

East Downtown/Huning Highland/South Martineztown

Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan

**Review
Draft**

**Prepared for the City of Albuquerque
Metropolitan Redevelopment Program
May 1, 2019**

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of the East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (“MR Plan” or “Plan”) is to identify, prioritize and implement redevelopment strategies and projects that will stimulate private investment and revitalization activity in the area. This MR plan is an expansion of the Old Albuquerque High School Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan adopted in 1984.

Located immediately east of the Downtown business district, the East Downtown, South Martineztown and Huning Highland communities provide the gateway for those traveling to and from Downtown Albuquerque. The economic output and neighborhood vitality of the district contributes greatly to the image and success of the Downtown district and the City of Albuquerque as a whole.

The adoption of the MR Plan will allow the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency to undertake activities designed to revitalize the area through multiple initiatives, including, but not limited to:

- Providing financial incentives for private development;
- Removing barriers to private investment;
- Providing public investment in infrastructure projects;
- Making improvements to public rights-of-way; and
- Creating public-private partnerships for anchor projects.

Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation and Area Boundary

The City of Albuquerque’s Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (“MRA”) conducted and analysis of the areas generally known as East Downtown, Huning Highlands and South Martineztown to determine if there was a need for the designation of a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area in and around these neighborhoods. This analysis was conducted in March and April of 2019 and culminated with the completion of the East East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation Report (“Designation Report”) and the East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Boundary (“MR Area”). The MR Area generally includes properties not zoned for single family residential uses along the Central Avenue corridor between Broadway Boulevard and Oak Street, along the

east side of Broadway Boulevard between Coal Avenue and Lomas Boulevard, along Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue ("MLK") between Broadway Boulevard and Interstate 25 and along the western frontage of Interstate 25 between Central Avenue and Coal Avenue. The full MR Area boundary can be seen in Figure 1. See Appendix B for the full designation report.

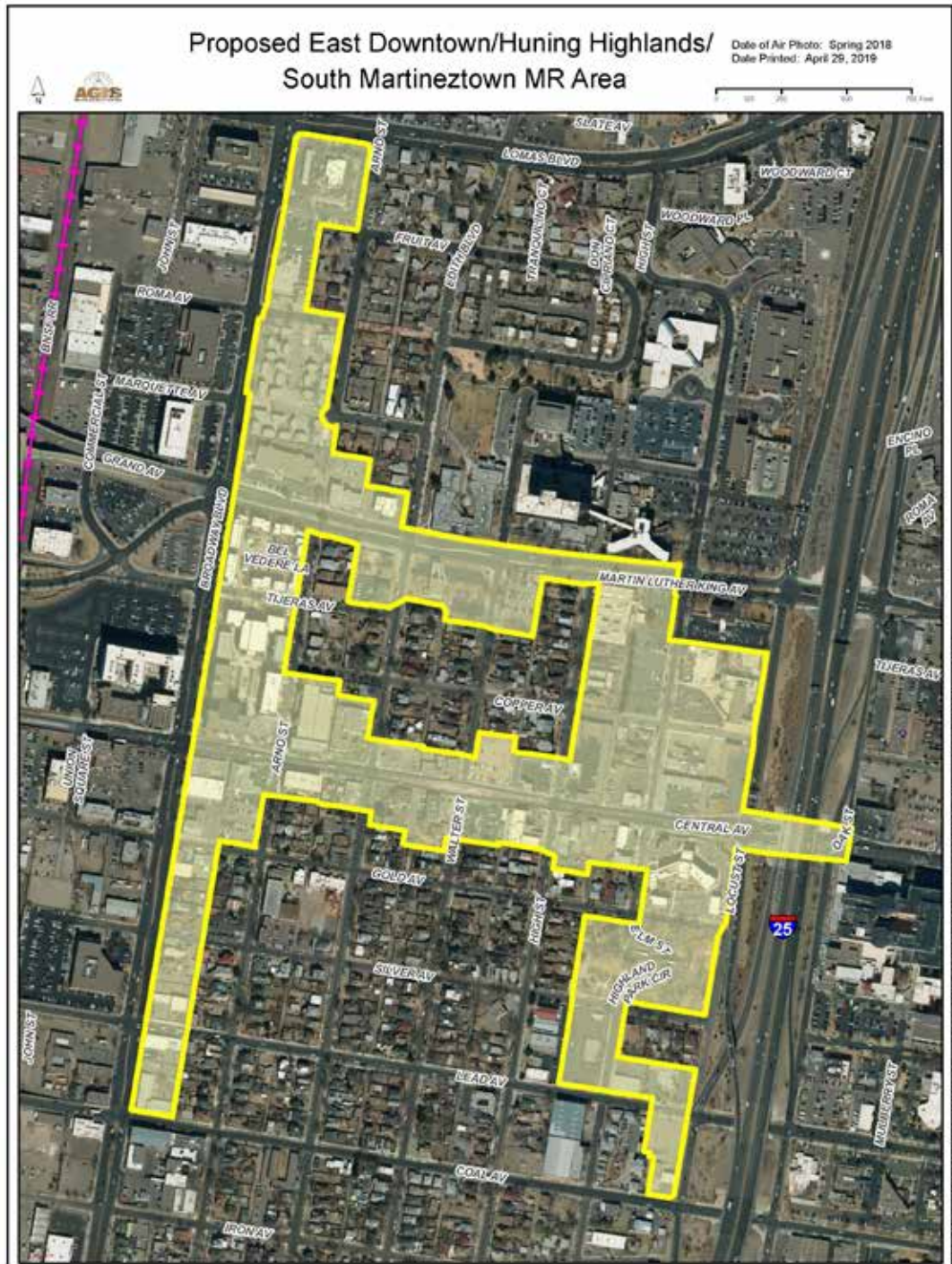


Figure 1.

Public Participation Process

The MRA planning process builds on over six decades of community work in the East Downtown (“EDo”) District. These planning efforts include the Huning Highland Sector Development Plan, the South Martineztown Sector Development Plan, the Old Albuquerque High School Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan, The EDo Master Plan and Regulating Plan, the Route 66 Action Plan, and the Central Corridors Planning Initiative, as well as countless efforts by individual property owners to redevelop private property in the area, which have included extensive public outreach and participation. It is the intent of this MRA plan to move forward this community effort.

Two public meetings were held as part of the MRA planning process to discuss the proposed boundaries of the MR Area, to gather neighborhood input and suggestions for potential ideas that could be included in this MR Plan and to discuss any community concerns. These meetings were held on April 11 and May 7th, 2019 at the Special Collections Library and were well attended by community members.

Several important issues were raised during the public participation process about the MR Area boundary and topics to be addressed in the Plan. Some of the topics that arose during the community discussions included:

- The need for additional multi-family housing units in the MR Area;
- A desire to see infill development of vacant and underutilized properties along the active transit corridors in the area, specifically properties with frontage along Central Avenue and Broadway Boulevard;
- The addition of streetscape improvements to Broadway Blvd. between Lomas Blvd. and Central Ave. including landscaping, medians, the addition of crosswalks, traffic calming measures and pedestrian refuge points.
- Improving the drainage infrastructure of the area to reduce the risk of flooding;
- Providing pedestrian crosswalks at various locations along Central Avenue in the Area;
- Prioritizing investment and redevelopment activities along the major transit routes of Central Avenue and Broadway Boulevard; and
- Encouraging overall walkability in the Area and improving the pedestrian experience.

Summary of Recommendations

This Plan makes recommendations and implementation strategies for both public and private initiatives, all with a goal of helping to catalyze redevelopment activity in the Area. The recommendations of this Plan include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Infrastructure upgrades to improve connectivity, walkability, public spaces, drainage and streetscapes;**
- **Redevelopment of vacant, underutilized and infill properties;**
- **Addition of multi-family housing; and**
- **Implementation of TIDD, TIF or other financing tool(s) to benefit the Area**

A full description of recommendations and implementation strategies can be found further in this Plan.

Role of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency

The MRA is primarily responsible for executing programs and projects that lead to the revitalization of blighted areas as designated by the Albuquerque City Council. The MRA works to deploy resources designed to encourage private and public investments, while creating partnerships to implement and develop catalytic redevelopment projects and activities.

The MRA's role in the East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area includes identifying the Area's revitalization and redevelopment needs, overseeing the development of the MR Plan including potential projects and implementation strategies, coordinating Plan elements with other city departments and government agencies and creating public-private partnerships to develop specific projects in the Area.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Historical Context

The East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area is comprised of the EDo commercial corridor which bounds Central Avenue (Route 66) between I-25 and the AT + SF Railroad tracks and two historic residential communities; the South Martineztown Neighborhood and the Huning Highlands Historic District.

Huning Highlands Historic District

The Huning Highland Neighborhood, which surrounds the EDo corridor to the north and south, is one of Albuquerque's oldest suburbs and includes a diverse range of housing types. In the early 1900's, Franz Huning, a German merchant, began developing the area to the east of a rapidly growing downtown to satisfy the demand for framed housing with steeply pitched roofs and porches which resembled housing in the eastern United States. Many of the area houses arrived on the AT + SF railroad in the form of kits houses from Sears, Roebuck and Company. The resulting neighborhood was a mixture of large and small homes of various styles.

Albuquerque's continued expansion eastward and the Nation's migration westward greatly impacted the Huning Highlands neighborhood. Route 66 played a major role in the development of the area, with both its arrival in 1937 and its eventual decommission in 1985. The realignment of Route 66 along Central Avenue in 1937 brought motels, gas stations, roadside eateries and souvenir shops catering to passing motorists. Some examples of this era remain today, many of which have been restored and adapted into local eateries, shops and a boutique hotel.

The last half century has brought physical and economic hardship to the area. The construction of I-25 in 1960, removed several blocks from the eastern edge of the neighborhood and created a physical barrier between EDo/Huning Highlands and the University of New Mexico, as well as newer suburbs to the east. Increased commercial development and traffic along Central Avenue, and the conversion of Coal and Lead Avenues into one-way thoroughfares have divided the neighborhood into four isolated fragments. Recent economic challenges, resulting from economic downturns and competition with big box and web-based retailers have forced much of the retail businesses in the area to close.

South Martineztown Neighborhood

South Martineztown, known in its early days as “Los Palomitas” or dog town, began as a rural area south of the sand dunes of Martineztown, was primarily used for farming and grazing. The 1890’s brought the first major development with the expansion of the Anglo grid pattern from downtown to South Martineztown, the opening of First Ward School and the arrival of St. Joseph’s Sanatorium in 1902. By the 1920’s, the residential population increased, commercial activity lined Broadway Blvd and Marquette Avenue (Currently MLK) and St. Joseph’s had become a hospital.

The following decades brought many challenges to the residents of the South Martineztown neighborhood. By the 1950’s, due to its proximity to the AT + SF railway, the City had identified and zoned South Martineztown for commercial expansion. Due to a perceived lack of residential stability, reports of residential loans not being made to commercially zoned property and rumors that the City would no longer issue residential building permits for the area, many residents left the neighborhood. City plans designated the area for civic development, including a new City hall and convention center. In the mid 1960’s, Albuquerque Public Schools identified the neighborhood for a major educational complex.

The residents of South Martineztown have had a lasting impact on the development path of the neighborhood. Responsible for the resistance to industrial expansion from the railroad, infringement from the hospital, civic plans from the city and the APS education complex, the Citizens Information Committee of Martineztown (“CICM”) has worked to develop their own detailed renewal plan for the neighborhood resulting in the 1970’s rebuilding of the residential neighborhood. Redevelopment including new housing, a park, landscaping and streets. The rebuilt Longfellow elementary school became the first Albuquerque magnet school featuring a bilingual curriculum. The CICM remains actively engaged in supporting the residential stability of the neighborhood.

Land Use and Zoning

Zoning within the East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area is generally mixed use, with primarily low intensity (See Figure 2). The Huning Highland residential area is protected by a historic overlay and a character protection overlay.

These overlays add general protections and development requirements to historically significant properties and ensure that new development remains in context with the character of the community. See the Integrated Development Ordinance for zoning details and affected properties.

Land use along Broadway Boulevard, Lomas Boulevard, and Central Avenue is primarily commercial consisting of small, single story buildings built prior to the turn of the last century, with many along Central Avenue dating to pre-WW II. Central Avenue has seen some recent redevelopment, both with the adaptive re-use of the former Albuquerque High School into lofts and several Route 66 era buildings into restaurants, as well as the new construction of mixed use and live/work. However, much of the land on Central Avenue remains vacant and underutilized, with empty lots and storefronts throughout. Development along Martin Luther King Boulevard is primarily low density medical and institutional, with some recent expansion of medical facilities along the north side.

Residential neighborhoods are located within easy walking distance of the commercial corridors. The Huning Highland Neighborhood, north and south of Central, consists of Railroad Era housing, ranging from single family homes to small courtyard apartments. Small lots and secondary dwelling units add increased density to the area while maintaining a lower density feel. North of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, the South Martineztown neighborhood was mostly rebuilt post 1970 and is now a compact urban neighborhood with a mix of townhouses, apartments and single-family homes. Renovations to two public housing projects in the area will update 96 affordable housing units, including. 60 – 1 bedroom, 20 – 2 bedroom, 13 – 3 bedroom and 3 - 4 bedroom units.

A prominent historic landmark, the renovation of the Old Albuquerque High School has been catalytic for the East Downtown area. Formerly the home of Albuquerque's original high school, the site remained vacant for decades and the buildings fell into disrepair. In 1984, Old Albuquerque High School Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan in an effort to incentivize redevelopment. However, it was not until 2001 that the restoration of the campus became a reality. Since that time, the five campus buildings have undergone restoration and have been adapted into highly desirable residences.

Date of Air Photo: Spring 2018
Date Printed: April 9, 2019



Figure 2.

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Figure 3..

The Innovate ABQ project, a public/private partnership between the University of New Mexico, Central New Mexico Community College and the City of Albuquerque is located on a 7-acre site at the northwest corner of Broadway Boulevard and Central Avenue. Although outside of the MR Area, the project intends to bring more than 600,000 square feet of space to foster the creation of long-term, job-creating ventures. The initial phases of the project have been completed with the construction of the Rainforest building, and the FUSE makerspace building. Additional development is planned, including the redevelopment of the First Baptist Church building and additional property to the north of the Rainforest building. The Innovate ABQ project has the potential to bring additional jobs and residents within close proximity to the MR Area, increasing the demand for area housing, goods and services. In addition, it has the potential to affect the local transportation network system, potentially increasing area traffic, the demand for parking, bicycle and pedestrian access and ride hailing/sharing services.

Transportation

With its close proximity to downtown and its traditional street grid, the EDo District, Huning Highland and the South Martineztown neighborhoods have the potential to support a strong multi-modal network. The neighborhood is walkable, with compact blocks, good connectivity and limited curb cuts. Recent infrastructure investments in the area, including bicycle lanes, lane narrowing and enhanced intersections have made the EDo neighborhood more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. However, major intersections, such as Lomas and Broadway Boulevards, Broadway Boulevard and Central Avenue, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Broadway Boulevards, Lead Avenue and Broadway Boulevard and the Coal Avenue and Broadway Boulevard intersections **remain difficult to navigate by bicycle or on foot**. Connections across Broadway Boulevard, the AT + SF railroad tracks and Interstate 25 are limited, reducing neighborhood connectivity and limiting pedestrian and bicycle movement to and from the downtown and university areas.

Opportunities exist for improved bicycle and pedestrian connections along Broadway Boulevard, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, Lomas Boulevard, Lead Boulevard and Coal Boulevard. These crossings would significantly improve access and connectivity in the area, as well as improve pedestrian, cyclist and motor vehicle safety.

The EDo District, Huning Highland and South Martineztown neighborhood are well served by a variety of transportation options. The Area has regular bus service on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, Lomas Boulevard, Lead Avenue, Coal Avenue, Broadway Boulevard and Central Avenue. The Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART) service will soon provide service on Central Avenue with a transit stop at Walter Avenue. The area is also served by docked bike share on Central Avenue between Walter and High streets and the City of Albuquerque also is served by a dock-less bikeshare.

Parking continues to be a challenge in the area. Although on street parking in the area is provided on most major streets and is metered in residential areas, on-site parking is needed to satisfy demand. This is often provided by surface parking on vacant and underutilized lots. There are two parking structures in the area, one serves the medical campus north of MLK and the second, which is located on Arno Street just north of Central Avenue, primarily offers reserved spaces for residences of the surrounding area with limited space for public parking. Opportunities exist to develop shared public parking structures which would increase available parking, free surface lots for development and provide a revenue stream for the area.

Services and Amenities

The EDo, Huning Highland and South Martineztown communities provide attractive cultural amenities within comfortable walking distance. The Highland Park and South Martineztown Park provide active and passive recreational activities and have recently seen reinvestment. Longfellow Elementary is a magnet school located on the northeast corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue and Edith Boulevard. The Special Collections Library, designed by Arthur Rossiter and a designated City landmark, is located on the northwest corner of Central Avenue and Edith Boulevard. Local restaurants attract visitors from throughout the state and a recently developed boutique hotel adds an attractive hospitality asset. The community is home to many churches, the St. Joseph's/Lovelace medical complex and adjacent medical facilities. The area, however, has limited retail offerings and access to daily goods and services to serve the growing residential population. Housing availability is limited. Opportunities exist to expand the existing residential offerings which would also increase the demand for additional retail and services much needed by the existing population. Additional opportunities include; improved connectivity to and from the area amenities, a comprehensive wayfinding system, and a public outdoor gathering space such as a plaza.

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Policy

The adoption of the East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan furthers the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies. The ABC Comprehensive Plan has identified six guiding principles; strong neighborhoods, mobility, economic vitality, equity, sustainability and community health to capture the values and vision of the community. The East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan is alignment with this vision. The following is a list of applicable goals from the Comprehensive Plan, see Appendix A for a complete list of Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies related to this plan.

Goal 4.1 Character

Enhance, Protect, and preserve distinct communities.

Goal 5.1 Centers and Corridors

Grow as a community of strong Centers connected by a multi-modal network of corridors.

Goal 5.2 Complete Communities

Foster communities where residents can live, work, learn, shop, and play together.

Goal 5.3 Efficient Development Patterns

Promote development patterns that maximize the utility of existing infrastructure and public facilities and the efficient use of land to support the public good.

Goal 5.6 City Development Areas

Encourage and direct growth to Areas of Change where it is expected and desired and ensure that development in and near Areas of Consistency reinforces the character and intensity of the surrounding area.

Goal 7.1 Streetscapes & Development Form

Design streetscapes and development form to create a range of environments and experiences for residents and visitors.

Goal 7.2 Pedestrian-Accessible Design

Increase walkability in all environments, promote pedestrian-oriented development in urban contexts, and increase pedestrian safety in auto-oriented contexts.

Goal 7.3 Sense of Place

Reinforce sense of place through context-sensitive design of development and streetscapes.

Goal 8.1 Placemaking

Create places where business and talent will stay and thrive.

Goal 9.1 Supply

Ensure a sufficient supply and range of high-quality housing types that meet current and future needs at a variety of price levels to ensure more balanced housing options.

Goal 9.3 Density

Support increased housing density in appropriate places with adequate services and amenities.

Goal 9.6 Development Process

Promote cost-effective housing redevelopment and construction that meets community needs.

Goal 9.7 Partnerships

Coordinate strategic deployment of housing-related funds and partnerships with community-based organizations for projects that achieve housing goals.

Goal 11.2 Historic Assets

Preserve and enhance significant historic districts and buildings to reflect our past as we move into the future and to strengthen our sense of identity.

Goal 12.1 Infrastructure

Plan, coordinate, and provide for efficient, equitable, and environmentally sound infrastructure to support existing communities and the Comp Plan's vision for future growth.



Issues and Opportunities

Designation Report Summary

The East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation Report has determined the Old Albuquerque High School MRA would be benefited by being expanded to include the mapped area (figure 1) and renamed to recognize the surrounding historic neighborhoods. The Designation Report concluded that the current conditions of the MR Area do indeed meet the requirements of a “blighted area” under the State of New Mexico Redevelopment Code 3-60A-4. The following criteria were indicated in the Designation Report:

Deteriorated or deteriorating structures

Throughout the plan area there are a number of aging and deteriorating buildings and structures that are in need of repair, rehabilitation and in some instances removal. There are several properties in the plan area along Central Avenue that appear to be very old and only marginally functional. Many of these buildings appear to need updating in order to be considered safe and functional for occupancy. Many structures were observed to have crumbling or deteriorating facades, broken windows and deferred maintenance.

Deterioration of site improvements

As one of the oldest neighborhoods in the City, the East Downtown community has transformed and evolved over time. The built environment grew and responded to many factors including the diminishing role the railway in the city, an increased use of the automobile, the construction of Interstate 25 along the eastern portion of the neighborhood, and the outmigration of businesses and residents of the downtown core. Because the Area experienced these changes, there properties with deteriorating site improvements that are outdated or unusable in the current marketplace. These deteriorating site improvements have potential for redevelopment opportunities or adaptive reuse solutions to modernize the structures and provide new activity to the community and local economy. Sites were observed with remnants of structures, trash and debris from past activities and damaged and decaying buildings.

Significant number of commercial or mercantile businesses have closed

Throughout the Area there are a number of shuttered businesses, many with high profile locations and frontage along the major activity corridors of Central Avenue, and Broadway Boulevard. Businesses have closed and the buildings they once inhabited remain vacant. These vacant storefronts contribute to a lack of economic activity in the Area, as well as decreasing the walkability, activity and potential for increased customer interactions at other Area businesses. In addition to the vacant unoccupied business locations there are numerous buildings, storefronts and vacant properties that are shown as available for sale or lease. The vacancy combined with the properties that are available for sale or lease show a current lack of confidence in the Area for businesses to locate and operate.

Low levels of commercial or industrial activity or redevelopment

While much of the Area has frontage along the transit corridors of Central Avenue and Broadway Boulevard, there are numerous vacant lots and empty buildings. Given the location of the Area, along vehicular and pedestrian commuter routes, and the proximity to downtown Albuquerque and the University of New Mexico main campus, there is great potential for an increase in the number and mix of commercial businesses that can operate in the area, as well as an increase in the economic output that could come from the increased business activity.

In addition to the conditions outlined in the Designation Report, the MR Area faces many challenges related to infrastructure. Stormwater management is a key issue for the area, with particular concern regarding potential flooding created from water draining from higher elevations to the East, moving along Central Avenue and collecting at a low point where the road drops below the railway tracks. This specific location and the surrounding areas have experienced flooding in the past when the stormwater system has not been able to adequately handle the flow of water during severe storms. In addition, area utilities, including water, power and sewer need to be upgrade in many areas as aging infrastructure continues to fail and modern demands have increased. Most residential streets and alleyways are in need of repaving and sidewalk improvements including accessible ramps at intersections.

In order to facilitate the connections between EDo, Downtown, South Martineztown, the University area and Huning Highlands connectivity needs to be improved. Of particular concern are increasing and improving crossing points at Broadway Blvd, the AT + SF railroad tracks and Interstate 25. Particular concern in these areas should be made to pedestrian and cyclist safety and comfort.

Overall, the East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area is a prime area for redevelopment, with proximity to downtown Albuquerque, area hospitals, Innovate ABQ and the University of New Mexico. The area has the foundation of a comprehensive and diverse multi-modal transportation system, including access to regional transportation via the Railrunner and Interstate 25. The established residential neighborhoods provide a diversity of housing types, architectural interest and pedestrian features. The MRA designation will enable revitalization tools and public-private partnerships which can assist with redevelopment along the commercial corridors.



Implementation Strategy

Core Goals for the EDo District and Surrounding Neighborhoods

EDo District: *Revitalize the EDo District by creating a multi-modal, live/work and mixed use, walkable district, with placemaking elements that add creative local interest and streetscape improvements, adaptive reuse of older buildings, development of vacant lots within the context and character of the neighborhood, encouraged by incentives for redevelopment.*

Huning Highland Neighborhood: *Preserve the neighborhood character by protecting existing structures, improving infrastructure and minimizing the negative impact of redevelopment in the EDo District.*

South Martineztown Neighborhood: *Redevelop the commercial corridors in the South Martineztown Neighborhood as a mixed-use development with new types of affordable housing, expanded pedestrian and bicycle linkages to medical and cultural facilities, Downtown and the University neighborhoods.*

Projects

The projects included in the MR Area Plan may be implemented through a combination of public and private projects.

Potential Projects

A. Infrastructure Improvements – Water and Sewer Line Improvements

Project Description: Upgrade water and sewer line improvements throughout the MR area. Supplement the funding for utility improvements to include streetscapes on those streets identified as pedestrian linkages in the pedestrian and bicycle linkages map (Figure 3).

Implementation Steps: This project would be completed through the City's CIP process, with potential for supplement funds through the MRA and grant funds.

B. Infrastructure Improvements – Pedestrian Realm

1. Streetscape Improvements

Description: Introduce pedestrian streetscape amenities as designated in the Route 66 Action Plan, the Downtown Walkability Study (Jeff Speck), and the EDo Masterplan.

Location: Central Avenue, I-25 to railroad underpass.
Broadway Boulevard, Coal Avenue to Lomas Boulevard
Edith Boulevard, Coal Avenue to Lomas Boulevard
High Street, Coal Avenue to MLK, continuing along
Silver Street, to implement the Bicycle Boulevard
MLK, I-25 to 1st Street

Streetscape Improvements may include:

- Install bulb-outs and on-street parking where needed.
- Incorporate street trees and landscaping where space is available.
- Consider creating small plazas of landscaping with seating and trash receptacles on leased portions of private property where ROW is too narrow to increase pedestrian realm.
- Provide bicycle lanes with protection where needed

Implementation Steps: This project would be completed through the City's CIP process, with potential for supplement funds through MRA and grant funds. Projects that receive MRA assistance may also contribute to the goals by incorporating these improvements as private development occurs, when appropriate.

2. Intersection improvements

Description: Pedestrian improvements and bulb-outs to facilitate crossing.

Location: Broadway Boulevard and Central Avenue, and Martin Luther King Jr. and Broadway Boulevards

- Provide bulb-outs and pedestrian refuges to reduce crossing distances.
- Use high definition crosswalk markings.
- Realign Tijeras Avenue to eliminate 5-point intersection at MLK Boulevard

Implementation Steps: This project would be completed through the City's CIP process, with potential for supplement funds through the MRA and grant funds. Projects that receive MRA assistance may also contribute to the goals by incorporating these improvements as private development occurs, when appropriate.

C. Infrastructure Improvements - Central Avenue underpass of Interstate 25

Description: High priority should be given to implementing design interventions to the pedestrian walkways along Central Avenue below Interstate 25. It is important for the economic success of the Area to connect to the adjacent Sycamore MR Area, Presbyterian Hospital campus and the Highlands Redevelopment (currently under construction as of the writing of this plan). Emphasis should be given to creating a comfortable and safe pedestrian experience in this area with lighting, landscaping and pedestrian safety features.

Implementation Steps: This project may be completed through the City's CIP process, with potential for supplement funds through the MRA and grant funds. Additionally, this project could be funded and/or maintained through funds generated from a TIDD or TIF district in the Area (See item M below).

D. Infrastructure Improvements – Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements and Connectivity

Description: Enhanced north/south streets which connect residential areas with commercial activity and transit opportunities on Central.

Location: Walter Street
Edith Boulevard
Silver Avenue
Tijeras Avenue
Roma Avenue

Program includes:

- Wide sidewalks with street trees
- Public seating areas
- Bicycle lanes
- Bicycle Amenities - bike racks and air pumps
- Wayfinding
- Intersections at Tijeras Avenue and Broadway Blvd, Roma Avenue and Broadway, Silver Avenue and Broadway

Implementation Steps: This project would be completed through the City's CIP process, with potential for supplement funds through the MRA and grant funds. Projects that receive MRA assistance may also contribute to the goals by incorporating these improvements as private development occurs, when appropriate.

E. Infrastructure Improvements – Stormwater and drainage

Description: Develop a comprehensive stormwater strategy. Consider underground storage tanks for water detention in public ROW and LID strategies which feature storm water in the landscape as a public amenity.

Location: Throughout plan area.

Implementation Steps: This project would be completed through the City's CIP process, with potential for supplement funds through the MRA and grant funds.

F. Infrastructure Improvements – Signage, Wayfinding and Branding

Description: Develop a comprehensive wayfinding system which incorporates a recognizable brand for the MR area.

Location: Throughout plan area

Implementation Steps: This project would be completed through business partnerships and grant funding, with potential for supplement funds through the MRA and grant funds.

G. Redevelopment – Encourage infill development

Description: Develop a package of financial incentives and tools that promote new infill development. Consider a streamlined redevelopment process which includes strategies developed to address infill constraints on tight urban lots including; trash pick-up, on site ponding, alley requirements, sidewalk improvements and encroachment agreements for amenities such as awnings, outdoor seating, signage and vending.

Implementation Steps: This project would be implemented by MRA via RFP process.

H. Redevelopment – Encourage higher density, more compact development

Description: Support affordability through the development of a diverse range of residential options including smaller sized units and a variety of housing choices.

Implementation Steps: Develop tools and strategies to support incremental development of infill sites. Provide development incentives for providing a range of unit types and size.

I. Creative Placemaking

1. Foster incremental private sector improvements that foster a sense of place.

Description: Develop strategies to recognize and support small private sector placemaking elements and activities which provide opportunities for people to gather and experience the local assets of the community including; façade improvements, outdoor seating, landscaping, awnings, building lighting, murals, art, window dressing, and community programming.

Implementation Steps: Encourage developers to include place making elements on private property. Develop financial strategies for encouraging private property owners to enhance storefronts and the public realm in front of buildings, alleyways and parking areas. Prioritize projects receiving MR financial assistance that incorporate place making components.

2. Creative Placemaking – Alleyway improvements

Description: Develop alleys as people spaces, pathways, dining areas and vending spaces.

Location: Between Elm Street and Broadway Blvd

- Create comfortable walkways with shade, planters and murals
- Allow food trucks and pop up vending to activate alleys
- Allow area to be used by existing businesses as outdoor seating
- Develop pedestrian and bicycle networks

Implementation Steps: This project would be completed through the City's CIP process, with potential for supplement funds through the MRA and grant funds.

J. Redevelopment – Develop a shared parking strategy for the Area

Description: Create a parking strategy for the Area that uses existing garages and on-street space to meet current and future parking demands. Determine if a need for new parking facilities exists and look for creative ways to maximize existing capacity including shared parking systems.

Implementation Steps: If deemed necessary, develop a public-private partnership to determine strategies for public parking structure development. Work with City Planning and Zoning to identify potential parking reductions or alternatives to on-site parking requirements for high-density and mixed-use development projects. Develop shared parking systems where spaces can be available for different uses at different times throughout the day and night.

K. Create Public-Private Partnership(s) for Redevelopment Project(s)

Description: Work with the private sector to develop properties that have a high catalytic redevelopment potential, especially those along the major transit routes in the Area.

Implementation Steps: Identify vacant and underutilized properties that are in need of redevelopment or reuse. There are many different ways to create public-private partnerships and each potential relationship should be examined on an individual basis. There are several ways the MRA may work to develop public-private partnerships including, but not limited to, the following:

- Purchase available properties with a goal of redeveloping;
- Sell MRA owned property for redevelopment (property may be sold for fair value);
- Assist private developers in obtaining Metropolitan Redevelopment Bonds for projects;
- Provide low or no-interest gap funding when available

L. Create a TIDD or TIF district or other available funding mechanism to provide additional funding for reinvestment in projects in the Area

Description: Use existing economic development tools to increase the capital that can be deployed in the MR Area to further the projects and plans identified in this Plan.

Implementation Steps: Identify potential economic development tools that are available for the area and work with necessary public and private entities to implement. (See Appendix D for descriptions of potential funding sources)

M. Allow Minor Amendments to MR Area Boundary to encourage development

Description: Allow the MR Area boundary to be amended to include adjacent properties if inclusion will lead to redevelopment activities and if requested by property owner.

Implementation Steps: MRA staff will complete internal amendments and manage the City approval process of creating a Minor Amendment to the MR Area boundary. Any boundary amendment will need to be approved by the Albuquerque City Council.



Appendices

Appendix A – Comp Plan Goals & Policies Related to EDo

Policy 4.1.2 Identity and Design: Protect the identity and cohesiveness of neighborhoods by ensuring the appropriate scale and location of development, mix of uses, and character of building design. [ABC]

- a) Maintain and preserve the unique qualities of historic areas. [ABC]

Policy 4.1.3 Placemaking: Protect and enhance special places in the built environment that contribute to distinct identity and sense of place. [ABC]

Policy 4.1.4 Neighborhoods: Enhance, protect, and preserve neighborhoods and traditional communities as key to our long-term health and vitality. [ABC]

Policy 5.1.1 Desired Growth: Capture regional growth in Centers and Corridors to help shape the built environment into a sustainable development pattern. [ABC]

- a) Create walkable places that provide opportunities to live, work, learn, shop, and play.
- b) Structure capital investment and land use regulations to direct growth to Centers, in particular those in need of public and private reinvestment.
- c) Encourage employment density, compact development, redevelopment, and infill in Centers and Corridors as the most appropriate areas to accommodate growth over time and discourage the need for development at the urban edge.
- d) Encourage the development of multi-unit, multi-story apartments and mixed-use residential buildings in Downtown, Urban Centers, and Activity Centers to increase housing density and expand housing options and affordability.

Policy 5.1.2 Development Areas: Direct more intense growth to Centers and Corridors and use Development Areas to establish and maintain appropriate density and scale of development within areas that should be more stable. [ABC]

Policy 5.1.8 Premium Transit Corridors: Foster corridors that prioritize high-capacity, high-frequency transit service, with mixed-use, transit-oriented development within walking distance of transit stations. [ABC]

- a) Encourage higher-density residential developments within ¼ mile of identified transit station locations.
- b) Minimize negative impacts on nearby neighborhoods by providing transitions between development along Transit Corridors and abutting single-family residential areas.
- c) Encourage active public spaces and plazas within 660 feet of identified transit station locations and balconies and decks overlooking transit station areas.

Policy 5.1.9 Main Streets: Promote Main Streets that are lively, highly walkable streets lined with neighborhood-oriented businesses. [ABC]

- a) Prioritize street and walkway improvements, such as street trees, landscaping, lighting, wayfinding, and wide sidewalks, to create safe and comfortable pedestrian environments.
- b) Minimize negative impacts on nearby neighborhoods by providing transitions between Main Street development and abutting single-family residential areas.
- c) Ensure that Main Streets are well-served by multi-modal transportation.
- d) Follow Main Street policy guidance for private property and follow other Corridor designation policies for decisions related to the public right-of-way when a corridor has both the Main Street and another Corridor designation.

Goal 5.2 Complete Communities

Foster communities where residents can live, work, learn, shop, and play together.

Policy 5.2.1 Land Uses: Create healthy, sustainable, and distinct communities with a mix of uses that are conveniently accessible from surrounding neighborhoods. [ABC]

- a) Encourage development and redevelopment that brings goods, services, and amenities within walking and biking distance of neighborhoods and promotes good access for all residents. [ABC]
- b) Encourage development that offers choice in transportation, work areas, and lifestyles. [ABC]
- c) Maintain the characteristics of distinct communities through zoning and design standards that are consistent with long-established residential development patterns. [ABC]
- d) Encourage development that broadens housing options to meet a range of incomes and life styles. [ABC]
- e) Create healthy, sustainable communities with a mix of uses that are conveniently accessible from surrounding neighborhoods. [ABC]
- f) Encourage higher density housing as an appropriate use in the following situations: [ABC]
 - i. Within designated Centers and Corridors;
 - ii. In areas with good street connectivity and convenient access to transit;
 - iii. In areas where a mixed density pattern is already established by zoning or use, where it is compatible with existing area land uses, and where adequate infrastructure is or will be available;
 - iv. In areas now predominantly zoned single-family only where it comprises a complete block face and faces onto similar or higher density development;
 - v. In areas where a transition is needed between single-family homes and much more intensive development.
- g) Locate quality commercial development and redevelopment in existing commercial zones and designated Centers and Corridors as follows: [ABC]
 - i. In Activity Centers with development to serve adjacent neighborhoods with an emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle connections to nearby residential areas;
 - ii. In larger area-wide shopping centers located near intersections of arterial streets and provided with access via transit;
 - iii. Next to another shopping center at an intersection only when safe pedestrian crossings are provided to encourage shoppers to “park once” and walk to multiple stores; and
 - iv. In contiguous storefronts along streets in established neighborhoods and Main Streets.
- h) Encourage infill development that adds complementary uses and is compatible in form and scale to the immediately surrounding development. [ABC]

Goal 5.3 Efficient Development Patterns

Promote development patterns that maximize the utility of existing infrastructure and public facilities and the efficient use of land to support the public good.

Policy 5.3.1 Infill Development: Support additional growth in areas with existing infrastructure and public facilities. [ABC]

Goal 5.6 City Development Areas

Encourage and direct growth to Areas of Change where it is expected and desired and ensure that development in and near Areas of Consistency reinforces the character and intensity of the surrounding area.

Policy 5.6.2 Areas of Change: Direct growth and more intense development to Centers, Corridors, industrial and business parks, and Metropolitan Redevelopment Areas where change is encouraged. [A]

- a) Use Figure 5-6 created according to the methodology described in Section 5.1.2.5, to determine where Areas of Change policies apply.
- b) Encourage development that expands employment opportunities.
- c) Foster a range of housing options at various densities according to each Center or Corridor type.
- d) Encourage higher-density housing and mixed-use development as appropriate land uses that support transit and commercial and retail uses.
- e) Encourage job creation in business and industrial parks, near freight routes, and where adequate transitions and buffers can be provided to protect abutting residential uses.
- f) Minimize potential negative impacts of development on existing residential uses with respect to noise, stormwater runoff, contaminants, lighting, air quality, and traffic.
- g) Encourage development where adequate infrastructure and community services exist.
- h) Encourage development in areas with a highly connected street grid and frequent transit service.

Goal 7.1 Streetscapes & Development Form

Design streetscapes and development form to create a range of environments and experiences for residents and visitors.

Policy 7.1.1 Design Elements: Prioritize design elements for transit-supportive design along Premium Transit Corridors, walkability within Centers, and a balance of land use and transportation considerations along other Corridors. [ABC]

Goal 7.2 Pedestrian-Accessible Design

Increase walkability in all environments, promote pedestrian-oriented development in urban contexts, and increase pedestrian safety in auto-oriented contexts.

Policy 7.2.1 Walkability: Ensure convenient and comfortable pedestrian travel. [ABC]

- a) Improve the pedestrian environment through coordinated design of subdivisions, streets, development sites, and buildings.
- b) Improve pedestrian safety and comfort by providing wider sidewalks, street trees and landscape buffers, lighting, on-street parking, street furniture, and waiting areas and median refuges at large or busy intersections.
- c) Ensure the location and design of sidewalks reflects the existing or planned character and intensity of surrounding land uses.
- d) Enhance existing streets and trails as linear paths connecting destinations throughout the region.
- e) Promote trees and landscape elements in the public right-of-way, along trails, and within private development to ensure a high-quality, pleasant, and healthy built environment.

Policy 7.2.2 Walkable Places: Promote high-quality pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods and districts as the essential building blocks of a sustainable region. [ABC]

- a) Design streetscapes to incorporate street trees, landscape elements, and enhanced sidewalks to support vibrant pedestrian environments. [ABC]
- b) Encourage building and site design that activates the pedestrian environment through building frontage, entrances, parking areas, and gathering spaces. [A]
- c) Support pedestrian activity along streets, including sidewalk dining, parquitos/parklets, and open streets events. [A]

Goal 7.3 Sense of Place

Reinforce sense of place through context-sensitive design of development and streetscapes.

Policy 7.3.3 Placemaking: Encourage efforts to establish and strengthen district identity within Centers, business districts, and neighborhoods. [ABC]

- a) Identify, celebrate, and leverage special places.
- b) Distinguish district gateways and entrances with signage, lighting, monuments, etc.
- c) Develop distinctive signage, banners, and logos to use on businesses, in parks, near gateways and entrances, and on plazas.
- d) Prioritize capital projects to address key issues and leverage key assets.
- e) Encourage site design that includes gathering spaces for festivals, markets, and events.

Goal 8.1 Placemaking

Create places where business and talent will stay and thrive.

Policy 8.1.1 Diverse Places: Foster a range of interesting places and contexts with different development intensities, densities, uses, and building scale to encourage economic development opportunities. [ABC]

- a) Invest in Centers and Corridors to concentrate a variety of employment opportunities for a

range of occupational skills and salary levels. [ABC]

Policy 8.1.2 Resilient Economy: Encourage economic development efforts that improve quality of life for new and existing residents and foster a robust, resilient, and diverse economy. [ABC]

- a) Maximize opportunities for economic development that furthers social, cultural, and environmental goals.
- b) Encourage the production, local sale, and export of locally-grown and made goods.
- c) Prioritize local job creation, employer recruitment, and support for development projects that hire local residents.

Goal 9.1 Supply

Ensure a sufficient supply and range of high-quality housing types that meet current and future needs at a variety of price levels to ensure more balanced housing options.

Policy 9.1.1 Housing Options: Support the development, improvement, and conservation of housing for a variety of income levels and types of residents and households. [ABC]

- a) Increase the supply of housing that is affordable for all income levels. [ABC]
- b) Assure against discrimination in the provision of housing. [ABC]
- c) Assure the availability of a wide distribution of quality housing for all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, or disabled status. [ABC]
- d) Protect the quality of existing housing stock through rehabilitation programs and training. [ABC]
- e) Provide for the development of quality housing for elderly residents. [ABC]
- f) Encourage community compounds to support multi-generational housing where such traditional development patterns exist. [ABC]
- g) Ameliorate the problems of homelessness, overcrowding, and displacement of low income residents. [ABC]
- h) Maintain an affordable housing supply in neighborhoods, in addition to creating market-rate housing, as part of revitalization efforts. [A]
- i) Provide for the development of multi-family housing close to public services, transit, and shopping. [A]
- j) Work on conservation, improvement, and expansion of the housing available to low- and moderate-income families until all housing in the area meets City Housing Code standards. [A]

Goal 9.3 Density

Support increased housing density in appropriate places with adequate services and amenities.

Policy 9.3.1 Centers & Corridors: Encourage higher density, multi-unit housing and mixed-use development in Downtown, Urban, Activity, and Village Centers, and along Premium and Major Transit Corridors to capture growth, relieve development pressure at the edge of the urban footprint, and maintain low densities in rural areas. [ABC]

Goal 9.6 Development Process

Promote cost-effective housing redevelopment and construction that meets community needs.

Policy 9.6.1 Development Cost: Reduce development costs and balance short-term benefits of delivering less costly housing with long-term benefits of preserving investment in homes and protecting quality of life. [ABC]

Policy 9.6.2 Incentives: Provide incentives for developing affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households, by aligning development regulations, infrastructure requirements, and fee structures with the priorities of City and County affordable housing programs. [ABC]

Goal 9.7 Partnerships

Coordinate strategic deployment of housing-related funds and partnerships with community-based organizations for projects that achieve housing goals.

Policy 9.7.2 Metropolitan Redevelopment: Identify and prioritize opportunities for catalytic projects that stabilize and serve blighted neighborhoods and support redevelopment in those areas. [ABC]

- a) Leverage partnerships with the private sector and community-based organizations as needed.
- b) Encourage development of mixed-use and mixed-income projects.
- c) Pursue remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites when feasible.

Goal 11.2 Historic Assets

Preserve and enhance significant historic districts and buildings to reflect our past as we move into the future and to strengthen our sense of identity.

Policy 11.2.1 Gentrification: Balance the objectives of historic preservation and conservation of affordable housing. [ABC]

- a) Work to maintain a range of housing options and affordability levels to ameliorate the displacement of low income households.
- b) Encourage renovation and rehabilitation to preserve and enhance the existing housing stock.

Policy 11.2.2 Historic Registration: Promote the preservation of historic buildings and districts determined to be of significant local, State, and/or National historical interest. [ABC]

- a) Preserve and maintain historically significant buildings and spaces.
- b) Recognize historic buildings and districts as vital elements of the community.
- c) Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic structures as a strategy to preserve character and encourage reinvestment.
- d) See Community Identity Goal 4.3 for character-defining elements of each Community Planning Area.

Policy 11.2.3 Distinct Built Environments: Preserve and enhance the social, cultural, and historical features that contribute to the identities of distinct communities, neighborhoods, and districts. [ABC]

- a) Consider local history and the visual environment, particularly features unique to Albuquerque, as significant determinants in development and redevelopment decisions in light of their relationship to and effect upon the following:
 - i. Architectural styles and traditions;
 - ii. Current and historic significance to Albuquerque;
 - iii. Historic plazas and Centers;
 - iv. Culture, traditions, celebrations, and events
- b) Encourage development that strengthens the identity and cohesiveness of the surrounding community and enhances distinct historic and cultural features.
- c) Design streets and streetscapes that match the distinctive character of historic areas.

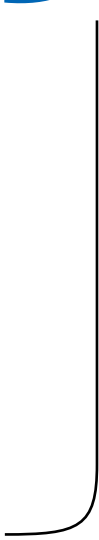
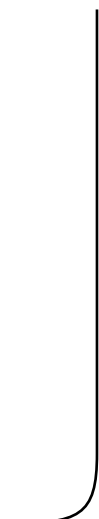
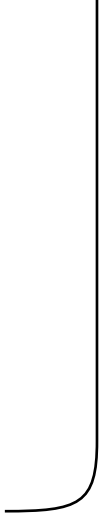
Goal 12.1 Infrastructure

Plan, coordinate, and provide for efficient, equitable, and environmentally sound infrastructure to support existing communities and the Comp Plan's vision for future growth.

Policy 12.1.1 Infrastructure Design: Encourage design of visible infrastructure (surface and overhead) that respects the character of neighborhoods and communities and protects significant natural and cultural features. [ABC]

Policy 12.1.4 Drainage and Flood Control: Reduce or eliminate flooding by improving ponding and drainage capacities in an environmentally sensitive manner through the development process and in coordination with flood control agencies. [ABC]

Policy 13.3.2 Flood Mitigation: Prevent flood damage and coordinate flood control and response with other agencies. [ABC]





Timothy Keller, Mayor

DRAFT

East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation Report



City Council

Isaac Benton, District 3

Albuquerque Planning Department

David S. Campbell, Planning Director

Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency

Karen Iverson, Manager

Matthew Butkus, Development Coordinator

PURPOSE

The proposed East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (“Proposed Area” or “Area”) is located just east of the Downtown Albuquerque central business district and includes the main commercial and transit corridors of: Central Avenue NE, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue NE and Broadway Boulevard. Given the location of the Proposed Area, its economic success and vitality is important to the greater downtown community and the City of Albuquerque as a whole.

The designation of this geographic area as a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (“MR Area”) will allow a Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan (“MR Plan”) to be created. The creation and adoption by the Albuquerque City Council, of both the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area and subsequent MR Plan will allow the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (“MRA”) to undertake activities designed to revitalize the Area through multiple initiatives, including, but not limited to:

- Providing financial incentives for private development;
- Removing barriers to private investment;
- Providing public investment in infrastructure projects;
- Making improvements to public rights-of-way; and
- Creating public-private partnerships for anchor projects.

The Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency is governed by the State’s Metropolitan Redevelopment Code, Section 3-60A-1 thru 3-60A-48 (“MR Code”). The MR Code has specific guidelines that must be followed in order for properties to be eligible for MRA funded improvements. The MR Code **does not** grant local government the power of eminent domain for the acquisition of private property.

Currently there are multiple metropolitan redevelopment areas that exist in close proximity to the Proposed Area including: the Downtown, Railroad and Old Albuquerque High School (“OAHS MR Area”) Areas. Given that the OAHS MR Area has already been established and is located in the immediate vicinity of the area that is the subject of this designation report, it was determined that the benefit would be greater to the overall community to have one cohesive Metropolitan Redevelopment Area boundary for the area. Due to this fact it is the recommendation of MRA staff that the existing Old Albuquerque High School Metropolitan Redevelopment Area be expanded to include the boundary as seen in Figure #1 of this report and renamed to the East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area. This will allow the Proposed Area to benefit from targeted redevelopment activities, economic development initiatives and potential area wide tax increment financing tools.

INTRODUCTION

In order to take advantage of the state Metropolitan Redevelopment Code, §§ 3-60A-1, et seq., NMSA 1978, 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, through the 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 regarding the proposed boundary expansion and renaming for the East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area is based on an analysis of the existing conditions in the Proposed Area, conversations with local stakeholders, a meeting with the East Downtown Neighborhood Association Board of Directors on March 7, 2019 and from public input received at a community meeting held on April 11, 2019.

As shown in Figure 1, the boundary of the Proposed Area generally includes properties not zoned for single family residential uses along the Central Avenue corridor between Broadway Boulevard and Oak Street, along the east side of Broadway Boulevard between Coal Avenue and Lomas Boulevard, and along Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue between Broadway Boulevard and Interstate 25.

It is the opinion of MRA staff that the Proposed Area that will be included in the expansion will benefit from being designated as a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area. As outlined further in this Designation Report, staff believes the current conditions of the Proposed Area do indeed meet the requirements of a “blighted area” under the State of New Mexico Redevelopment Code 3-60A-4.

The recommendation of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency staff is to approve the proposed boundary expansion and renaming of the OAHS MR Area to the East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area, as reflected in this report. Following the approval of the major expansion to the OAHS MR Area boundary, MRA staff can develop a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan to address the conditions of slum and blight that exist, with the goals of promoting new real estate development

activity, improving the conditions for businesses to thrive and to improve the overall health, safety and economic activity within the East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area.

As defined by the State of New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code, N M S A 1978, § 3-60A-4 (H & I), a slum area or a blighted area is:

H. “slum area” means an area within the area of operation in which numerous buildings, improvements and structures, whether residential or nonresidential, which, by reason of its dilapidation, deterioration, age, obsolescence or inadequate provision for ventilation, light, air, sanitation or open spaces, high density of population, overcrowding or the existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes, is conducive to ill health, transmission of disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency or crime and is detrimental to the public health, safety, morals or welfare;

I. “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, insanitary 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.

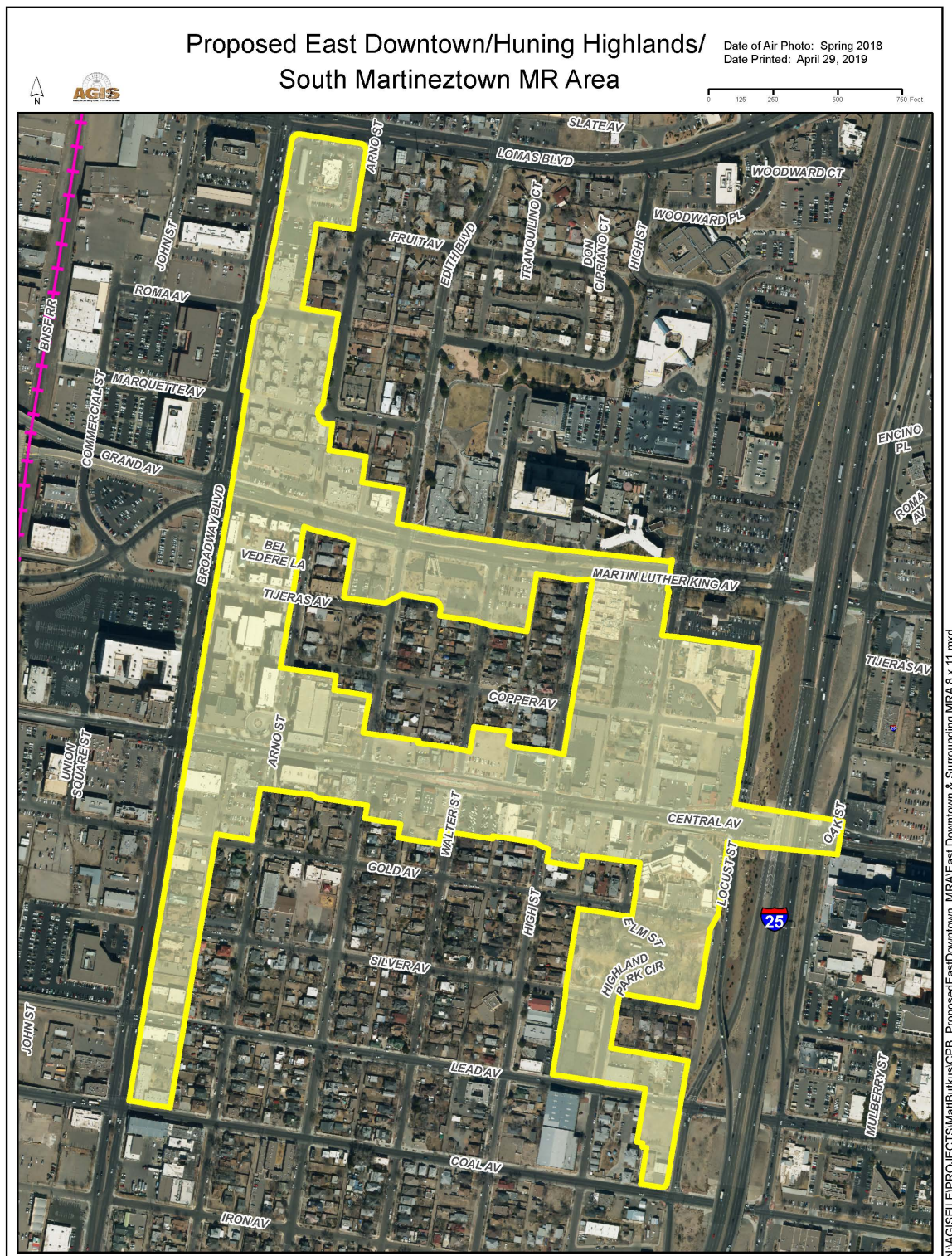


Figure 1 – Proposed East Downtown/South Martineztown MR Area Boundary

CAUSES OF BLIGHT IN THE EAST DOWNTOWN/HUNING HIGHLANDS/SOUTH MARTINEZTOWN METROPOLITAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA

In order for an area of the city to be designated as a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area, certain conditions of blight must exist as described in the state's MR Code (§ 3-60A-7, NMSA 1978). Through its analysis of the proposed MR Area, the MRA has identified categories that demonstrate that the Proposed Area should be designated as a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area. These categories are identified below and include:

- Deteriorated or deteriorating structures;
- Deterioration of site improvements;
- Significant number of commercial or mercantile businesses have closed; and
- Low levels of commercial or industrial activity or redevelopment.

The MRA acknowledges that additional conditions that contribute to the slum and blighted conditions in the Proposed Area may exist. It should be noted that not all properties within the boundary area exhibit these conditions but a high enough concentration of properties and blighted conditions exist to designate the overall area as a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area.

1. Deteriorated or deteriorating structures

Throughout the Proposed Area there are a number of aging and deteriorating buildings and structures that are in need of repair, rehabilitation and in some instances removal. There are several properties in the Area along Central Avenue that appear to be very old and only marginally functional. Many of these buildings appear to need updating in order to be considered safe and functional for occupancy. Many structures were observed to have crumbling or deteriorating facades, broken windows and deferred maintenance.



Broken windows and deteriorating building facades

2. Deterioration of site improvements

As some of the oldest neighborhoods in the City, the East Downtown, Huning Highlands and South Martineztown communities have transformed and evolved over time. The built environment grew and responded to many factors including the diminishing role the railway in the city, an increased use of the automobile, the construction of Interstate 25 along the eastern portion of the neighborhoods, and the outmigration of businesses and residents of the downtown core. Because the Proposed Area experienced these changes, there are properties with deteriorating site improvements that are outdated or unusable in the current marketplace. These deteriorating site improvements have potential for redevelopment opportunities or adaptive reuse solutions that can modernize the structures and provide new activity to the community and local economy. Sites were observed with remnants of structures, trash and debris from past activities and damaged and decaying buildings.



Vacant and deteriorating building fronting Broadway Blvd.



Trash and debris on vacant property

3. Significant number of commercial or mercantile businesses have closed

Throughout the Area there are a number of shuttered businesses, many with high profile locations and frontage along the major activity corridors of Central Avenue, and Broadway Boulevard. Businesses have closed and the buildings they once inhabited remain vacant. These vacant storefronts contribute to a lack of economic activity in the Area, as well as decreasing the walkability, activity and potential for increased customer interactions at other Area businesses. In addition to the vacant unoccupied business locations there are numerous buildings, storefronts and vacant properties that are shown as available for sale or lease. The vacancy combined with the properties that are available for sale or lease show a current lack of confidence in the Area for businesses to locate and operate.



Closed businesses and inactive storefronts along Central Avenue and Broadway Boulevard

4. **Low levels of commercial or industrial activity or redevelopment**

While much of the Area has frontage along the transit corridors of Central Avenue and Broadway Boulevard, there are numerous vacant lots and empty buildings. Given the location of the Area, along vehicular and pedestrian commuter routes, and the proximity to downtown Albuquerque and the University of New Mexico main campus, there is potential for an increase in the number and mix of commercial businesses that can operate in the area, as well as an increase in the economic output that could come from the increased business activity.





Vacant properties with high redevelopment potential

NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT:

In order to gain greater insight into the needs of the community, meetings were held with local residents, business owners and area stakeholders. Through these conversations and interactions community ideas and items of concern were identified that should be addressed and incorporated into the MR Plan for the Area. Topics that were identified included, but were not limited to:

- A need for additional multi-family residential properties;
- Landscaping, medians and pedestrian crossing locations along Broadway Boulevard between Central Avenue and Lomas Boulevard;
- A need for marked crosswalks along Central Avenue in the Area;
- Improving the safety and pedestrian experience on Central Avenue below the Interstate 25 overpass and below the rail line. A need for lighting, cleaning, landscaping and safety was identified. (**The rail line underpass is located just outside the MR Area, however its use, appearance and perception is important to the walkability and success of the Proposed MR Area*);
- There are many vacant storefronts along the major roadways in the area and a desire for increased retail businesses was expressed;
- As is the case in many parts of the city, there are crime and safety issues related to an increased number of homeless individuals in the Proposed Area that needs to be addressed; and
- Improving the pedestrian and bicycle connection routes in and around the area.

Additional topics that were identified as part of the community outreach, as well as recommendations and design interventions, will be addressed in the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan that will be created for this Area.

FINDINGS:

Through its analysis MRA staff identified issues that demonstrate that blighted conditions exist including, but are not limited to:

- Deteriorated or deteriorating structures;
- Deterioration of site improvements;
- Significant number of commercial or mercantile businesses have closed; and
- Low levels of commercial or industrial activity or redevelopment.

It is the determination of MRA staff that the existing conditions within the proposed East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area sufficiently meet the definition of “Blight” as required by the MR Code (§ 3-60A8), NMSA 1978). *“...because of the presence of a substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures...deterioration of site or other improvements, ...an area where a significant number of commercial or mercantile businesses have closed or significantly reduced their operation 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”*

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the findings outlined in this report, it is the recommendation of the MRA that the existing Old Albuquerque High School Metropolitan Redevelopment Area should be expanded and renamed to the East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area, as reflected in this report. If the major expansion and name change is approved by City Council, the MRA will utilize powers made available through the MR Code and work with the community to create a MR Plan to encourage revitalization and private investment within the East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area.

MRA staff encourages the Albuquerque Development Commission to make a recommendation to the Albuquerque City Council to **APPROVE** the major expansion of the Old Albuquerque High School MR Area and renaming to the East Downtown/Huning Highlands/South Martineztown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area based on the four findings of blight contained in this report. These four finding of blighted conditions include:

- Deteriorated or deteriorating structures;
- Deterioration of site improvements;
- Significant number of commercial or mercantile businesses have closed; and
- Low levels of commercial or industrial activity or redevelopment.

Prepared by: Matthew Butkus
Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency

APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Area Crime Analysis

Appendix B: Area Demographic Profile and Key Facts

Appendix C: Old Albuquerque High School Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan

Appendix C – Potential Funding Sources

OTHER PUBLIC FUNDING SOURCES

This appendix includes a list of federal and state economic and infrastructure development funding resources that may be available to East Downtown/South Martineztown MR Area affiliated agencies, developers and investors. Each of these programs requires applicants to meet certain qualifications in order to be eligible for funding.

GENERAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

New Mexico Environment Department Brownfields Program

A brownfield is a property whose redevelopment is complicated by the presence of contamination or perceived contamination. Examples of brownfield sites include former industrial sites, old landfills and old gas stations. The New Mexico Environment Department ("NMED") provides free environmental

evaluations that include Phase I assessments. Phase I assessments look at the historic uses on a site. Funding and assistance can be sought from the NMED for Phase II (sampling and remediation plans), as well as Phase III (remediation) for a site. NMED is part of Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA")

Region 6. The amount of funding available for a site depends on how much of the Region 6 funding to NMED has been allocated in a given period. NMED will also provide technical assistance throughout the process. Through the Voluntary Remediation Program, a site can receive site closure documentation from NMED and liability protection for lenders and future purchasers.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance

This is a resource which includes extensive listings of federal assistance programs for municipalities,

contacts and grant application procedures. The catalog is available on-line at the following web address: www.cfda.gov.

Programs are grouped into the following basic categories:

- Agriculture;
- Business and Commerce;
- Community Development;
- Consumer Protection;
- Cultural Affairs;
- Disaster Prevention and Relief;

- Education;
- Employment, Labor, and Training;
- Energy;
- Environmental Quality;
- Food and Nutrition;
- Health;
- Housing;
- Income Security and Social Services;
- Information and Statistics;
- Law, Justice, and Legal Services;
- Natural Resources;
- Regional Development; and
- Science and Technology.

Cooperative Agreements Program (“COOP”) Local Government Road Fund

The program assists local governments and other public entities to improve, construct, maintain, repair, and pave highways and streets and public parking lots. Funds must be used for the construction, maintenance, repair, and the improvements of public highways, streets and parking lots. The local match is 40% and awards range from \$9,000 to \$192,000. Funds are made available at the beginning of the fiscal year and must be encumbered and spent no later than the end of the fiscal year.

Local Economic Development Act (“LEDA”) Capital Outlay Funds

Administered by the New Mexico Economic Development Department (“NM EDD”), these funds are provided to local governments to help stimulate economic development efforts. Grant funding is based on the receipt of funds appropriated by the New Mexico Legislature or by the City Council and are provided on a reimbursable basis only. Guidelines for eligible projects can be found on the NM EDD website, but generally include requirements such as the need to create permanent, full-time, private sector jobs; the project must be fully-funded and shovel ready, and must target industry clusters such as aerospace and defense, advanced manufacturing, back office and technical support, digital and emerging media, energy, food processing, and logistics, distribution and transportation.

Municipal Arterial Program (“MAP”) Local Government Road Fund

This program assists municipalities construct and reconstruct streets which are principal extensions of the rural highway system and other streets which qualify NMDOT criteria. Municipalities are required to contribute 25% to the cost of the project. There is no set limit to the amount of awards but the State share typically ranges from \$50,000 to \$1.1 million per project. Complete applications must be received by March 15th for funding to be considered by the fiscal year beginning July 1. Municipalities must submit applications provided by the NMDOT Transportation Planning Division.

New Mexico FUNDIT

Accessing all the needed funding for a single project can be a challenge, especially with one financing agency. This program was created in order to provide local governments’ access to simultaneous financing options which saves time, eliminates duplication, improves project effectiveness, and ensures strategic investment with public resources. Projects can include business development such as incubators or industrial parks, community development such as feasibility studies and comprehensive plans, infrastructure development such as capacity increasing, updating or replacing existing facilities and services, housing and downtown revitalization. The project must be prioritized in the local Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (“ICIP”), Economic Development Plan or Comprehensive Plan.

Public Project Revolving Fund (“PPRF”)

Through the PPRF, the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (“MFA”) has provided the means for unusual projects to receive financing. The PPRF is being looked at to provide an increasing array of public projects. Many of these projects have less proven revenue streams but do not have other viable sources of financing. Created in 1994, the PPRF program assists a wide range of public credits in accessing the capital markets with advantage of offering to all borrowers (regardless of their credit worthiness) fixed ‘AAA’ - insured interest rates.

Recreational Trails Program (“RTP”)

The RTP is a Federal reimbursement program funded through section 1109 of the FAST Act. In New Mexico RTP is administered by NMDOT. The program requires a match from the project sponsor of 14.56% of the total project cost. The program provides funding to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized trail uses. In addition to their recreational purpose, RTP-funded projects often provide multi-modal transportation options. Examples of trail uses include hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding and four-wheel driving. Eligible applicants include local governments, regional transportation authorities, transit agencies, State and Federal natural resources or public land agencies, school districts, location education agencies and schools, tribal governments and any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails.

Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants

The Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program supports locally-led collaborative efforts that bring together diverse interests from the many municipalities in a region to determine how to best target housing, economic and workforce development and infrastructure investments to create more jobs and regional economic activity. The program places a priority on investing in partnerships, including nontraditional partnerships (e.g., arts and culture, recreation, public health, food systems, regional planning agencies and public education entities) that translate the Six Livability Principles into strategies that direct long-term development and reinvestment, demonstrate a commitment to addressing issues of regional significance, use data to set and monitor progress toward performance goals and engage stakeholders and residents in meaningful decision-making roles.

Transportation Alternatives Program (“TAP”)

TAP is a Federal reimbursement program originally authorized under section 1122 of the Federal transportation act, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (“MAP-21”). In New Mexico TAP is administered by NMDOT. The program requires a match from the project sponsor of 14.56% of the total project cost. TAP provides funding for programs and projects such as: pedestrian and bicycle facilities, safe-routes-to-school projects, infrastructure improvements that provide better access to transit, environmental mitigation and other infrastructure improvements to the transportation system. Federal funding is required in the following proportions: 50 percent of TAP funds are sub allocated to areas in New Mexico based on their share of the total state population. The remaining 50 percent is available for use in any area of the state. Sub-allocated funds are divided into three categories: areas with populations of 200,001 or more; areas with populations of 5,001 to 200,000; and areas with populations of 5,000 or less. These are special census designations related to population density and do not correspond with city or town boundaries.

Surface Transportation Program (“STP”)

The United States Department of Transportation provides funding for restoration projects through Transportation Enhancement funds, which are administered through NMDOT through STP. The STP program funds construction, improvement and other transportation-related projects on roads functionally classified Interstate, Principal Arterial, Minor Arterial or Major Collector. STP funds are allocated for Transportation Management Areas (metropolitan areas over 200,000), Transportation Enhancement projects, and the Safety Program.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Angel Investment Tax Credit

This program offers equity financing for private sector companies through tax credits incentivizing private investors. Credits are available for up to \$62,500 per taxpayer for an investment made in each of up to five New Mexico companies engaged in qualified research, technology or manufacturing trades. Eligible companies must have most tangible assets and employees based in New Mexico.

Collateral Support Participation Program

As part of the State Small Business Credit Initiative, the United States Department of Treasury provided New Mexico \$13 million, which has been allocated through the New Mexico Finance Authority ("NMFA") to support the Collateral Support Participation Program. Through the Collateral Support Participation program, NMFA is able to partner directly with banks to provide businesses seeking to expand, create or retain jobs. This program provides low interest, no fee loan funds to businesses in rural and urban New Mexico, but gives preference to rural communities. NMFA requires banks to provide a simple and feeless application process catering to small businesses. In order to qualify for funds, a small business must be located in New Mexico or be authorized to conduct business in New Mexico, use the loan proceeds for business purposes, have 500 or fewer employees and meet the bank's lending requirements.

New Markets Tax Credits ("NMTC")

A federal program administered by Community Development Entities (CDE), the NMTC program provides tax credits to qualified development projects in low-income areas. The New Mexico Finance Authority, a New Mexico based CDE, has allocated \$201 million in tax credits of which 44% closed in rural New Mexico and has created 849 jobs since 2006. In order to be eligible, businesses must be located in a low-income census tract and must be developing commercial, industrial and/or retail real estate projects (including community facilities) or developing for sale housing in low-income census tract areas. Projects are typically between \$5 million and \$25 million. Some business types are ineligible such as country clubs, golf courses, massage parlors, hot tub facilities, suntan facilities, racetrack or other gambling facilities, liquor stores and certain farming businesses. A useful interactive map tool is available online to locate qualified census tracts (<https://www.cohnreznick.com/nmtc-mapping-tool>).

SMART Money Loan Participation Program

The SMART Money Loan Participation Program is a program administered by NMFA intended to leverage funds provided by local New Mexico banks for businesses that create quality jobs. The program provides bank participation loans, direct loans, and loan and bond guarantees on behalf of private for profit and non-profit entities. The program is designed to create greater access to capital for businesses throughout New Mexico, lower the cost for the borrower and share the risk with the bank creating a benefit to both the bank and borrower. Business loans must result in job creation and economic benefit and carry a minimum of risk.

Appendix D – Police Reports

East Downtown Police Report Analysis



Top 10 Police Reports					
Police Report	2016	2017	2018	2019*	Grand Total
TRAFFIC ACCIDENT NO INJURIES	110	99	81	24	314
INCIDENT	67	51	63	14	195
AUTO BURGLARY	45	42	30	7	124
BATTERY	30	43	33	4	110
VANDALISM, MALICIOUS MISCHIEF, GRAFFITI	27	31	29	9	96
AUTO THEFT	27	30	23	2	82
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH	16	21	32	9	78
DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED	16	14	26	22	78
CRIMINAL TRESPASS	26	30	14	6	76
TRAFFIC ACCIDENT W/INJURIES	24	26	15	6	71

2019 represents 1/1/2019 - 3/31/2019

Many of the police reports have either decreased since 2016 or have remained close to the same count each year.

DWI and Behavioral Health reports have either doubled or more than doubled since 2016.

Auto Theft and Auto Burglary have been trending downward citywide since 2017. The East Downtown MRA shows a similar trend for 2019.

The number of Behavioral Health police reports have increased by 50% since 2016. Trend for 2019 is to be slightly higher than 2018. With the increase of these police reports, recommendation for social/medical services in the area could be beneficial.

Report prepared by Crime Analysis Unit, Real Time Crime Center, Albuquerque Police Department

East Downtown Police Report Analysis



The following categories were developed to represent the various police reports that have been written in the MRA Area of East Downtown area from 2016 – 3/31/2019:

QoL (Quality of Life) – crimes such as vandalism, graffiti, criminal trespass, DWI, Behavioral Health, shoplifting, white collar crimes, etc.

Traffic – all crimes related to Traffic Offenses and accidents

Violent – crimes of assault, battery, sex crimes, robbery

Property – felony level stolen or received property from residential burglary, burglary to a business, auto theft, auto burglary

Larceny – theft from building, theft of motor vehicle parts or accessories, etc.

Warrant – felony or misdemeanor warrant served

Proactive – found item, welfare checks, recovery of vehicle

- The East Downtown MRA area has more police reports that are of a quality of life nature. Five of the Top 10 police reports are of the QoL category. Considerations for business partnership and community education on crime prevention strategies is encouraged.
- Traffic Accidents with and without injury occur in this area. Majority occur along Central at Edith, Walter and High. Timing of signals, signage, or road diet should be reviewed.
- Violent and Property crime are close in numbers although the trend for 2019 is to have property crime be much lower than in past years. Further analysis into the violent crime reports would be necessary to recommend potential solutions.

Crime Category	Grand Total
QoL	779
Traffic	413
Violent	272
Property	263
Larceny	114
Warrant	83
Proactive	52

Report prepared by Crime Analysis Unit, Real Time Crime Center, Albuquerque Police Department

East Downtown Police Report Analysis

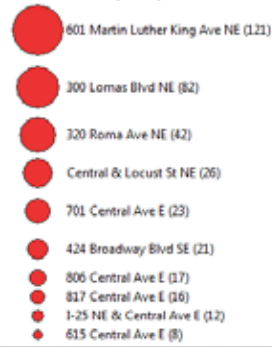


Repeat Address Locations were developed for the MRA of East Downtown. The graduated symbols represent the Top 10 address location in 2018 with the highest number of police reports.

601 Martin Luther King Ave NE is the Lovelace Hospital Complex. Auto Burglary, Auto Theft, and Larceny occur at this address. Violent crimes also occur at this location. Traffic accidents are not that high.

300 Lomas Blvd NE is the Circle K / McDonalds. Incidents, Felony Warrants, and criminal trespass of police reports mainly occur at this address. Business robberies also occur at this address.

2018 Top 10 Repeat Locations



- APD RTCC has video partnership with Presbyterian Hospital and Commercial Businesses throughout the City. Encouragement to become a Video partner with APD might be considered to address crimes that occur at these locations and possibly aid in a faster investigation.

Report prepared by Crime Analysis Unit, Real Time Crime Center, Albuquerque Police Department

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