

CUTLER AVENUE REPORT



REPORT CREATED BY



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Acknowledgements

Thank you Albuquerque City Councilor Diane Gibson for sponsoring this community planning effort as well as all of the community members who participated in the public process.

Mayor Tim Keller

District 1: Councilor Ken Sanchez (President)

District 2: Councilor Isaac Benton

District 3: Councilor Klarissa Pena

District 4: Councilor Brad Winter

District 5: Councilor Cynthia Borrego

District 6: Councilor Pat Davis

District 7: Councilor Diane Gibson

District 8: Councilor Trudy Jones

District 9: Councilor Don Harris (Vice-President)



City of Albuquerque

Charlotte Chinana
Policy Analyst – District 7

Tom Menicucci, AICP
Policy Analyst II

Petra Morris, AICP
Council Planning Manager

Shanna Schultz, MCRP
Policy Analyst – Planning

Michelle Gricius
GIS Manager – AGIS

Jeff Hertz, MCRP
Policy Analyst

Cutler Ave. Community Members Who Participated in the Cutler Ave. Workshop on December 12, 2017

Roy Solomon (Green Jeans)

Bob Reule (Reule Sun Corporation)

Melanie Mariano (Midtown Sports & Wellness)

Carolyn Tobias (Keshet Dance & Center for the Arts)

Emily Dunkin (Keshet Dance & Center for the Arts)

Adrian Trask (Keshet Dance & Center for the Arts)

Joe M. Gallegos (Hampton Inn)

Will Hogsett (Calibers)

Bryan Pletta (Stone Age Climbing Gym)

Mary Tarango (21st Century Public Academy)

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PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES



SHOP **LEARN** PLAY



1.1 Introduction

Throughout the City of Albuquerque, commercial business districts are beginning to develop, flourish, and mature. Establishing vibrant commercial business districts is not only a critical component of local economic development, but also improving public safety and contributing to placemaking. One of Albuquerque's emerging commercial business districts resides along Cutler Avenue (Cutler) in City Council District 7. In an effort to garner support from community stakeholders and to identify the right planning tools to support this emerging area in Albuquerque, City Council Staff coordinated a comprehensive participatory planning process that began in December 2017 and ended May 2018.

1.2 Executive Summary

Cutler and the surrounding area have all the characteristics, assets, and resources to become the next bustling commercial district in Albuquerque. City staff conducted a series of three different planning activities with neighborhood businesses to identify a suite of recommendations for supporting the development of a commercial district along Cutler. The activities included a site visit, Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis, and mapping exercise. These recommendations are aimed to help create a unique district, establish a sense of place and belonging among businesses, make infrastructure improvements to the public spaces that improve the quality of life in the area, bolster the transportation network through the area, and improve the sense of safety and security among patrons and businesses. These recommendations are classified in five major categories: Land Use, Transportation, Infrastructure, Marketing and Economic Development, and Safety.

For each category, this report lists recommendations, potential funding sources, responsible entities, and establishes priorities. To accelerate implementation of these objectives an implementation table was created that organizes priorities into short, medium, and long term time frame, as well as identifying the priority level (high, medium, or low). The following recommendations are all identified as short term and a high priority:

- Street improvements that include striping and marking on-street parking, bike “sharrows”, and crosswalk improvements along Cutler.
- Install pedestrian scale light fixtures to PNM poles as an interim measure to improve visibility and safety.
- Install wayfinding signage to alert cyclists and drivers of connections between Cutler and the bike trail.
- Work with Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA) to address sewer emissions in the area.
- Work with Albuquerque Metropolitan Area Flood Control Authority (AMAFCA) to address concerns with people occupying the storm drain.
- Add a speed hump across the entrance to Keshet's driveway to divert storm-runoff.
- Work with the City Council Office to issue an RFP for a branding firm to market the area.
- Work with the Cultural Services Department to hold special events and block parties to make Cutler a vibrant commercial destination.
- Provide continued support to the @Midtown merchants association through the Office of Neighborhood Coordination.
- Establish a Security Assistance Funding Zone to provide financial support for public safety improvements in the area.

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2.1 Community Workshop

On December 12, 2017, the City Councilor Diane Gibson (District 7) held a workshop at the Stone Age Climbing Gym Community Room inviting businesses to explore opportunities to establish a stronger sense of place and belonging along Cutler. Nine business owners attended the workshop. The workshop began with an introduction of staff and participating business owners. This was followed by a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis (SWOT) through which the group identified assets and issues in the area. Business owners then participated in a group exercise by marking up maps of the area with individual comments and ideas.



City Councilor Diane Gibson saying a few words to business owners before city staff initiated the workshop in Stone Age Climbing Gym's Community Room.

On March 9, 2018, City Staff reconvened business owners along Cutler to present preliminary recommendations for the area, make changes to these recommendations where needed, and begin to prioritize recommendations into an implementation matrix. During this meeting, city staff also made plans to provide project participants with a draft of the report in Spring 2018 and to have a final report completed by Summer 2018. At the end of the meeting, city staff and participating business owners identified next steps for the project.

2.2 SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis identified the area's internal strengths and weaknesses as well as its external opportunities and threats. The results are as follows:

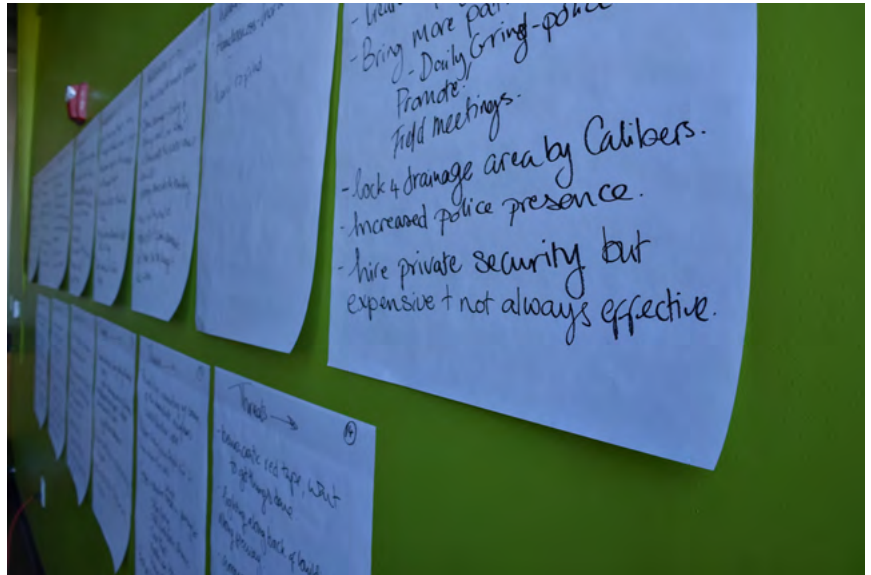
Strengths: The most prevalent advantages of Cutler are its central location within the City, its close proximity to existing transportation networks and businesses, and the sense of community that exists among business owners residing in the area. Here is a detailed list of strengths identified by workshop participants:

- *The area is centrally located – “Midtown”*
- *There is good visibility from I-40*
- *The area is easily accessible from I-40*
- *Cutler has great connections to the existing bike network, including through the trail along the arroyo*
- *There is a diversity of businesses – retail, restaurants, services, etc.*
- *The local businesses are family-friendly*
- *Good communication exists between most of the businesses in the area*
- *There is a commitment for businesses to the surrounding neighborhoods – interest in making improvements that are beneficial and respectful to the surrounding neighborhoods*
- *The businesses along Cutler Ave. are committed – there is a strong group of those willing to improve the area*



Business owners posting the neighborhood's strengths on the wall during the SWOT analysis.

- *There is unique architecture in the area*
- *Neighbors have been waiting for this area to come together*
- *Neighbors want to see economic growth and expansion in the area*
- *There is a desire to create an area the businesses can have pride in – for employees and visitors alike*
- *This area could be an economic hub for the City – potential for businesses to locate in the area*
- *Strong, active nearby residential neighborhoods – potential for collaboration between business community and residential community*
- *Potential for businesses to collectively participate in giving-back programs or host charitable events*
- *The Fraternal Order of Police are located in the area*
- *There are informal parking agreements between owners when there are events, this reflects the good relationships in the area*



Notes taken during the SWOT analysis.

Weaknesses: The most prevalent deficiencies of Cutler are infrastructure shortcomings, including insufficient lighting, drainage issues, poor sewage systems, lack of parking, and narrow sidewalks. In addition, the area has become frequented by transient populations. Here is a detailed list of weaknesses identified by workshop participants:

- *Lack of parking*
- *Street lighting is poor along most (if not all) of Cutler*
- *The bike path through Cutler could be improved to better connect with the arroyo path*
- *Sidewalks along Cutler are too narrow*
- *Telephone/utility poles/fire hydrants in the middle of sidewalks make it disruptive for pedestrians and those requiring Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations*
- *Lack of landscaping along the corridor*
- *ADA accessibility is poor – sidewalk widths, curb ramps, etc.*
- *Need better connections to bus routes*
- *There are no pedestrian crosswalks*
 - *Example: between the 21st Century Academy and Keshet*
 - *Example: Stone Age's parking lot on the north side of Cutler and the gym itself*
- *The traffic speeds are high*
- *Cutler between the Hampton Inn and Carlisle Boulevard (Carlisle) is a private road and is undersized for traffic volumes*
- *One-way traffic on the west end of Cutler is a barrier to connectivity*

- *There are drainage issues during heavy rains – existing infrastructure is not draining to arroyo appropriately*
 - *Example: Runoff runs westbound down Cutler and crosses Keshet parking lot - Keshet has experienced flooding in their parking lot and on the inside of their building*
- *There is a lack of cohesive identity for the area*
- *Cutler is on the edge of two Albuquerque Police Department (APD) Patrol Beats 411 and 412*
- *Long wait-times for calls of service to 911*
- *Lack of APD patrols*
- *Large homeless population – this has increased in the last two years*
- *The nearby diversion channel offers shelter opportunities for the homeless*
- *There has been a large increase of litter and trash*
- *Aggressive homeless population can deter for visitors and employees*
- *Would like to help the community but also concerned about drawing too much to the area*
- *There are often needles in parking lots, on the sidewalks, and in the landscaping*
- *There is a drainage area near Calibers that has an unlocked gate – this gate needs the option to be locked*
- *Cutler has undersized sewage systems underneath it. There are sometimes foul smells from this issue*
- *Congestion at the end of the school and the start of the after-school programs*

Opportunities: One of the most apparent opportunities for Cutler is for businesses in the area to collaborate on establishing a stronger sense of place and belonging in the area. This could involve everything from establishing a stronger brand for the area to working with New Mexico MainStreet to become established as a New Mexico MainStreet community. Here is a detailed list of opportunities identified by workshop participants:

- *Widen the driving lanes on Cutler between Reule Inc. and Carlisle to convert it to two-way traffic (at the bridge over the arroyo) and dedicate the cross-section as a public road*
- *The businesses could create an identity for the area - utilizing gateway signage, wayfinding, consistent building colors, benches, street lights, etc.*
- *Business could offer discounts for APD as an incentive to bring more officers to the area (some businesses are already doing this, but should try to publicize this incentive further)*



Business owners sharing their vision for Cutler

- *Local restaurants could offer locations for APD to have their field meetings to bring more officers to the area*
- *Overall need for an increased police presence*
- *The businesses could band together to hire a security patrol*
- *Branding/ marketing for the area (Name ideas: “Midtown Arts and Entertainment District”)*
- *There is an opportunity to work with the State’s Main Street organization*
- *The businesses could coordinate more neighborhood-driven events*
- *The businesses could pursue murals or other forms of public art for the area*
- *The corridor could pursue a unified color scheme for the area – a possible design overlay or through street furniture (benches, trash cans, etc.)*
- *There is a lot of opportunity for this area to be a tourism hub*
- *Hotels in the area can be an anchor that brings people to Cutler*
- *The businesses could form a merchants association through the City’s Office of Neighborhood Coordination*
- *Request APD mobile camera units along Cutler*
- *Install permanent video cameras in area to monitor crime*
- *Install street lights down Cutler to improve safety and visibility for bicyclists, motorists, and pedestrians*
- *Install lighting along the backsides of buildings where people tend to congregate*
- *Secure Embudo Arroyo as a deterrent to keep vagrants from congregating or setting up camp in the arroyo*
- *Re-stripe Cutler to better connect to the existing bike pathway (add bike lanes or designate as a Bike Boulevard)*
- *Add Bikeshare stations in the area (Note: a Pace bike share station was added at Green Jeans in June 2018)*
- *Businesses could coordinate with UNM to offer LoboBux transactions*

Threats: Visible threats to the area are the high rate of crime that is taking place along Cutler, as well as the prevalence of homelessness. Here is a detailed list of threats identified by workshop participants:

- *There are other desirable, trendy areas in the City - Nob Hill, for example*
- *This is an unknown pocket of town (for now)*
- *There are some unresponsive owners of businesses in the area – lack of participation*
- *Visibility from I-40 is decent, but not from Carlisle or Washington Street (Washington)*
- *Crime*
- *Homelessness*
- *Recent crime trends including:*
 - *Stone Age: Once every 2-3 weeks a break-in in the parking lot. Often customer bags are stolen from their cars.*
 - *Hampton Inn: Vehicle thefts and car break-ins.*
 - *Calibers: Couple of car break-ins a week. Needle and drug use along the backside of the building. Drug use in bathroom in building.*
 - *Keshet: Vehicle break-ins. Bicycle thefts – all times of day.*
- *There is red tape (from the City, ABCWUA, etc.) that can be a barrier to making improvements*
- *Addressing is needed for the properties*
- *Lack of lighting along the back of buildings, inability to place lighting next to I-40*
- *The noxious smell from the sewer system*

2.3 Mapping Exercise

Subsequent to holding the SWOT analysis, the group focused on a mapping exercise that involved the group adding notes to an aerial of the plan area, and identifying issues and areas for specific improvements. While the ideas and issues identified reflected the previous discussion in the SWOT, the mapping exercise looked at specific areas along Cutler. A variety of issues in the area were identified including:

- Signage or a gateway feature at the Carlisle entrance to Cutler
- Sewer gas is stagnating and emitting from the manholes between Morningside Drive (Morningside) and Hampton Inn
- The section of Cutler that is on private land is too narrow, and during peak times at Green Jeans, cars park on both sides and make it difficult for vehicles in the through-way to pass each other and for emergency vehicles to traverse this section of the road.
- Re-stripe street with a bike lane from the east side of the Hampton Inn lot to Washington
- Improve the water blocks on the Keshet driveways so that the storm water runoff does not cross the Keshet parking lot
- To comply with ADA requirements, improve sidewalk widths where fire hydrants and power poles are located in the sidewalk and reset driveway water blocks with a 40 inch top landing pad
- Construct sidewalks in front of 4106 and 4231 Cutler Ave.
- Landscape areas where planting strips exist
- Install a crosswalk across Cutler at the intersection of Morningside and Cutler and where the Stone Age and charter school lots abut



City Staff and business owners adding notes to an aerial photo with ideas for specific improvements for the area.

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3.1 Existing Conditions

In December 2017, City Council staff visited Cutler and the surrounding neighborhood to assess the existing conditions in the area. During their site visit, staff made observations on three different elements of the area's existing conditions: land use and zoning, transportation, and infrastructure.

3.2 Land Use & Zoning

3.2.1 Land Use: The land use in the plan area along Cutler is characterized by predominantly commercial services or retail uses. There are also a few warehousing and institutional land uses. However, there is not much vacant property in the area. The lack of vacant property shows that while the area has some physical needs, the area is not stagnant in terms of development.



Figure 3.2.1 Land Use

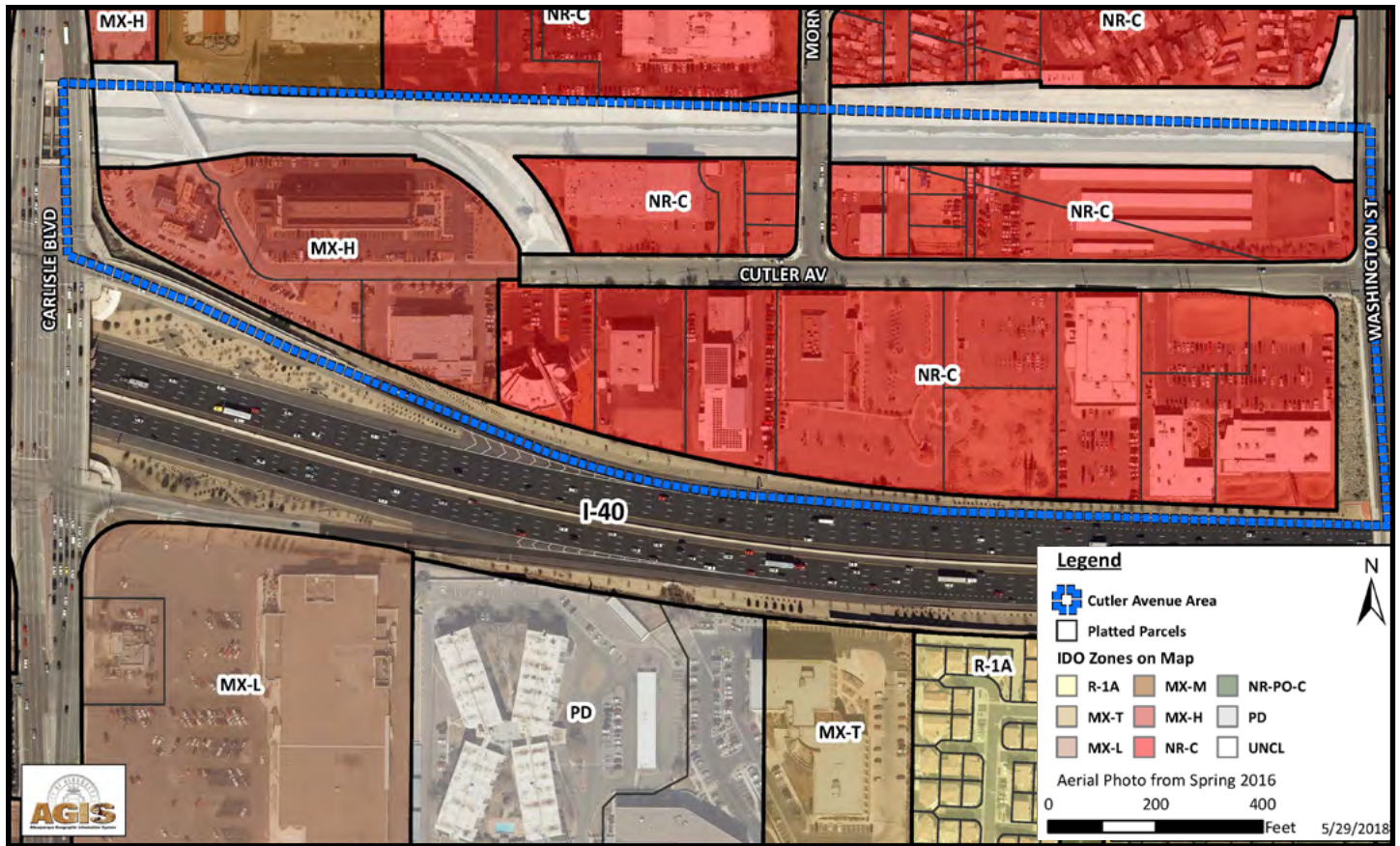


Figure 3.2.2 Zoning

3.2.2 Zoning: At the beginning of the planning process, the previous zoning code was in effect, however, the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) is now the regulating land use document. The zoning for the plan area is MX-H (mixed-use high intensity) and NR-C (non-residential commercial). Properties zoned MX-H will allow for high density residential development and makes light manufacturing an accessory use. On the other hand, light manufacturing is permissible in NR-C, but no residential development is allowed. Both zones allow for a wide range of commercial service and retail uses.

3.3 Transportation

During the site visit and meetings with business leaders along Cutler a number of transportation issues were identified that were considered detrimental to the area including:

- *Poor street lighting*
- *Inadequate sidewalks*
- *High traffic speeds*
- *Lack of painted bicycle infrastructure*
- *Drainage issues during heavy rains*
- *Missing and/or narrow sidewalks*



At some locations along Cutler there is no sidewalk and cars are parked where the sidewalk should be located.

- *Infrastructure blocking sidewalk*
- *Limited street lighting*
- *No pedestrian lighting*
- *Need to delineate on-street parking*
- *Poor visibility for access, one-way in from Carlisle*
- *Poor visibility from deteriorated paving*

3.3.1 Roadway Conditions: Cutler was last paved in 1999, when the roadway was converted from a dirt road to a paved road. The pavement is now approaching 20 years old and is listed in poor condition. However, this section of Cutler is currently not scheduled for rehabilitation. The sidewalks are in good condition though they are narrow and include obstructions.



At various locations along Cutler infrastructure is blocking the sidewalk.

Cutler from Washington to the cul-de-sac at the east lot line of the Hampton Inn is a 60 foot right of way from the back of the sidewalk on the north side of the street to the back of the sidewalk on the south side of the street. The street cross-section is comprised of a 35 foot paved asphalt section abutted on each side by a 2 foot concrete gutter pan back by a ½ foot wide by 1 foot high concrete curb. Behind both the north and south curb lines is a 5 foot planting strip which is backed by a 5 foot sidewalk.

From the east end of the Hampton Inn property line to Carlisle, Cutler is located outside the public right of way and within private easements.

From Hampton Inn to the Embudo Channel, Cutler is almost totally located on an easement within the property of the Hampton Inn site that traverses east/west for 251 feet and then turns north for 90 feet to the Embudo Diversion Channel.



This section of Cutler from the Hampton Inn to Carlisle is not a City road.

One small section of the easement is by the Embudo Arroyo and is located on land owned by Green Jeans Incorporated. The roadway cross-section of this is 40 feet. The asphalt pavement is 28 feet wide, with abutting 2 ½ foot curb and gutter stones on each side of the asphalt with a 4 foot sidewalk on each side of the roadway backing up to the curb.

From the Embudo Arroyo to Carlisle the roadway is located on an easement that lies within the right of way for the AMAFCA. The roadway proceeds north/south for 170 feet and then east/west for 135 feet to Carlisle. The pavement cross-section for the north south section is 23 feet wide and is comprised of concrete on the bridge section over the Embudo Arroyo and asphalt on the north side of the arroyo to where Cutler turns west. The pavement is abutted by a 2 ½ foot curb and gutter stone and a four foot sidewalk abuts the east curb and gutter on the east side of the roadway. Upon

turning to east/west direction the roadway has a 32 foot asphalt pavement abutted by a 2 ½ foot wide curb and gutter. This section of the roadway does not have a sidewalk. The roadway intersection at Carlisle is not a standard at grade intersection but is instead a standard commercial driveway curb cut.

3.3.2 Roadway issues: When examining the transportation and infrastructure in the area, there are a variety of elements of the physical built environment that are currently damaged and need considerable improvements. First of all, the collector street contains a wide right-of-way that has limited markings (60 feet). Secondly, there are missing and/or narrow sidewalks (and in some instances, infrastructure is blocking the sidewalk). There is also poor lighting along the street that includes limited street lighting and no pedestrian lighting. There is a need for more on-street parking. And finally, the access to Cutler from both the Carlisle and Washington entrances is substandard. The Carlisle entrance is a one way only, patrons coming from the west can easily enter businesses on Cutler. When leaving they must drive east to Washington then either north to Menaul Boulevard or south to Indian School Road then back track to Carlisle. For patrons coming from the east via Washington it can be hard to even see Cutler, especially at night. The Washington roadway segment from Interstate 40 to the Embudo Arroyo is the west ramp for the Washington overpass. This places Cutler's street elevation well below the grade of Washington and consequently the view shed of drivers on Washington.

3.3.3 Carlisle Deceleration/Acceleration Lane: The access to Cutler from Carlisle is a one way east bound or in bound entrance. West or out bound traffic is prohibited. This is a requirement of the New Mexico Department of Transportation because a motorist exiting Cutler to Carlisle starts their turning movement after the north bound lanes on Carlisle are clear and they are proceeding from a stop condition on Cutler and are therefore moving slowly. Vehicles exiting the I-40 on the west bound off-ramp are turning north onto Carlisle at a rapid speed. The off-ramp and the Cutler entrances are in close proximity and after the vehicle exiting Cutler has started its movement onto Carlisle, a rapidly moving vehicle that turns onto Carlisle from the off ramp, may not have the time or space to maneuver around the slower vehicle and the two automobiles could collide.

3.4 Infrastructure

Infrastructure is often one of the most important, but overlooked elements of the built environment for delivering basic services to a commercial district. Conversations between staff and business owners revealed some underlying issues with the neighborhood's drainage, sewage, and transportation systems. Due to the fact that making infrastructure improvements is often costly, this report focuses on applying incremental improvements to improving the existing conditions in the area.

3.4.1 Cutler from East Lot Line of Hampton Inn to Carlisle: Cutler from the east lot line of the Hampton Inn to the Embudo Arroyo is a private road. The property owners would prefer that the roadway transfer into the City's public right of way. From the bridge over the Embudo Arroyo to Carlisle, the roadway is right of way granted to the City through a license agreement with the City. The attendees at the charrette stated this segment is insufficient to adequately move traffic into and out of the area. The bridge over the arroyo from guard rail to guard rail and the roadway segment from the bridge to Carlisle is only 32 feet wide. Six feet of that width is used for a sidewalk on the east side of the bridge and the northeast and north side of the roadway. This leaves approximately 26 feet for travel lanes. For a commercial street that is too narrow to allow two way traffic. To address these issues the workshop participants expressed a desire to:

- Expand the width of the bridge over the Embudo Arroyo

- Expand the width of the roadway between the bridge and Carlisle
- Add a sidewalk on the south side of the bridge and this segment of roadway
- Complete the north side sidewalk along the south property line of the Econo-Lodge. This would provide for two lanes which would allow for two way travel on Cutler between Carlisle and Washington.

3.4.2 Sewer Emissions: The segment of Cutler between Morningside and the Hampton Inn has an ongoing odor problem emitting from a large regional sewer line that follows on the south side of the North Diversion Channel and then crosses underneath it at a location between the Hampton Inn and the Keshet Dance Studio. When the sewer line is flowing at capacity the air filling the empty voids along the line is forced out of the regional line into a connecting local sewer line that services Cutler. The odorous air exits the Cutler sewer line once it reaches the manhole closest to the major sewer line, which is located between the F.O.P Building and Keshet.

3.4.3 Drainage: The workshop participants reported storm water nuisance flows short cutting across the Keshet parking lot from Cutler into storm culverts and also flowing from Washington onto Cutler. Between Washington and Green Jeans, Cutler, generally drains from the east, west and south to a concrete culvert located on the north side of the small cul de sac off Cutler between Keshet and the Hampton Inn. The grade of Cutler in front of the west entrance to the Keshet property is equal to the grade of Keshet's parking lot and the driveway into the lot is not constructed at slope to prevent water from entering the lot. This allows storm water flowing down Cutler from points east to divert through the Keshet Parking lot to the concrete culvert. Within the parking lot the water is impeded by landscaping and a chain link fence that separates the lot and the culvert. This slows the stormwater which allows the sediment and trash in the water to settle onto the parking lot.

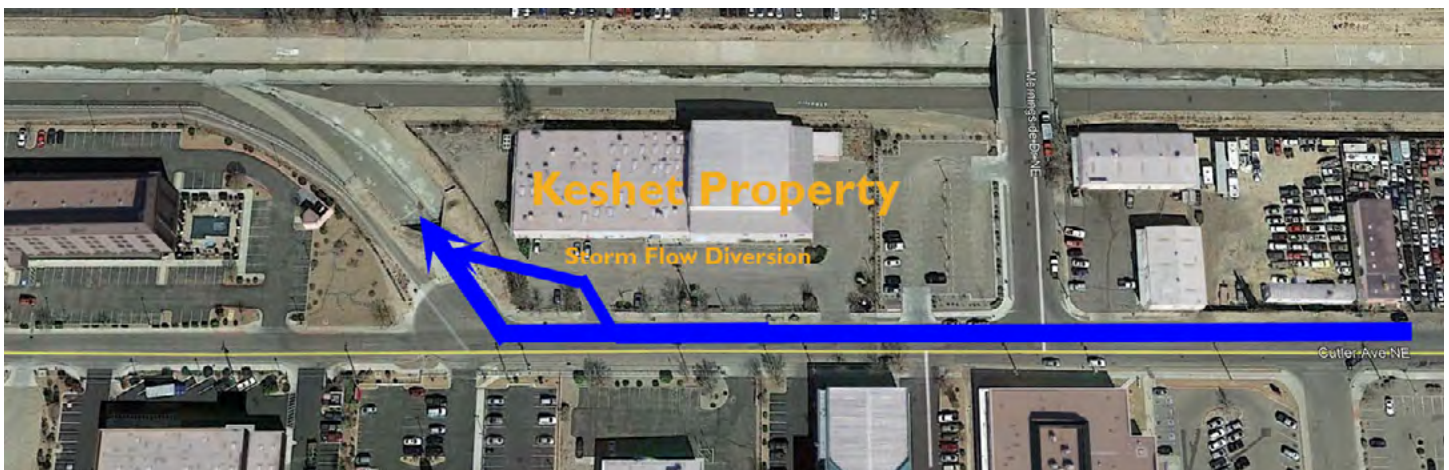


Figure 3.4.1 Stormwater flows from the City right-of-way across the Keshet property

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4.1 Recommendations

After thoroughly reviewing all of the data collected during the SWOT analysis, mapping exercise, and site visit, City staff identified a series of recommendations for the area. These recommendations are categorized by land use and zoning, transportation, infrastructure, marketing and economic development, and safety. These reflect the general themes of the discussion with the community. Section 5 of this report contains information on implementation.

4.2 Land Use & Zoning

4.2.1. IDO Amendments: *The Cutler area is zoned Mixed Use-High Intensity (MX-H) and Non-residential Commercial (NR-C) in the IDO. Both of these zones allow for a wide variety of commercial, retail, and service uses. The NR-C zone also allows for light manufacturing uses permissively, while the MX-H zone allows light manufacturing as an accessory use. The MX-H zone allows residential uses while the NR-C zone does not. Given the range of land uses currently occurring within the plan area and the range of uses allowed by the IDO, changes to the IDO would not be necessary. If residential development was desired within the plan area on properties currently zoned NR-C, then a zone change could be pursued. During the planning process for this report there was no interest expressed in residential development, but this may become desirable in the future and could be a future consideration. Future amendments to the IDO could include the addition of design requirements, should the community wish to see a particular built form for the architecture of the area. However, while design was discussed it was not a high priority at this time within the community.*

4.3 Transportation

Analyzing the existing conditions of the area and collecting input from business owners, City staff developed the following recommendations to address issues in the existing public right-of-way and to improve usability of the area:

4.3.1. Cross-Section Realignment and Repaving: *Use striping to improve safety and user-ability for bicyclists, motorists, and pedestrians. Repave Cutler to improve both the street conditions and restripe the roadway. This could be accomplished in two phases:*

- 4.3.1.1 Phase 1:**
This phase would be initiated by striping a 7.5 ft parking lane on the north and south sides of Cutler. This would encourage parking by providing a protective zone for parked cars by striping a 2 ft



Figure 4.3.1. Phase 1

stripped diagonal buffer to provide a safe zone for motorists to open their driver side doors without the door striking cyclists or being struck by a passing car. Within the remaining 21 ft through-lane, paint "sharrow" decals (a shared-lane marking) to inform all users of the street that it is for joint use by bicyclists and motorists. A three-way stop sign could be installed at Morningside and Cutler and crosswalks striped in to provide a protected crossing. The first phase could make a

significant difference to the roadway conditions. The community may want to see how these improvements work before moving forward with the second phase.

• **4.3.1.2 Phase 2:**

This phase would include the expansion of the sidewalks (this involves moving the curb). This would result in 6 ft wide sidewalks with 6 ft planting strips (total of 12 ft). The paint parking buffer would need to be removed. The two driving lanes would be kept at 21 ft, the parking would remain, and the sharrows would also be kept. While bicycle lanes could be added during this phase, this would result in the loss of the on-street parking. As this area is desired to be a walkable and slow commercial area, “sharrows” and on-street parking may be the most appropriate roadway treatment.



Figure 4.3.2. Phase 2

4.3.2. Sidewalks and Curb: Infill missing sidewalks and curb at 4106 and 4231 Cutler. This project could be implemented with the Phase Two street improvements, or could be done as a stand alone project.

4.3.3. Utility Apparatus Removal: Remove utility apparatus (utility poles and cable boxes) blocking the sidewalk or construct a sidewalk around such apparatus to provide clear and continuous pedestrian access along the street.

4.3.4. Landscape Strips: Add landscaping and irrigation to landscape strips between curbs and sidewalks

4.3.5. Lighting: Install ornamental pedestrian and street lighting to improve visibility and safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. Lighting is a high priority for the area. The provision of lighting is both a safety feature and an aspect of creating a defined place. As an interim measure, light fixtures could be added to PNM poles to provide pedestrian lighting. Decorative street lighting that allows for a banner to be placed on the poles is ultimately desired.



Figure 4.3.3. Examples of decorative lighting

4.3.6. Bike Trail Signage: To mitigate the safety issues of drivers on northwest bound Cutler not being able to look around the Green Jeans containers to see west bound bicyclists on the bike trail who are approaching Cutler, install signage on both Cutler and the bike trail to alert cyclists and drivers of the connection between Cutler and the bike trail.

4.3.7. Bump-Outs: *Bump-outs could be installed next to driveways serving busy activity centers, including Stone Age Gym and Keshet Dance Studio to shorten crossing distances for pedestrians. These could be part of any proposed crosswalks (See 4.3.1.1. above). The intersection of Morningside and Cutler is close to Stone Age Gym, Keshet Dance Studio, and 21st Century Public Academy and could be improved for pedestrians.*



Figure 4.3.4. Example of a bump out and crosswalk

4.3.8. Improving Cutler Avenue Between the Hampton Inn and Carlisle to a Two Way Public Street: *Convert the private segment of Cutler to a two way public street through the following phases:*

- *Phase 1. Transfer the Cutler cross-section west of the Hampton Inn sidewalk from a private access easement to public right of way. This will enable the City to negotiate for right of way to expand the roadway to fit two through lanes and to improve the sidewalks to the standards recommend in this report.*
- *Phase 2. Acquire right of way to accumulate the land area to expand Cutler to two travel lanes, two parking lanes, sidewalks and planting strips between the east lot lineof the Hampton Inn and the Embudo Arroyo and two travel lanes and sidewalks on each side of the of the road between the Embudo Arroyo and Carlisle.*
- *Phase 3. Expand Cutler bridge across the Embudo Arroyo to include two vehicle lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the lanes.*
- *Phase 4. Construct a deceleration/ acceleration lane on the east side of Carlisle from the I-40 west bound on-ramp to the north lot line of the Econolodge*
- *Phase 5. Install street and pedestrian lighting*
- *Phase 6. Landscape the planting strips on both sides of Cutler between the east lot line of the Hampton Inn and the Embudo Arroyo.*

4.4 Infrastructure

The following recommendations address infrastructure issues identified, and seek to improve the area:

4.4.1. Sewer Emissions: *The Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Authority is working on a design to resolve the issue that will be followed by construction of any proposed solution. In the interim the water authority will continue to address the odor issue through adjustments to the operation of the line*

4.4.2. Storm Drain: *There are concerns about people occupying the storm drain. AMAFCA cannot screen the drain because it would catch debris and dam the water. To address the concerns, APD has begun patrolling the area and AMAFCA is installing “No Trespassing” signs.*

4.4.3. Flooding at Keshet: To address the flooding of parking areas, add a speed bump across the entrance to the driveway to divert storm-runoff away from the Keshet parking lot to the arroyo access at the cul-de-sac located between Keshet and Hampton Inn (see Figure 4.4.1. for interim improvements). Over the long term, improving the curb cut could be integrated into sidewalk improvements. If this were to be done, it would be important to identify the right time to pave.



Figure 4.4.1. Proposed location for a speed hump.

4.5 Marketing & Economic Development

The following recommendations focus on economic development opportunities through a range of different ways to make the Cutler area more visible, and to support a sense of place.

4.5.1. Branding: Creating a brand for an area can help to define a place within the public mind and draw attention to an area. One recent example is in the West Downtown area where local merchants used a branding and marketing campaign to help keep customers coming to the area during the construction of the Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART) project. Businesses along Cutler could work with the City Council to issue an RFP for a branding firm to market the area.

4.5.2. Events: Just as Nob Hill has utilized special events and block parties to attract patrons and transform the area into a vibrant commercial destination, businesses along Cutler could work together to block off the street, to hold different events, to invite local bands to put on shows, and to encourage patrons to arrive by bike. These events could be seasonal.



Figure 4.5.1. Nob Hill Summer Fest.

4.5.3. Wayfinding and Gateway Signage: Wayfinding, gateway signage, and public art help create a sense of place and belonging and draw more people to the area. A wide range of wayfinding and gateway signage could be installed in the Cutler area. This could include everything from more formal banners on light poles and larger gateway features to less formal forms of public art. Banners on light poles are usually 36 x 24 inches, however, these would require the installation of light poles designed to include banners. Gateway features range in size and are based on the design, however, many have a strong sculptural component. Public art includes murals, art pieces, and can also be incorporated into infrastructure. A first phase could include identity signs for the area. These could be installed at the intersections of Cutler and Carlisle, and the intersection of Cutler and

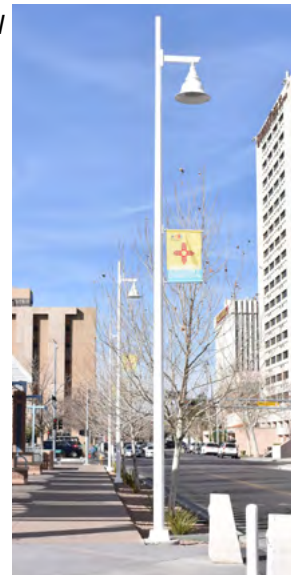


Figure 4.5.2. Banner on light pole in the Downtown area.

Washington, and at Morningside and Menaul Blvd. Similar signage was installed along San Pedro for the Mile Hi District. The signs in the Mile Hi District are mounted on poles and measure 30"x30".

4.5.4. Merchants Association: As a result of this community planning process, business owners in the area have already established a merchants association through the Office of Neighborhood Coordination, an important first step for garnering more formal recognition by the City and more support for economic development. They have named their area @Midtown. Providing the merchants association with continued support will be key to supporting the area.



Figure 4.5.3. Mile Hi District Sign

4.5.5. New Mexico MainStreet: New Mexico Main Street has been a state program since 1985 that focuses on local economic revitalization and redevelopment by building off of existing assets, including community, arts, and culture. This program has a economic development focus that can also be integrated with historic preservation efforts. In Albuquerque, there are five existing MainStreet communities, Nob Hill, Baretas, Downtown, Bridge Blvd, and Corrales.

4.5.6. Business Improvement District: In the same way that a business improvement district (BID) was once established in the Downtown area aimed at accruing additional revenues from businesses to fund projects within the district's boundaries, businesses along Cutler can also come together to pool together resources for making capital improvements to their area.

Communities Served by New Mexico MainStreet (As of July 2016)

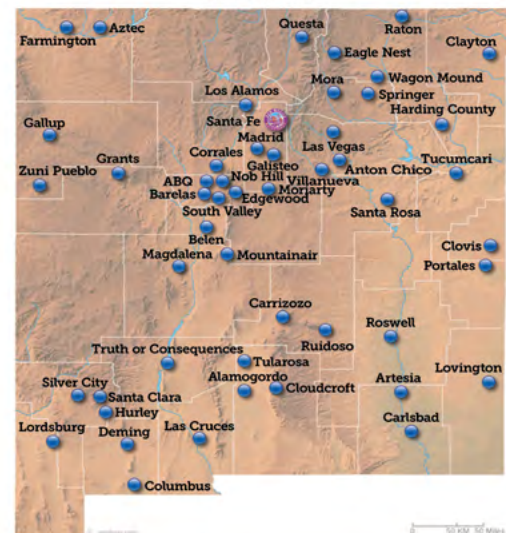


Figure 4.5.4. New Mexico MainStreet communities

4.6 Safety

4.6.1. Security Assistance Funding Zone: In order to address concerns surrounding criminal activity in the area, one option for affected business owners is to develop a Security Assistance Funding District.

In 2017, the City Council passed O-17-60, the "Security Assistance Funding District Ordinance", that allows for the creation of Security Assistance Funding (SAF) Districts. These Districts can access matching grants from the City to fund safety improvements in the area. The intention of the legislation is to find innovative ways and additional sources of funding that the City can utilize to support areas working to improve their publicly safety.

In order to designate the area as a SAF District, the following conditions would need to be met and the following steps would need to be made:

- Businesses would need to demonstrate that the area could function as a commercial or arts and cultural district that could have a significant economic and/or cultural impact.
- The request for designating the area as a district needs to come from at least 10 business owners (comprising 51% of the business owners in the area) or at least 5 real property owners (comprising 51% of the property owners in the area).
- Business owners must have a security plan developed in conjunction with City Staff.

- *The security plan must address specific public safety issues in the area, including specific criminal offenses prevalent in the area. The plan must be specific to the area and backed up by verifiable data.*
- *The district is renewed on an annual basis.*
- *Grants available to the district are limited in the following ways:*
 - *May not exceed \$100,000*
 - *1:1 cash match with merchants and/or property owners*
 - *May only be used for the following items in the security plan: private security, surveillance cameras, street and pedestrian lighting, alarm systems, signage related to public safety, barriers, fencing, gates, and chief's overtime.*
 - *The district must have a board to administer the grant and a report each year on spending.*

What can the SAF District cover?

Grants may be used to pay for components of the security plan for the area including but not limited to private security, surveillance cameras, street and pedestrian lighting, alarm systems, signage related to public safety, barriers, fencing, gates, and chief's overtime. The portion of the plan that the City match can pay for includes improvements in the public right-of-way, chief's overtime, and publicly owned equipment or systems.

5.1 Implementation

Upon the adoption of this report by means of City Council Resolution, City staff have identified a suite of funding mechanisms, legislative mechanisms, and a general time frame for implementing the recommendations.

5.2 Funding Mechanisms

The following identifies a variety of funding mechanisms to implement the recommendations in this report, including funding coming from all levels of government and from different types of funds established in the City of Albuquerque:

- **Grants (State, Federal, Private):** *There are a wide variety of state, federal, and private grants that business owners have available to help fund projects in their neighborhood.*
- **City Council Neighborhood Set-Asides:** *Every 2 years, as part of the City's General Obligation (GO) Bond program, every City Council District is provided with \$1 million of set-aside funds to be used on small capital improvement projects in that District. The scope of the types of projects that these set-aside funds can be used for is determined by the bond questions asked by each City Councilor as part of the GO Bond program. Set-aside funds cannot be used for operations.*
- **Business Improvement District (BID):** *This is a defined area within which businesses are required to pay an additional tax (or levy) in order to fund projects within the district's boundaries. These districts typically fund services such as cleaning streets, providing security, making capital improvements, construction of pedestrian and streetscape enhancements, and marketing the area.*
- **Security Assistance Funding Zone (SAFZ):** *Refer to Section 4.6.1. for a summary of the SAFZ.*
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF):** *This is a public financing method that is used as a subsidy for redevelopment, infrastructure, and other community-improvement projects. Through the use of TIF, municipalities typically divert future property tax revenue increases from a defined area or district toward an economic development project or public improvement project in the community.*
- **Capital Outlay:** *During each New Mexico legislative session, Senators and Representatives authorize capital outlay allocations towards various capital projects scattered throughout the state. These are funds spent to acquire, maintain, repair, or upgrade capital assets. Capital assets, also known as fixed assets, may include machinery, land, facilities, or other business necessities that are not expended during normal use.*
- **Capital Implementation Program:** *Through a multi-year schedule of public physical improvements, CIP administers approved Capital Expenditures for systematically acquiring, constructing, replacing, upgrading and rehabilitating Albuquerque's built environment.*

5.3 Legislative Mechanisms

As the legislative branch of local government, the City Council has the following legislative mechanisms at hand in order to implement City Staff's recommendations:

- *Resolution that identifies the area and adopts the report*
- *Amendment to the Integrated Development Ordinance*
- *Ordinance that establishes a business improvement district*
- *Resolution that establishes a security assistance funding zone*
- *Ordinance that establishes tax increment financing*
- *Resolution that appropriates funding.*

5.4 Implementation Table

The implementation table on this and the next page provides direction on the recommendations for the area. Time frames are defined by short term (1-3 years), medium term (4-7 years), and long term (8+ years). Each recommendation also has possible funding and legislative mechanisms and also identifies their priority level and partnering agencies needing to be involved in the implementation process.

Implementation Table				
Recommendations	Time Frame	Priority	Agencies & Partnerships	Funding/ Legislative Mechanisms
Land Use & Zoning				
4.2.1. IDO Amendments	Medium Term	Low	CABQ Planning Department	Amendments to IDO
Transportation				
4.3.1.1 First Phase Street Improvements	Short	High	Department of Municipal Development, New Mexico Department of Transportation, Planning Department, City Council Services	Grants, City Council Neighborhood Set-Asides, Business Improvement District Tax Revenue, Tax Increment Financing, Capital Outlay, General Obligation Bond, Transportation Infrastructure Tax
4.3.1.2 Second Phase Street Improvements	Medium	Medium		
4.3.2. Sidewalks and Curb	Medium	High		
4.3.3. Utility Apparatus Removal	Medium	Medium		
4.3.4. Landscape Strips	Long	High		
4.3.5. Lighting	Short/ Medium	High		
4.3.6. Signage	Short	High		
4.3.7. Bump-Outs	Medium	Medium		
4.3.8. Improving the one way portion of Cutler to a two way	Long	Low		
Infrastructure				
4.4.1. Sewer Emissions	Short	High	Department of Municipal Development, Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority, Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control	Grants, City Council Neighborhood Set-Asides, Business Improvement District Tax Revenue, Tax Increment Financing, Capital Outlay, General Obligation Bond, Transportation Infrastructure Tax
4.4.2. Storm Drain	Short	High		
4.4.3. Flooding at Keshet	Short	High		

Marketing & Economic Development				
4.5.1. Branding	Short	High	Local Marketing Firm, Cultural Services Department, Office of Neighborhood Coordination, New Mexico Main Street, Public Art Department	Grants, City Council Neighborhood Set-Asides, Business Improvement District Tax Revenue
4.5.2. Events	Short	High		
4.5.3. Wayfinding and Gateway Signage	Medium	Medium		
4.5.4. Merchants Association	Short	High		
4.5.5. New Mexico Main Street	Medium	Medium		
4.5.6. Business Improvement District	Long	Low		
Safety				
4.6.1. Security Assistance Funding Zone	Short	High	City Council Office	Security Assistance Funds (via Resolution)