welfare of the residents of Albuquerque.

SECTION 2. In accordance with the requirements of Section 3-60A-8 NMSA 1978, the Council hereby designates the area that is described in Section 1.A above, and shown in the official North Corridor MR Area boundary map attached hereto as Exhibit B, to be a 'metropolitan redevelopment area' as defined by Section 3-60A-4 (M) NMSA 1978 and finds it to be appropriate for a metropolitan redevelopment project or projects. This area shall be referred to as the North Corridor MR Area to distinguish it from other metropolitan redevelopment areas.

SECTION 3. The MRA of the Planning Department is hereby authorized and directed to prepare a Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan, as defined by Section 3-60A-4 (N) NMSA 1978, for the North Corridor MR Area, which, without limitation, shall: (1) Seek to eliminate the problems created by the blighted conditions of the area; (2) Conform to and coordinate with the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, any applicable Rank 2

1 and 3 plans, and any other applicable plans or policies; and (3) Be sufficient to
2 indicate the proposed activities to be carried out in the area, including, but not
3 limited to, any proposals for land acquisition, redevelopment, improvements,
4 rehabilitation and conservation and the plan's relationship to definite local
5 objectives respecting land uses, improved traffic patterns and controls, public
6 transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities, housing
7 facilities, commercial activities or enterprises, and other public improvements.

8 SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY CLAUSE. If any section, paragraph, sentence,
9 clause, word or phrase of this resolution is for any reason held to be invalid or
10 unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not
11 affect the validity of the remaining provisions of this resolution. The Council
12 hereby declares that it would have passed this resolution and each section,
13 paragraph, sentence, clause, word or phrase thereof irrespective of any
14 provisions being declared unconstitutional or otherwise invalid.

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City of Albuquerque PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Richard J. Berry, Mayor

Interoffice Memorandum

March 23, 2016

To: Dan Lewis, President, Albuquerque City Council

From: Richard J. Berry, Mayor

Subject: North Corridor Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation

Attached for your review is the North Corridor Metropolitan Redevelopment Area designation report. The designation of the non-single family areas, near 2nd and 4th Streets in the North Valley, as defined in the report, is the first step to creating a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area ("MR Area") that can promote redevelopment activities. After the designation of the area as an MR Area, the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency will begin on writing a Metropolitan Redevelopment plan for the area.

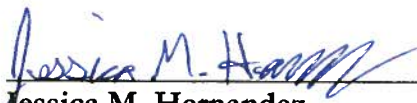

Designation of an MR Area is based on findings of blighted conditions, as defined in the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (3-60A-8). The project designation has received neighborhood support.

Also, attached are the resolution, cover analysis and fiscal impact analysis.

Recommended:

Approved as to Legal Form:


Robert J. Perry
Chief Administrative Officer
4/9/16
Date


Jessica M. Hernandez
City Attorney
4/12/16
Date


Recommended:


Suzanne Lubar
Planning Department Director
3/23/16
Date

Cover Analysis

1. What is it?

Designation of the North Corridor Metropolitan Redevelopment Area boundary.

2. What will this piece of legislation do?

It will provide a defined Metropolitan Redevelopment Area boundary for the North Corridor (North Valley) redevelopment initiative. This will be the first step in the future formulation of a Redevelopment Plan.

3. Why is this project needed?

This project is needed to stimulate redevelopment activities, to address old and out of date infrastructure, under-utilized land and dilapidated structures, and to provide a stabilization of economic and residential needs for the surrounding community.

4. How much will it cost and what is the funding source?

No funding source is required for the designation to occur.

5. Is there a revenue source associated with this contract? If so, what level of income is projected?

This does not apply to this legislation.

6. What will happen if the project is not approved?

If this project is not approved, the MRA will not be able to create a plan that will use Metropolitan Redevelopment dollars to address issues in the corridor, which includes 4th Street and 2nd Street. This part of town will not be able to benefit from MRA involvement in improvements such as upgrades to public infrastructure, investment in public-private partnerships, façade improvement programs, updates to antiquated platting and planning in the area.

7. Is this service already provided by another entity?

No, this service is not being provided by another entity.

FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

TITLE: Adoption of the North Corridor Metropolitan Redevelopment Area

R: O:
FUND:

DEPT: Planning

- ☒ No measurable fiscal impact is anticipated, i.e., no impact on fund balance over and above existing appropriations.
- ☐ (If Applicable) The estimated fiscal impact (defined as impact over and above existing appropriations) of this legislation is as follows:

	2016	Fiscal Years 2017	2018	Total
Base Salary/Wages	-	-	-	-
Fringe Benefits at	-	-	-	-
Subtotal Personnel	-	-	-	-
Operating Expenses	-	-	-	-
Property	-	-	-	-
Indirect Costs 8.52%	-	-	-	-
Total Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<input type="checkbox"/> Estimated revenues not affected				
<input type="checkbox"/> Estimated revenue impact				
Amount of Grant	-	-	-	-
City Cash Match	-	-	-	-
City Inkind Match	-	-	-	-
City IDOH *8.52%	-	-	-	-
Total Revenue	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

These estimates do not include any adjustment for inflation.

* Range if not easily quantifiable.

Number of Positions created 0

COMMENTS ON MONETARY IMPACTS TO COMMUNITY/CITY GOVERNMENT:

There are no monetary impacts from this legislation.

COMMENTS ON NON-MONETARY IMPACTS TO COMMUNITY/CITY GOVERNMENT:

This is a request to adopt the North Corridor Metropolitan Redevelopment Area as presented on the map attached to the designation report. After the adoption of this area as a Metropolitan Redevelopment area, a metropolitan redevelopment plan will be created that identifies redevelopment projects the City will facilitate in with the objective to restore economic growth.

PREPARED BY:

APPROVED:

FISCAL ANALYST

(date)

Christopher Hyer

PLANNING DIRECTOR

(date)

Suzanne Lubar

REVIEWED BY:

BUDGET OFFICER

(date)

Gerald Romero

EXECUTIVE BUDGET ANALYST

(date)

Diolinda Dickson

CITY ECONOMIST

(date)

Jacques Blair

EXHIBIT "A"

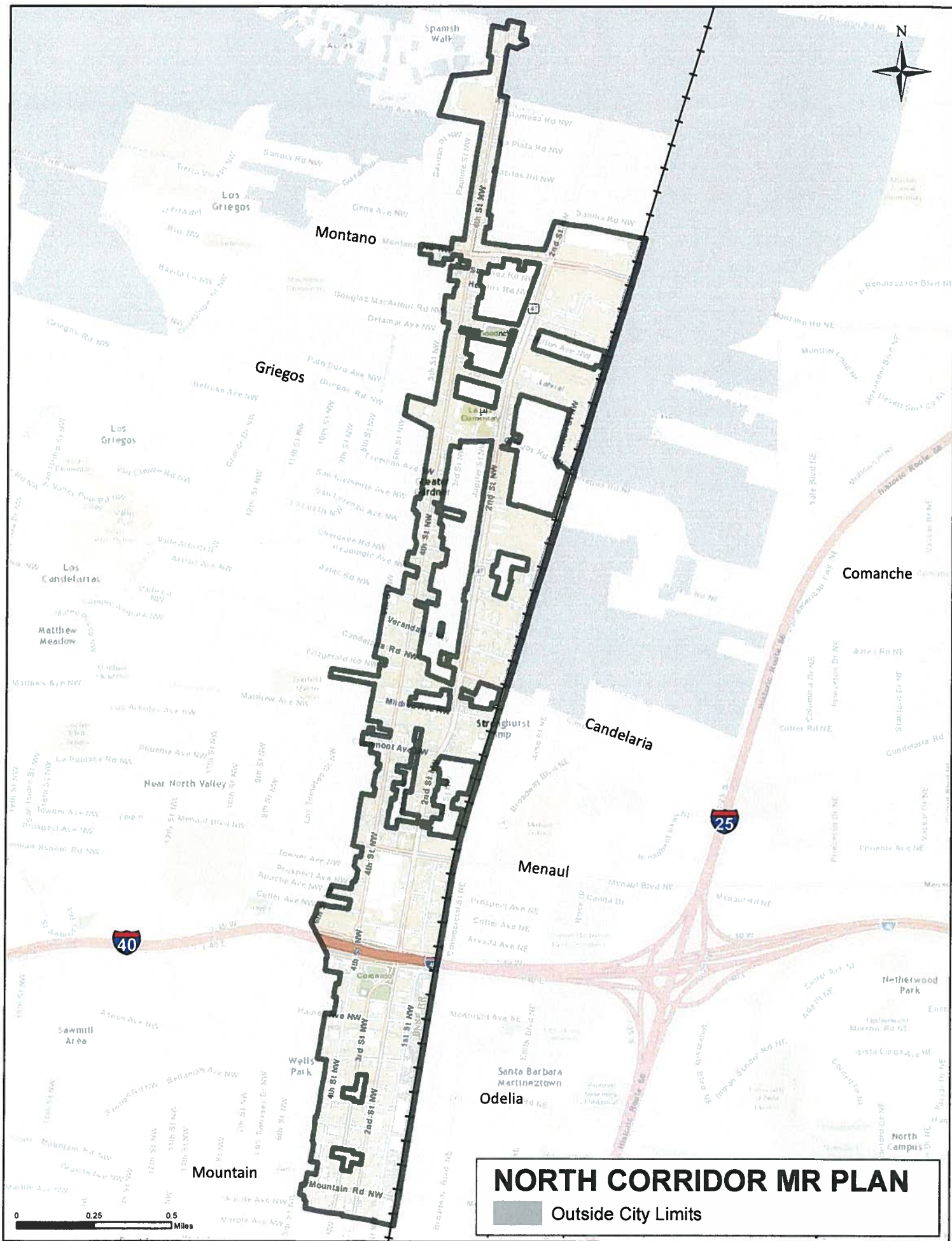


EXHIBIT "B"

City of Albuquerque

North Corridor

Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA) Area Designation
To Be Presented To the Albuquerque Development Commission

February 18, 2016



Richard Berry, Mayor

City Council

Isaac Benton, District 3

Albuquerque Planning
Department

Suzanne Lubar, Director

Metropolitan Redevelopment
Agency

Rebecca Velarde, Manager
(505) 924-3844
rvelarde@cabq.gov

Chris Hyer, Senior Planner
(505) 924-3927
chyer@cabq.gov



The North Corridor Metropolitan Redevelopment Area encompasses much of the North Valley's commercial areas, north of Granite Street, on the west side of the rail road tracks. The designation of this area as a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area will allow a Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan to be created. Once this Plan is adopted, public Metropolitan Redevelopment funds can be used to update aging infrastructure and provide for other publically funded projects in the proposed Metropolitan Redevelopment Area.

Introduction

In order to take advantage of the state Metropolitan Redevelopment Code, §§ 3-60A-1, et seq., NMSA 1978 ("MR Code"), the City of Albuquerque passed the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency Ordinance, §§ 14-8-4-1, et seq., ROA 1994 ("MRA Ordinance"). The MR Code requires that a geographical area be declared "a blighted area" and there be a finding that the rehabilitation, conservation, redevelopment or development, or a combination thereof, in the designated area is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals or welfare of the residents before a municipality can exercise the powers conferred by the MR Code (MR Code, § 3-60A-7, NMSA 1978). The Albuquerque City Council has reserved to itself the power to declare an area blighted (MRA Ordinance, § 14-8-4-3 (A), ROA 1994). However, in creating the Albuquerque Development Commission ("ADC") as an advisory body and designating it the board of commissioners for the MRA, it is appropriate for the City Council to look to the ADC for recommendations regarding the existence, extent, and eligibility of appropriate areas of the City to be declared blighted (§ 14-8-6-2 (C), ROA 1994). This designation report is submitted pursuant to this function of the ADC.

This designation report on the proposed boundary for the North Corridor Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (the "MR Area" or "North Corridor MR Area") is based on analysis from existing conditions and public input. As shown on the map provided on the following page, the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency ("MRA") would like to designate a new MR Area solely in North Valley areas that do not include single family homes. The boundaries of the area are roughly Granite Boulevard on the south, the rail road tracks on the east, typically one property deep on the west side of 4th Street, and the commercial properties that line Montañó Road. There are additional commercial properties included at the intersections of major roads with 4th Street and up to the City limits.

The North Corridor MR Area is a mixture of mature and redeveloped commercial, industrial, warehouse, office and multi-family properties. For example, uses presently located on old Route 66, 4th Street, include a handful of old motels, restaurants, tourist trade activities, automotive services and other retail shops. This is combined and interspersed with office, industrial and multi-family uses. This mix is indicative of the fact that this area was the main north-south corridor, or the "Mother Road," through Albuquerque as the City grew.

The MRA held the first public meeting on the proposed MR Area on November 4, 2015 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the University of New Mexico North Valley Center for Family and Community Health Services at 3401 4th Street NW. The meeting was well attended by residents and business owners of the study area. There were many questions asked about the proposed designation of a new MR Area and what it meant to have such a designation. There was good discussion about a Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan (the "MR Plan") as well as the benefits of being in the MR Area and what current conditions could be addressed. The questions and comments from this meeting can be found in Appendix A.

A second public meeting was held January 13, 2016 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the North Valley Senior Center, 3825 4th Street NW. There were a lot of new faces and the meeting was again well attended by residents and business owners of the study area. The presentation was similar with the addition of responses to the questions that were asked at the previous public meeting. This helped all members of the public to have a better understanding of the intentions of the MR staff. However, the public is still mixed in their understanding of the different plans that provide guidance and regulations over this

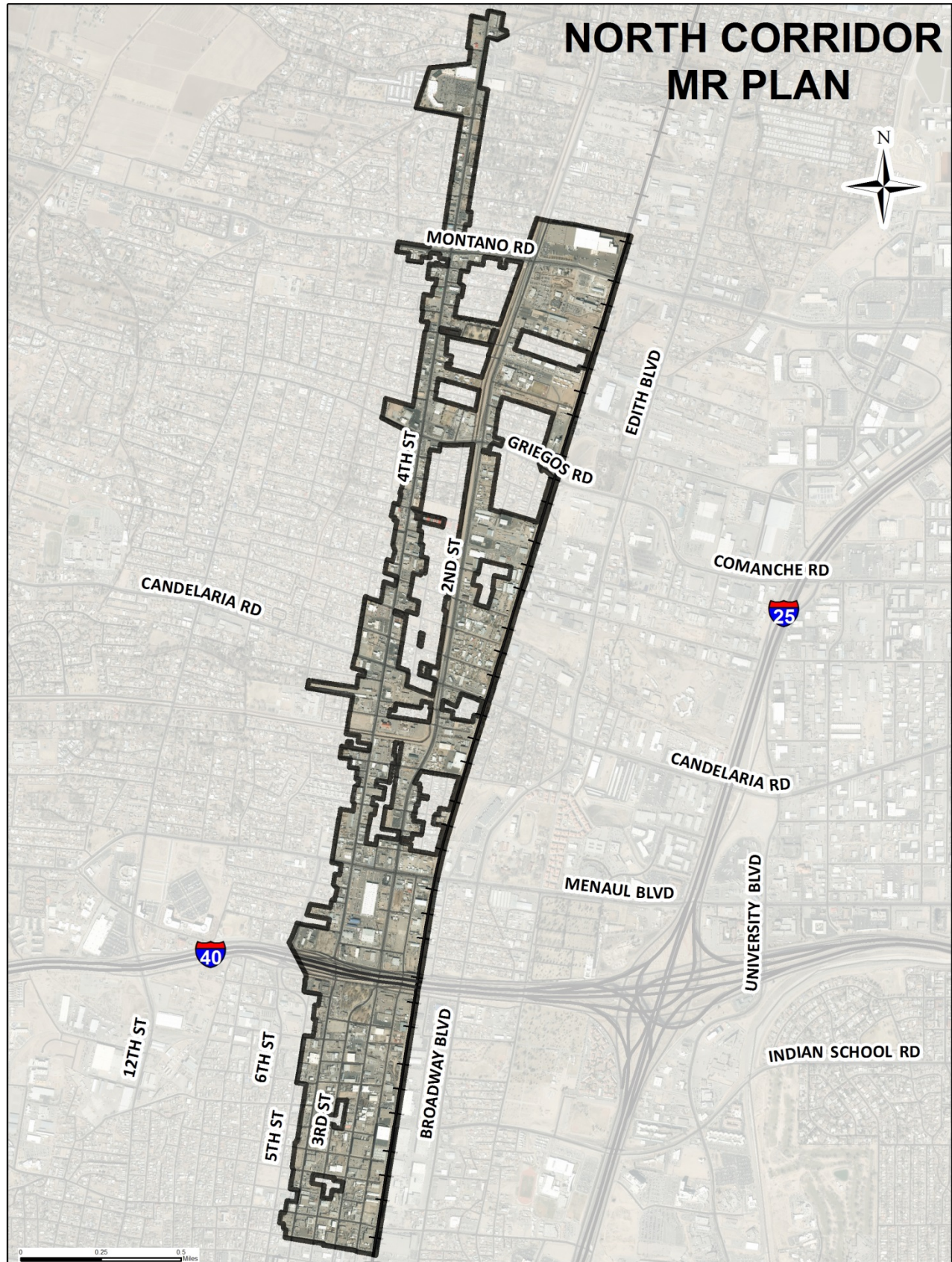
[El Camino Real Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation]

area.

Since the relationship with the public is overall positive and they have suggested ideas for improvements to the Area, the recommendation of staff is to approve the proposed boundary of the North Corridor MR Area. After this area has been designated an MR Area, the MRA then can embark on drafting an MR Plan in order to promote real estate redevelopment, invest in infrastructure in the area, improve conditions for businesses and improve the overall health, safety and economic diversity within areas of the North Corridor MR Area.

*** “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 conditions of use (Metropolitan Redevelopment Code, §3-60A-4 (I), NMSA 1978).



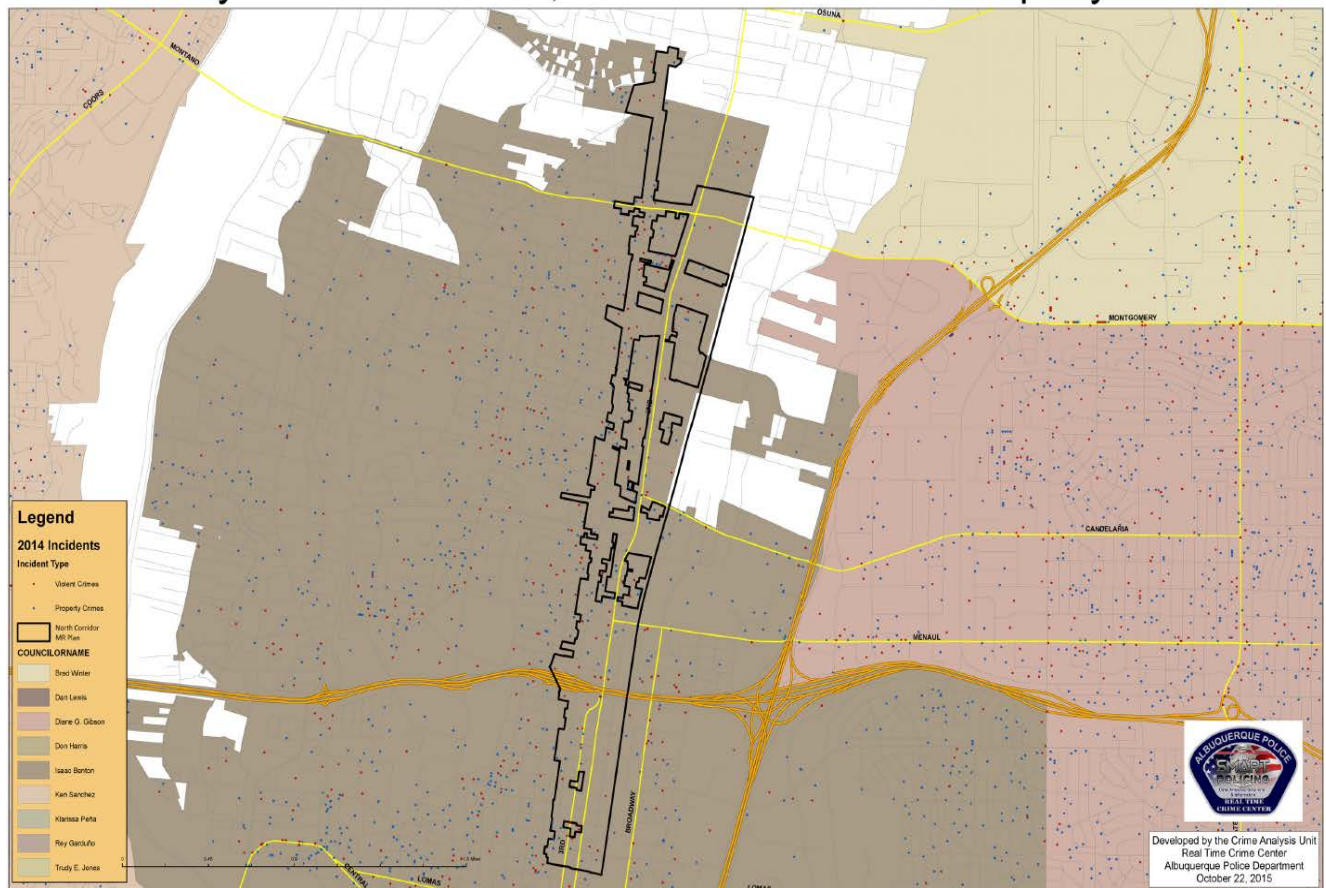
Causes for Blight in the North Corridor Area

In order for an area of the City to be designated as an MR Area, certain conditions of blight must be demonstrated as described in the state's MR Code (MR Code, §3-60A-4 (I), NMSA 1978). Through its analysis, the MRA has identified five categories of reasons that the proposed area should be considered an MR Area. The MRA acknowledges that other conditions that contribute to blight may exist.

1. Crime

Crime is not unique to this area alone as there is crime in all parts of the City. However, one way to describe an area as having some of the determinants of blight is to show that crime does exist. The map below shows occurrences of violent crime (represented by red dots) and property crime (represented by blue dots) in calendar year 2014. Both violent and property crime are prevalent in the area. The presence of crime ties back to the definition of blight in the MR Code because it creates an "unsafe condition" in the proposed MR Area (MR Code, §3-60A-4 (I), NMSA 1978).

January 1 - December 31, 2014: MRA Violent & Property Crimes



2. Household Income

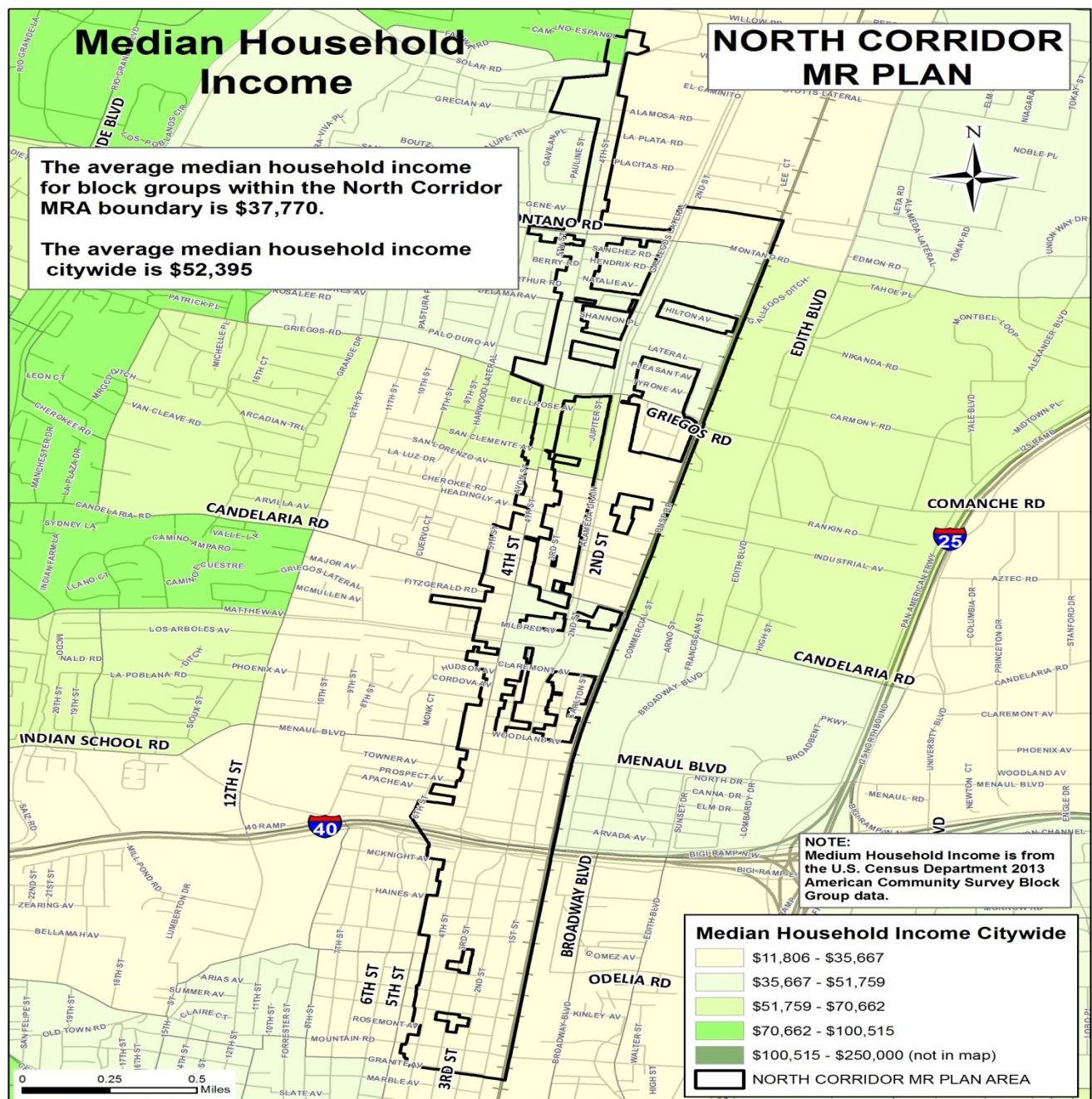
The MRA collected data on household income from the United States 2010 Decennial Census. The data used is from households that are located within the Census Tracts that are overlapping the proposed MR Area. The Census Tracts are

[El Camino Real Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation]

broken down into Block Groups, which provide more geographic detail. The average income levels by Block Group are shown on the map below.

Though the proposed MR Area does not include single family residential zoned properties, household income data from within and surrounding the MR Area compared to the City's area median income gives an indication of disinvestment for the general area. The area median household income for the entire City is \$52,395, and the North Corridor MR Area average median income is \$37,770.

The lower average household income has led to "low levels of commercial or industrial activity or redevelopment" in this area (MR Code, §3-60A-4 (I), NMSA 1978).



[El Camino Real Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation]

3. Poor/Aging Public Infrastructure

Public Infrastructure consists of any improvements or facilities that are readily used by the public and are not privately owned. This includes, but is not limited to, public streets, sidewalks, street lights, street furniture and utility poles.

As the corridors within the proposed MR Area were a central part of commerce in Albuquerque, extensive infrastructure was developed and used. Much of this infrastructure has started to deteriorate, has out-lived its usefulness or is out of date. The public infrastructure demonstrates the proposed MR Area is blighted as defined by the MR Code as it creates “unsafe conditions” and it shows “deterioration of site or other improvements” (MR Code, §3-60A-4 (I), NMSA 1978). Additionally, out of date infrastructure can lead to “low levels of commercial or industrial activity or redevelopment.” (*id.*)

Sidewalks

As seen in the images below, the proposed MR Area contains extensive damaged sidewalks. Crumbling sidewalks have not been repaired. These sidewalks may have been damaged from heavy vehicles or shifting land underneath. The area also contains buckling sidewalks from tree roots growing under the pavement or shifting soils underneath.



Crumbling sidewalk from heavy vehicles



Buckling sidewalk and pavement



Crumbling sidewalk from shifting land underneath



Buckled sidewalk

[El Camino Real Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation]

Other sidewalk problems exist in this proposed MR Area. There are numerous occurrences of obstructions taking up part of the pathway created by the sidewalk. Thus, pedestrians must negotiate their path around these objects. In some instances, these areas are totally impassible for someone in a wheelchair.



Numerous obstructions in the sidewalk



Large power-pole in the sidewalk

This area also contains unfinished sidewalks. As seen in the images below, there are numerous places where sidewalks are partially finished and there is not a connection to other parts of sidewalks that have been finished.



Accessible ramp with no connecting sidewalk



Sidewalk abruptly ends

Power Poles

In addition to problems regarding the sidewalks, overhead power lines are plentiful in the proposed plan area. This area was developed when overhead power lines were the norm. However, these lines create clutter in the view shed and add to a feeling of blight.

[El Camino Real Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation]



Various overhead power lines that are common throughout this area.

The North Valley is a transmission corridor for power – this could be placed underground. Visual clutter of the overhead power lines is worsened by a lack of street lights and pedestrian scale lighting along the sidewalks. This type of infrastructure could be added in addition to having modern street furniture along the side of the roadways.



Major overhead transmission lines with poles in the middle of sidewalks.

Medians

The vacant medians in the proposed MR Area contribute to blight in the area. The creation or infusion of landscaping in existing medians in the roadways could benefit the public along major roadways of the proposed MR Area. There are medians along portions of 2nd Street that are not landscaped. There is also a lack of medians on a large portion of 4th Street, which adds to a lack of safety for drivers facing oncoming lanes of traffic or for pedestrians wanting to cross the road.

[El Camino Real Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation]



The lack of medians adds to a dangerous roadway for cars and pedestrians

Inconsistent Rights-Of-Way

Another problem with the roadways along this corridor is the lack of a consistent right-of-way. Many of the structures in the North Valley predate the City's adoption of the Zoning Code, and many of the existing buildings are not compliant to its regulations. These buildings are grandfathered in and are not in violation, but do create some problems with the alignment of the right-of-way that the roadways and sidewalks share.

Many buildings were built without taking into account front yard setbacks; there are buildings that are within a few feet of the roadway. This situation creates a unique problem when trying to place new sidewalks along the public right-of-way or adding street furniture to certain areas. The definition of blight within the MR Code describes this issue as "obsolete or impractical planning and platting" (MR Code, §3-60A-4 (I), NMSA 1978).

4. Private Property

As with any other part of the City, the roadways are lined with privately owned properties. Many of these properties have improvements on them such as buildings, carports, signs, or developed parking areas. Interspersed among these developments are vacant lots that may or may not have had development at one time.

The proposed MR Area contains many buildings with commercial or industrial vacancy. Buildings that are vacant due to a business closing down with no new business replacing the closed business negatively impact both the financial health of the building owners and the economic health of the area. Because of their economic non-viability, private investment in these buildings decline, adding to the blight and constituting what the MR Code calls "the presence of a substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures." (MR Code, §3-60A-4 (I), NMSA 1978.)

[El Camino Real Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation]



Vacant Buildings in the Proposed North Corridor Metropolitan Redevelopment Area

The proposed MR Area also includes various vacant buildings, several of which are in disrepair needing investment and redevelopment. Buildings that have boards over the windows and doors compound the lack of economic health by sending signals to the market that the area is in decline and there is no longer vitality. This viewpoint can lead to other forms of blight as well.



Boarded up buildings and blank walls and signs send a negative signal to the market

Vacant land interspersed among development in a mature part of the City also signals poor economic health. This land creates a disconnect or a “hole of inactivity”. The lack of continuity could lead to visitors and patrons not continuing along a corridor due to a lack of interest on the street.

[El Camino Real Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation]



Vacant lot along 2nd Street, south of I-40



Vacant lot on 4th Street, north of I-40



Vacant Lot along 2nd Street, north of I-40



Vacant lot along 4th Street, north of I-40



Empty lot not adding interest to the street



Empty lot adjacent to another empty lot



Empty lot behind fence



Empty lot next to boarded building

[El Camino Real Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation]

The proposed North Corridor MR Area includes some properties that may have an operating business on them, but send a negative signal to the market because of their interface with the street. Blank walls, vinyl or chain link fencing and razor (or barbed) wire often create an uneasy, uninviting feeling that does not encourage economic activity.



Business with blank wall



Business with chain link fencing



Business with blank, vinyl fencing



Business with chain link and vinyl fencing



Chain link fence topped with razor wire



Blank wall topped with razor wire

[El Camino Real Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation]

Along with how private property interfaces the street, the condition of buildings is an important factor that influences the vitality of an area. Though many buildings in the proposed MR Area are attractive, other buildings could use the assistance of the MRA to improve facades. Further, some buildings in the proposed MR Area have attractive facades but are not as well maintained as would be ideal.

The MR Code defines a blighted area as one that has “the presence of a substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures,” or “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” (MR Code, §3-60A-4 (I), NMSA 1978).



Buildings that may consider utilizing the benefits of a façade improvement program.



Building façade could be improved

Building façade needs to be cleaned

The proposed MR Area also includes development with large parking areas between the street and the buildings. This type of development creates a less pedestrian-friendly environment compared to buildings being placed up front and interacting with the street with the parking area behind the building.

[El Camino Real Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation]



Examples of buildings with large parking areas between them and the public right-of-way

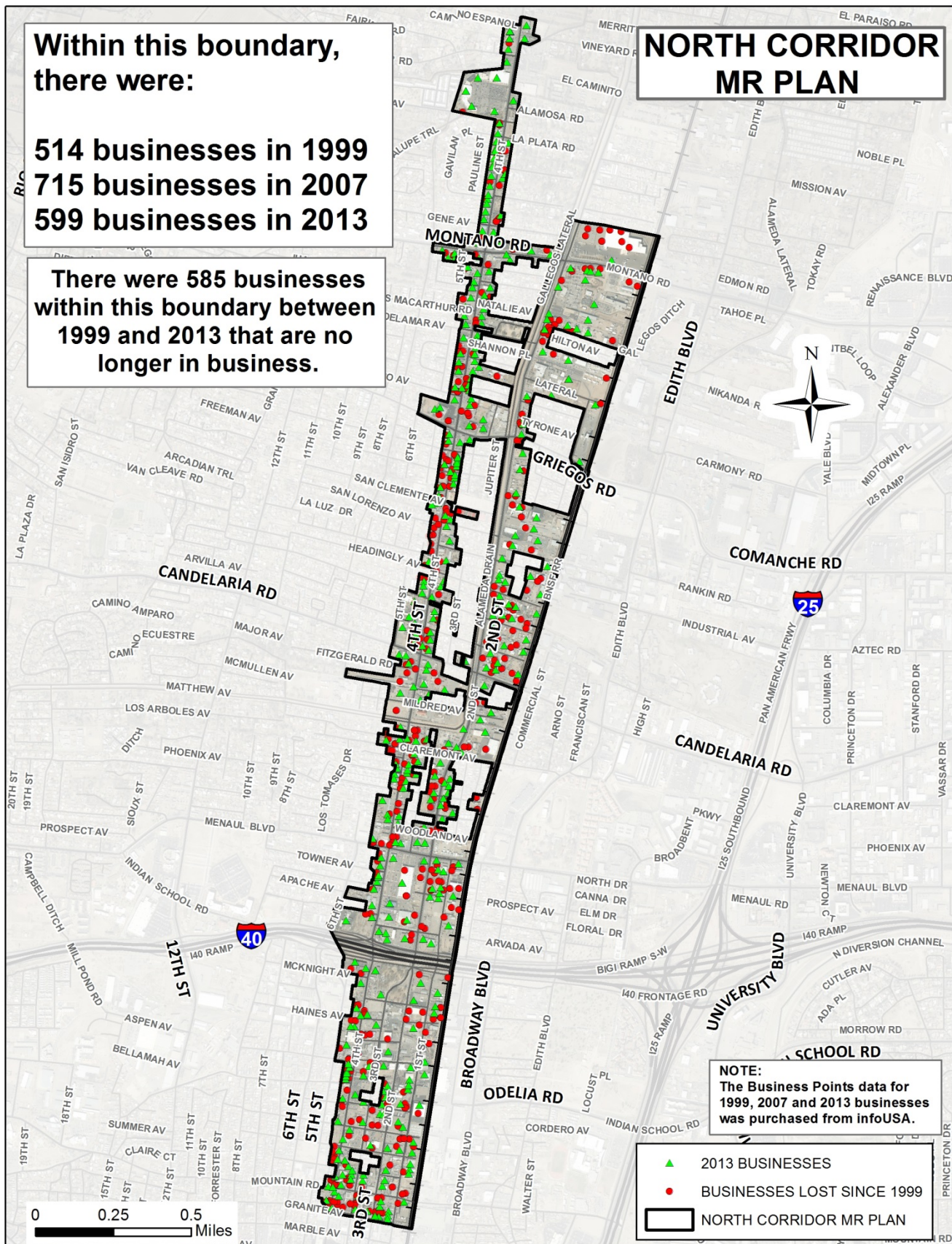
5. Business Turnover

Utilizing business data from infoUSA regarding how many businesses were open during a given year, the MRA has found the proposed North Corridor MR Area is a difficult area to own a business. The definition of a blighted area in the MR Code not only mentions that businesses in the area “have closed or significantly reduced their operations due to the economic losses or loss of profit due to operating in the area”, but further the area displays “low levels of commercial or industrial activity or redevelopment” (MR Code, §3-60A-4 (I), NMSA 1978).

The MRA manipulated data from years 1999, 2007 and 2013. If a business was operating in 1999 but was no longer operating in 2007, then it was deemed closed. Once this comparison was made between 1999 and 2007, the resultant data was compared to 2013. The MRA did not consider a business closed if a new business was placed at the same address with a similar name (e.g. – Bob’s Burgers became Bob’s Tasty Burgers).

The proposed MR Area had 514 open businesses in 1999, 715 open businesses in 2007 and 599 open businesses in 2013. However, over this time period, 585 businesses that were at one time open are no longer operating. Please see the following page for a map that shows where businesses have closed and those that remain open.

[El Camino Real Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation]



[El Camino Real Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation]

The data points do not reveal any clustered area of (in)activity, but overall new businesses seem to locate where improvements to the general area were made. Areas along 4th Street that have a median have equal number or slightly more new businesses operating in the area. This is further supported by making physical observations that newer businesses tend to be attracted to improved areas, or the businesses themselves have realized better patronage by customers when improvements have been made to their properties.

Other Considerations

There are many transient services located in the corridor. These services are typically located where the services are most needed. As the area shows signs of economic decline and blight, many businesses are vacated allowing transient activity to increase in these areas. Reinvestment in this area will help the proposed MR Area to stabilize and become healthy and will thus decrease any perceived negative impacts from transient activity. This is an ongoing problem in the City and the designation of the proposed MR Area will not directly resolve this issue, but will help by reducing places of inactivity and catalyzing additional activity in the area.

Another key benefit from having this proposed area designated as an MR Area is to bring attention to the needs of the antiquated platting, especially along 4th Street. The Department of Municipal Development (“DMD”) in the City of Albuquerque started a 4th Street Corridor project focused on improving the public infrastructure that is needed to facilitate pedestrian-oriented redevelopment. This project has slowed down and having the area designated as an MR Area will allow the MRA to work with DMD to realize their intent by finding additional funding for the project.

One other consideration is that 2nd and 4th Streets are used by commuters that do not frequent the businesses in the area. These commuters simply traverse the area and add to the heavy rush-hour traffic, but do not stop in the corridor. Many of these commuters are west side residents that are attracted to the newer stores and businesses west of the river, closer to their communities. The designation of the proposed MR Area could allow traffic analyses to occur and may suggest ways of slowing the traffic along these corridors to allow people to frequent businesses in the area.

Neighborhood Input

Attached to this designation report are Appendices A and B, which are a listing of questions and concerns, expressed by citizens that own properties within the area. There are many items in their questions that should be addressed in an MR Plan.

Findings, Determinations, and Conclusion

The MRA concludes that the existing conditions within the proposed North Corridor MR Area meet the definition of “blight” as required for the designation by the MR Code (§ 3-60A-8). The condition of the proposed MR Area “substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth and economic health and well-being of a municipality or locale within a municipality ... or constitutes an economic or social burden and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals or welfare in its present conditions of use” (MR Code, §3-60A-4 (I), NMSA 1978).

MRA staff recommends the Albuquerque Development Commission recommend City Council approval of an MR Area designation for the proposed North Corridor MR Area based on the five points that were discussed above. These points include:

- Crime. The proposed MR Area includes a significant amount of property and violent crime, which creates an unsafe environment.
- Household Income Levels. The median income in this area is well below the City average and has led to low levels of commercial activity.
- Poor/Aging Public Infrastructure. The proposed MR Area includes poor and/or aging public infrastructure that is unsafe and deteriorating. Further, inconsistent right-of-way points to obsolete or impractical planning and platting.
- Private Property. The area includes many buildings that are vacant, unmaintained or deteriorating. Additionally, many of the building facades in the area are not conducive to vitality. Finally, vacant parcels create holes of inactivity.
- Business Turnover. The proposed MR Area has experienced a decline in business activity and high business turnover, which have led to low levels of commercial activity.

It is determined that the designation of this area as a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area is needed. If the MR Area is approved by City Council, the MRA will utilize its powers made available through the MR Code and work with the community to create an MR Plan to encourage revitalization and private investment within the North Corridor Metropolitan Redevelopment Area.

Appendix A

Comments and Questions at a Public Meeting on the Proposed North Corridor Metropolitan Redevelopment Area on November 4, 2015

- Will this make our taxes go up?
- Can you show us examples of projects from other neighborhoods?
- What is the timeline of this project?
- Will this impact the Sector Development Plan for 4th Street?
- The City is directing services for the homeless along the railroad corridor from Lomas to Candelaria. Places like the Hi-Lo Market are very burdened with shoplifters now. These policies are impacting our neighborhoods.
- Title loan companies are bottom-feeders – they’re causing lots of troubles here.
- What response do you want from us prior to going to the ADC?
- The City already has lots of planning processes going on in this area – do you plan to integrate with those other plans?
- Where is AMAFCA on this as they own 2nd Street? (reference was probably to the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District due to the ditch along 2nd Street).
- We’re a manufacturing and construction business – how do we fit into this plan?
- What if a property owner doesn’t want to participate, and just wants to leave their property as-is?
- What about businesses that shouldn’t be here anymore, like the truck stop?
- Will you be starting at one end and moving north or south?
- Can we find out how successful other MR areas have been?
- Will the City pay for the fire hydrants that they just made me pay for on my property?
- Until you do something about St. Martens (shelter), nothing will change.
- Is there a sunset date for these plans?
- What are the resources that you’ll be bringing to the area?
- Will developers come offer to buy my property?
- By offering property and money to developers (for City-owned properties), I’m concerned that development won’t come out like we expect.
- How many other MRAs are active right now? Are any finished?
- Will road diets be possible as part of this project?
- We have fundamental infrastructure problems with water and sewer – there are still septic systems in use here.
- There is a lot of skepticism in this area about anything the City says. St. Martens was supposed to be a church, but it turned into a shelter. Love’s Gas Station was supposed to be a “country store.”

Appendix B

Comments and Questions at a Public Meeting on the Proposed North Corridor Metropolitan Redevelopment Area on January 13, 2016

- People live in the Valley because of vacant land; the City wants to fill it up.
- MR Area boundary should go to Edith.
- What is meant by public-private partnership?
- What is a road diet?
- 4th Street Sector Development Plan disallows certain properties, but not in whole plan area.
- Can City use Eminent Domain?
- Will there be an overlay zone on 2nd Street?
- What is diversity of ownership?
- Are there other MR Areas this size?
- How was the northern boundary determined?
- Would it make sense for the MR Area boundary to go to Solar and include Smith's or go to County on north?
- Can we tie the Plan Area to the County/Los Ranchos?
- Designation does not imply improvements to be made.
- Are any banks on board?
- Are there deadlines to improvements to be made?
- Would private property owners be treated like developers?
- How do the MR Plan and Parsons-Brinkerhoff street improvements combine?
- 4th Street Plan and redevelopment of private property - when can this happen?
- How are residences brought in?
- Are HUD funds specific to MR Areas?
- Is state funding targeted to MR Areas?
- With the MRA designation, does PNM underground utilities?
- Is there a plan for a community garden?