

# REPORT ON EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS IN THE ALBUQUERQUE RAIL YARDS “DRAFT”

*June 12, 2019, Prepared by Claudia B. Isaac, Edited by Charla E. Henley*

## INTRODUCTION

The City of Albuquerque embraces the principles of “Equitable Development” (Perry Abello, 2019) and “Community Benefits” (Guinan & O’Neill, 2019) in its renewed efforts to redevelop the Albuquerque Rail Yards. These principles are consistent with goals and commitments laid out in the 2014 Rail Yards Development Plan (CABQ, 2014), and resonate with goals of the Rail Yard Advisory Board and the community-based organizations that represent the two neighborhoods adjacent to the site: Barelás and South Broadway<sup>1</sup>. These principles also resonate with many of the non-profit and for-profit developers, policy organizations, and service providers who work in the Rail Yard adjacent neighborhoods.

Equitable development is an approach to creating healthy, vibrant, communities of opportunity. “Equitable outcomes come about when smart, intentional strategies are put in place to ensure that everyone can participate in and benefit from decisions that shape their neighborhoods and regions.” (Policy Link<sup>2</sup>).

Shelter Force builds on traditional definitions of equitable development which do not emphasize the embedded race and class structures that make equitable development difficult (Andrews, 2019). This Albuquerque Rail Yards redevelopment initiative offers a unique opportunity to reinforce the equity and inclusion principles of equitable development policies, with further potential to inform greater City policy redevelopment approaches.

An Equitable Development strategy for Rail Yards redevelopment argues, therefore, for determining how to generate a return on public and private investment that considers not only the City and Private investors, but the adjacent community as well, especially in regards to who will capture that return on investment. This analysis seeks to maximize return to local developers, businesses, and the public interest, with particular focus on return to residents, organizations and enterprises within the neighborhoods adjacent to the Rail Yard.

The equitable development lens has implications for several of the Consultant Team’s central questions, and each is addressed in this report:

- How does the choice of development strategy and development structure (single developer, City as developer, non-profit Community Development Corporation (CDC)) impact the delivery of community benefits?
- What phasing strategies are likely to ensure community benefits from Rail Yard redevelopment?
- What role should the Rail Yard Advisory Board (RYAB) and established Community-based Organizations (CBO’s) in the adjacent neighborhoods have in governance of the Rail Yard redevelopment initiative, including initial development and ongoing implementation?
- Given the community engagement already embodied in the 2014 Rail Yards Master Plan (RYMP), and continued neighborhood organization interest in building on that base, what amendments or revisions are needed in that plan, and/or the relevant Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plans (MRA Plans) to correspond to newly-established equitable development strategies at each phase of development? and
- Though not part of the original community benefits questions, the research indicates a need to address the

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<sup>1</sup> Although San José is not adjacent to the Rail Yard site (it is adjacent to BNSF Railway Co., which is adjacent to the site), members of the San José community participate in the rail yards and their input is included in this report.

<sup>2</sup> <http://edtk.policylink.org/>

ongoing questions of environmental justice and polluting industries that came up frequently in focus groups.

## ***Methodology***

This analysis and these recommendations are based on a series of focus groups and interviews with residents of the South Broadway, Barelás, and San José neighborhoods, representatives of community-based organizations (CBO's) in the adjacent neighborhoods, for-profit and non-profit entities located in and/or working in the adjacent neighborhoods, and governmental agencies with development responsibilities in the adjacent neighborhoods. This data was complemented with review of relevant plans, policies and documents, including the relevant Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) Plans, neighborhood sector plans, which though no longer official planning documents (now incorporated into the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO)), provide important information about community vision, goals, concerns and proposed local development action<sup>3</sup>. Focus group participants were chosen in consultation with staff from the City's MRA, Planning Department, and Economic Development Division. Some participants joined the focus groups without invitation, having learned that they were happening. These participants were welcomed into the conversation and invited to future focus groups. Focus group data was complemented by individual interviews with "influencers," and a literature review. Attachment I lists participants who were interviewed or who attended focus groups.

Focus groups were held in community centers and other neighborhood relevant places in South Broadway and Barelás. Invited participants received an infographic in advance of the session (see Attachment II), which included the questions that we wished to ask during the session. Focus groups were recorded to ensure accuracy, and participants were encouraged to write down "insights and ideas" that they were not able to express verbally, and which were collected at the end of the session. A summary of each of the focus group notes was distributed to participants, who were invited to review, comment, and correct information therein (see Attachment III).

## ***Community Benefits Mentioned in the 2014 Rail Yard Development Plan***

The interviews and focus groups were grounded in the 2014 Rail Yard Master Plan (RYMP)<sup>4</sup> for several reasons. There was considerable community involvement in the development of that plan, and at the time the community benefits included in that plan represented a relative consensus vision of community desires and aspirations for the site. There is also some concern among neighborhood residents that the City not jettison all of the effort and attention they had invested in that plan. Residents throughout the data collection process indicated that they had lost considerable trust in the City's ability and/or willingness to take their input seriously, feeling that promises incorporated into that Plan had been made and broken, that they have been treated with disrespect since the adoption of the 2014 plan, and that their considerable effort to help shape the 2014 plan constituted an exercise of tokenism. Grounding current equitable development initiatives in that plan renews City commitment to respectful and effective involvement of community members in this re-boot of the redevelopment process.

The analysis and recommendations below are based in that RYMP, and assume that community benefits elements of that plan that are not explicitly contradicted below would remain. These recommendations may be incorporated productively into an amendment to the 2014 plan, both to respect the community and professional engagement in that plan, and to ensure continuity with the community benefits framework imitated in 2014. The Focus Group Handouts (Attachment II) summarize 2014 RYMP proposed community benefits.

## **ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following sections address central themes that emerged from interviews and focus groups:

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<sup>3</sup>In addition to the Rail Road MRA Plan, the South Valley sector plan was re-designated as an MRA Plan. There is a Barelás MRA Plan, but it is not clear whether that plan aligns with the now-defunct Barelás Sector Plan. It does not appear that any MRA Plan covers the San José neighborhood, though Barelás Industrial Park MRA Plan has some geographic overlap with San José.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cabq.gov/council/projects/completed-projects/2014/albuquerque-rail-yards-redevelopment>

- Development Strategy and Phasing;
- Economic Prosperity;
- Workforce Development;
- Affordable Housing;
- Arts and Cultural Programming;
- Environmental Justice; and
- Community Engagement.

## ***Development Strategy and Phasing***

### ***RELEVANT PRINCIPLE***

The City asked the Consultant Team to address the feasibility of different development approaches and strategies for Rail Yard redevelopment. Equitable Development principles argue for organizational structures and strategies that allow adjacent neighborhoods to utilize existing capacity and build both diagnostic and adaptive capacity (Isaac, 2017) to benefit fully from all phases of the development process<sup>5</sup>.

### ***KEY FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND EXISTING CAPACITY***

Though not posed as a direct question, many interviewees and focus group participants weighed in on their experiences with the previous master developer, and expressed considerable unease with engaging another master developer charged with guiding what is likely to be at least 10- to 20-years of redevelopment activity. Participants made numerous suggestions for alternative development strategy approaches, most of which involved identifying a coordinating entity (a nonprofit organization or a City authority) that would guide and coordinate development strategies and agreements ensuring that planning move from exploration of possibilities to actual implementation. Most participants expressed interest in exploring agreements with multiple developers contracted for distinct phases. Participants wanted development focused not only on most easily developable parts of the site, but on community preparedness for absorbing benefits from different development components (physical development, connectivity and amenities; commercial development; business incubation and recruitment; affordable housing; light manufacture, warehousing and distribution; and arts and cultural programming). Neighborhood participants sought a phased development strategy that ensures ongoing, respectful, and effective neighborhood communication, with access to various coordinated sources of expertise within the City and the larger governmental and professional communities, and ensured “diversification of development capacity” as the Rail Yard development process proceeds.

From an equitable development perspective, the choice between a single master developer, a nonprofit organization as development coordinator, or the City as development coordinator depends on the state of existing community capacity to negotiate with large private enterprises and public sector entities. At this point, though there is considerable analytical/diagnostic capacity within the adjacent neighborhoods, there is insufficient organizational infrastructure to present a coherent and comprehensive set of negotiating points to a single master developer, arguing, therefore, for working with multiple developers phased in over time. The findings indicate that the neighborhoods’ residents and existing CBO’s would prefer to build a relationship with a new nonprofit organization as the development strategy coordinator. It is not clear that the existing Community Development Corporations (CDC) in the adjacent neighborhoods (Barelas Community Coalition (BCC) and United South Broadway Corporation (USBC)) have either the desire or capacity to take on that task together. Nor do either of those CDCs work in the San José neighborhood.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

All the equitable development findings support a **phased, incremental development strategy** for the Rail Yards, given

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<sup>5</sup> Diagnostic capacity refers to community member’s ability to do data-based analysis of their economic, social, political, and physical conditions. This capacity then enables adaptive capacity, the ability to generate and implement strategies to respond to positive opportunities and negative conditions in the community.

current neighborhood absorption capacity and the lack of a coordinated neighborhood mobilization strategy. Phasing development will allow the neighborhoods to prepare proactively for redevelopment and to work internally to maximize benefits rather than simply waiting for development benefits to appear. Phased development with multiple developers over time would also provide greater opportunities for neighborhoods to grow their skill in negotiating Community Benefits Agreements and their capacity for negotiating for developer accountability over time.

The findings indicate that **engaging a single master developer for the site was ineffective, and weakened neighborhood faith** in the redevelopment process. Findings support the creation of a **Community Development Corporation (CDC) with broad neighborhood credibility** to plan and coordinate redevelopment efforts, convene a community-heavy board, and help build community and City capacity to understand and analyze neighborhood conditions in order to, in turn, build capacity to act in response to market, social, and political opportunities and challenges.

A 501c3 Rail Yards CDC can work with existing neighborhood CDC's (the Barelvas Community Coalition (BCC) and the United South Broadway Corporation (USBC) to raise philanthropic, State and Federal funds (possible sources are the WK Kellogg Foundation, the McCune Foundation, the NM Economic Development Department, and the Federal Economic Development Administration), whereas a City Authority would have to identify City budget resources to fund its activities. A nonprofit organization is also centrally poised to avail itself of new market tax credits;<sup>6</sup> and to determine whether advocacy for opportunity zone designation<sup>7</sup> would meet the needs of the Rail Yard site and adjacent neighborhoods. This fundraising can support ongoing neighborhood capacity building for negotiating Community Benefits Agreements (CBA's). Finally, a nonprofit can mobilize new financial and human resources for time-intensive development activities, enabling allocation of resources to community engagement activities such as web and social media management, convening community meetings, and facilitating neighborhood, government agency and service provider entities.

The creation of a Rail Yards CDC may not, however, be able to leverage all of the extensive public investment necessary to ensure equitable Rail Yards redevelopment. It would be useful to explore the political and economic feasibility of promoting the establishment of a **New Mexico State Redevelopment Authority** to expand the development capacity of the Rail Yards. This does not preclude the creation of a Rail Yards CDC, but could leverage the considerable resources required for the proposed redevelopment effort<sup>8</sup>.

Of course, implementing this recommendation would require solicitation of **funding sufficient to staff and fund programmatic work of the organization**. It would also require a shift in thinking of current entities involved in planning, programming, and negotiating rail yard development agreements, including a shift in the charge of the Rail Yards Advisory Board (RYAB), which would need to reevaluate its role, composition and authority. As such, the members of the RYAB should be consulted further before pursuing the development of a nonprofit to ensure that the functions of the two entities are complementary rather than competitive.

Whichever strategy is selected, the organizing entity (City or nonprofit) must have the have **legal authority to make decisions** for the Rail Yards and related neighborhood strategies and policies relating to: negotiating development agreements (and, as neighborhood capacity increases, community benefit agreements); engaging actively in business development and coordination of workforce development services; and providing technical assistance as needed for forming public/private partnerships for housing and business development. The board of directors of the nonprofit should have substantial neighborhood representation.

The findings point to a need for establishment of **criteria for development agreements**. Key elements of all development agreements should include:

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nmfa.net/financing/new-markets-tax-credits/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://shelterforce.org/2019/05/03/pushing-opportunity-zones-to-fulfill-their-promise/>

<sup>8</sup> The Minnesota State Redevelopment Authority may provide a useful model for a legislative and executive branch initiative to create a New Mexico Redevelopment Authority.

- 1) Clear distinction between Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and other non-enforceable agreements versus legally binding and enforceable contracts and agreements;
- 2) Those enforceable contracts and agreements need to include claw-back provisions, based on measurable, and time-specific performance indicators; and
- 3) Clear monitoring and enforcement mechanisms need to be built into all enforceable agreements, which may include Development Agreements, public-private partnership contracts, construction and service contracts, and Tax Increment Financing (TIFs)/ Tax Increment Development District (TIDDs). For the latter, enforceable agreements need to ensure that a substantial portion of the tax increment financing collected provides tangible community benefits.

## ***Economic Prosperity***

### ***RELEVANT PRINCIPLE***

Equitable development strategies seek to ensure that business development supports the economic prosperity of the local community, supports local “value chains” (Blankman, 2009) that enhance the business environment for existing locally owned businesses, and generates new on- and off-site businesses that support socially & environmentally responsible local entrepreneurship.

### ***KEY FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND EXISTING CAPACITY***

Findings indicate a strong need to coordinate workforce and business development approaches. Participant responses suggest balancing the current business demand focus in the 2014 RYMP to also approach business development through a labor supply lens<sup>9</sup>. The labor supply approach implies a longer timeframe, as rather than asking what businesses the city can attract given current conditions, the strategy would be organized around which businesses can help meet both existing employment needs of residents, and build resident human capital developmentally and into the future.

Participants argued for a diversified mix of commercial and manufacturing business development, promoting both micro- and macro- entrepreneurs, enterprises that provide a mix of economic-base and asset-based jobs, and a full utilization of business incubation, technical assistance, and financial assistance tools available from federal (Small Business Administration, Small Business Development Centers), state (New Mexico Main Street), federal (Economic Development Administration), non-profit (WESSTCorp, WK Kellogg Foundation, the McCune Foundation) and local economic development agencies (plus local CDC’s and community economic development and community-based organizations).

Participants identified a robust list of potential enterprises for the Rail Yard site that takes advantage of local supply chains and value chains. The sectors listed below share the following characteristics: a) they can create local multipliers through economies of agglomeration involving existing and developing local sectors; b) they can link local enterprises to rail-distribution, enabling regional expansion of local sectors who now only supply the greater Albuquerque area; c) they can provide incentives to recruit and develop economically and socially sustainable enterprises that can, with time, replace the polluting business currently operating in the adjacent neighborhoods (especially San José); and d) they have the capacity to supply large numbers of living wage jobs.

There was universal support of locating some kind of incubator on the site, a suggestion also included in the 2014 RYMP, and consistent with social enterprise development and supply chain development goals of the two existing local incubators – the South Valley Economic Development Center, and Three Sisters Kitchen. Suggested businesses include food hub and distribution center (including food packing facilities, value added enterprises that process, and distribute local food production; recruitment or incubation of a small, environmentally sound, and community

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<sup>9</sup> As elaborated in the Workforce Development section, a labor supply strategy focuses on building local human capital so that a neighborhood can attract businesses looking for skilled labor, and are willing to pay for the increased worker capability.

responsive USDA certified slaughterhouse for craft/artisan meat goods and small scale butchery; a tree/plant/seed germination nursery; local, affordable commercial enterprises that meet resident daily needs (such as a laundromat, drug store, small shops meeting affordable daily needs); and light manufacture of sustainable energy parts, solar panels, wind mills, etc. Participants responded favorably to film industry activities on the site, as long as current irregular and low access jobs can lead to more stable post-production, above the line, higher skill jobs through training requirements enshrined in development agreements. One participant suggested encouraging BNSF Railway Co. (BNSF) to locate an office on site, to coordinate with the business incubator to facilitate the BNSF movement of locally produced merchandise through Albuquerque and beyond. It should be noted, though, that there is little evidence of BNSF's interest or willingness to participate in an equity development strategy for the Rail Yards site.

Participants in Barelás and South Broadway expressed support for basing at least some of the economic activities on the site in continuing and expanding rail road trade opportunities. Residents of San José, however, expressed emphatic concern that Railroad focused businesses would simply extend their existing problem with polluting railroad-related activities on to the City-owned site. This finding points clearly to the difficulty in addressing San José's environmental concerns with the *Railroad* activities adjacent to the *Rail Yard* site as opposed to the Rail Yards redevelopment process that this report engages. The lack of BNSF Rail Road interest in participating in a community development process for Rail Yards development presents an ongoing challenge for redevelopment planning. As such, any community benefit for San José would have to create incentives for BNSF, the warehouse, and industrial businesses located there to shift to clean industry. This San José position differs from the Barelás and South Broadway suggestions for utilizing the Road Runner and commercial train transport of locally produced goods (on site and in surrounding neighborhoods) to expand regional market access for local entrepreneurs. Creating sustainable supply chain opportunities may incentivize creation of different economic multipliers in the San José neighborhood.

The Rail Yard Market received a mixed reception from participants. Though viewed as a potential location for affordable, neighborhood scale commercial enterprises, the current commercial mix was not seen as welcoming or affordable to the adjacent neighborhoods. Participants also expressed concern about business development strategies such as sound and film studios and other enterprises that require limiting public access to the site. There was also concern about locating an amphitheater or large event venue on the site because of noise and traffic concerns.

The two local CDC's (the BCC and USBC) bring some capacity for taking the lead on economic development initiatives, but it is not clear that they are able to coordinate a joint business development and recruitment initiative. There are a robust set of incubation opportunities (the South Valley Development Center (SVEDC) and Three Sisters) that serve the adjacent neighborhoods, but there is currently insufficient coordination between these entities, and between distinct economic development strategies of organizations within each adjacent neighborhood.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

There are a number of **existing local entrepreneurial initiatives and existing local businesses** that could benefit from business development at the Rail Yards. Supply chains and market multipliers should be considered in business incubation and/or recruitment. This requires that business development and workforce development initiatives be coordinated to ensure local benefit. A diverse mix of small and medium sized enterprises are most likely to create links to existing businesses and neighborhood entrepreneurial potential. Enterprise development on the Rail Yard site must not contribute to environmental degradation, especially since the surrounding neighborhoods are heavily burdened by polluting industries. The relatively low incomes of neighborhood households call for a mix of price points in commercial enterprises on the site.

All of the business development ideas suggested by focus group participants and interviewees are worth exploring, as is the RYMP call for a business incubator. There is, however, insufficient information to propose any particular sector or strategy over others. An appropriate next step is to contract with a community-based market development planner to research the feasibility of each idea and to generate a **long-term business development plan**. This plan should propose a preferred mix of business demand-focused and labor supply-focused businesses to recruit or

develop. A market development plan can outline the best ways to utilize New Mexico Main Street, State Economic Development Division resources, and investigate other federal, state, and philanthropic resources for business development. This plan should also research the utility of proposing a local commercial tax freeze for low income, affordable commercial property similar to the existing property tax alleviation for low income homeowners.

The City can work with the Barelás Community Coalition (BCC) and Rail Yard Market teams to **diversify Rail Yard market vendors and price points** in the immediate term. In the longer term, the market could work with an on-site incubator as an outlet for appropriate incubated products. Ability to negotiate discounts for local residents should be investigated further. Discounts could cover events, purchases in development and commercial lease agreements, and local businesses who sell basic staples like food<sup>10</sup>. Public and philanthropic funding can also be sought to fund these subsidies and discounts. The proposed market study would help determine the feasibility of Rail Yard Market diversification, and determine potential sources for the necessary deep subsidy that such discounts would require.

Any amendments to the 2014 RYMP, relevant Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plans or specific development agreements should **re-affirm the RYMP call for a permeable border between the Rail Yard site and the South Broadway and Barelás neighborhoods** in order to ensure two-way connectivity and multiplier effects between neighborhood businesses and those on the Rail Yard site. Zoning and urban design strategies can ensure that the Rail Yard commercial and manufacturing district “feel” part of the adjacent neighborhoods, rather than as a walled off enclave development. Existing BCC, Casa Barelás and USBC plans for Fourth Street and South Broadway community economic development should serve as a basis for connectivity, as these are the commercial corridors central to those neighborhoods’ MRA strategies. Careful attention should be made to mitigate the potential contradiction between promoting business connectivity between the site and neighborhoods, and neighborhood concerns about increased delivery trucks and traffic in residential parts of their communities.

**Connectivity to the San José neighborhood is complex** given the negative externalities the neighborhood experiences from current railroad commercial shipping activities, and the fact that the neighborhood, while adjacent to the Rail Road, is not adjacent to the City-owned Rail Yards site. This lack of direct adjacency to the site severely constrains City control over activities directly adjacent to that neighborhood. Moreover, the San José neighborhood organizations have relatively low capacity, and rely heavily on the activism of a few key players. The environmental justice concerns in the adjacent neighborhoods and the larger Albuquerque community may be able to provide strategic expertise and political back up to their efforts.

## ***Workforce Development***

### ***RELEVANT PRINCIPLE***

Equitable development ensures that employment opportunities created on-site meet the employment needs in, and capacity of, adjacent communities, provide incentives and requirements for well-paid, career-ladder local jobs, and enhance the educational and training opportunities for adjacent residents especially youth.

### ***KEY FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND EXISTING CAPACITY***

One of the central findings of the workforce development focus group was to focus workforce development on building the hope and aspirational thinking of workers in the adjacent neighborhoods. Human capital development in the neighborhoods is perceived to be low, though aggregate high school completion rates do not vary substantially from Albuquerque rates. Participants also note that criminal agents recruit heavily among middle school aged youth

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<sup>10</sup> Such discounts, of course, would require a source of subsidy, and so is not an easy strategy to implement.

Moreover, a previous experiment to promote the use of USDA Double Up Food Bucks in the Rail Yard Market were unsuccessful because the amount of locally produced produce for sale was insufficient to draw local SNAP recipients to the Market, and even the half-price incentive was insufficient to compete with produce available in local groceries and warehouse businesses. (Prendergast and Isaac, 2016).

in the neighborhoods, limiting youth capacity to thrive and prosper. Job-related community benefits can be derived throughout the Rail Yard planning, development, and build out phases of the project, starting with strategies to prepare existing residents of adjacent neighborhoods for high quality jobs in Rail Yard related construction and new Rail Yard related enterprises, recruiting staff for the proposed not-for-profit CDC from the adjacent neighborhoods, continuing with recruiting local residents for development related (construction) and for commercial activities on the site. This is consistent with the first source hiring requirements recommended by participants in the economic prosperity focus group, but shifts attention away from low-skill, low pay jobs likely to be accessible to the majority of residents, to building on- and off-site education and training capacity targeted to neighborhood participants to increase local human capital.

Participants also indicated that resources for training and job placement already exist in the community, and are available to residents of the Rail Yard adjacent neighborhoods, but neighborhood-based organizations are not being utilized fully to help direct residents to those programs. Neighborhood participants committed to helping with that pipeline in their respective communities.

A common theme in all of the focus groups was that jobs created (and businesses recruited) as part of the Rail Yard Development must attend to historical and contemporary environmental pollution, particularly in the railroad-related enterprises located in the San José neighborhood. This includes replacing the jobs in existing polluting industries with opportunities for clean, safe employment.

There are several mechanisms in place in the City to support workforce development benefits in the Rail Yard neighborhoods. The City of Albuquerque (CABQ) living wage ordinance provides a baseline for development agreement negotiations, though CABQ does not currently have a local hire ordinance.

Though some participants mentioned that the presence of unions helped ensure high quality, living wage jobs comparable to the jobs available when the Rail Yards were still open, there was little discussion about current union organizing to ensure similar outcomes. There was considerable unease about requiring union jobs in RY enterprises, reflecting lack of trust of the inclusiveness and accessibility of local unions to non-traditional workers.

The focus groups uncovered a very strong network of workforce development service providers, with substantial success in leveraging philanthropic and federal funding to help train and place residents in high quality, living wage jobs with a career trajectory. Participants noted, however, that these organizations face challenges in reaching residents in under-served communities (sometimes being unable to spend down all the funds they have mobilized). Representatives of adjacent neighborhood organizations expressed a strong interest in working with those organizations (including Workforce Connections, Prosperity Works, WESSTCorp, etc.) to help connect their neighbors to these service providers.

There is evidence of strong interest and capacity among City agencies (Planning, Metropolitan Redevelopment, Family and Community Services, and Economic Development) in working with neighborhoods, service providers, and non-neighborhood organizations (like SWOP, Street Food Institute, the CNM Film Program) to build a network of youth and adult learner education and training opportunities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

An equitable development approach challenges the current business demand-driven strategies outlined in the RYMP. It would be productive to amend the RYMP to outline **a worker supply-driven approach**. A worker supply strategy focuses on building local human capital so that a neighborhood can attract businesses looking for skilled labor, and are willing to pay for the increased worker capability. This type of strategy focuses on the qualifications and training aspirations of residents in the neighborhoods, and then seeks to recruit businesses that create career ladder opportunities for that population. A supply driven strategy would focus on long-term improvement in human capital development outcomes for residents rather than an employer recruitment focus. This shift in focus is, itself, a community benefit, as it helps identify and build on community assets rather than accepting existing deficits as a base for job creation, and helping to break the employment limitations of neighborhood residents, which lock them into low-wage, jobs. The goal of the plan should be to increase the wellbeing of neighborhood workers, not just to recruit

businesses. Market research must be done to match local worker aspirations with real market, sustainable jobs.

The current employer demand approach and existing funding sources de-incentivize working with adult learners with low existing skills and lower educational attainment. These approaches particularly limit education and job opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals, a group that neighborhood participants were particularly concerned about reintegrating into their communities.

If a **youth-to-adult education and training program** is going to succeed, the City will need to focus on developing the workforce the community *wants*, drawing on the youth engagement activities of the City Youth Programs Division, the APS Community Schools Division, the UNM Community Engagement Center (Service Learning Corps<sup>11</sup>), CNM programs (like the Film Program<sup>12</sup> and the Street Food Institute<sup>13</sup>) and youth-focused organizations like Casa Barelás<sup>14</sup>, Working Classroom<sup>15</sup>, the Youth Conservation Corps<sup>16</sup>, Generation Justice<sup>17</sup>, Future Focused Education<sup>18</sup>, Story Tellers After School Program, and YDI Youth Build<sup>19</sup>.

**In the immediate term**, well before actual business recruitment or development of the Rail Yards begins, these partners can work to develop middle school and high school curricula and programming to improve key STEM and reading skills and mitigate risk of gang recruitment. Middle and High School students will benefit from early introduction to community responsive vocational, professional, and entrepreneurial planning support, and skill building internship opportunities. For adult learners, the City can work with existing neighborhood organizations to coordinate access to existing workforce development services identified by focus group participants. Participants involved with neighborhood organizations indicate that they are prepared to identify and reach out to residents poised for GED completion, specific job training programs, and after school and evening learning opportunities.

**In the intermediate term**, Rail Yard development agreements and contracts should prioritize youth internship opportunities, consistent with the recommendations of the 1993 Pocket of Poverty Plan<sup>20</sup>. Agreements with developers and major employers located on the Rail Yard site should ensure feasible career opportunities for low skill (but living wage) jobs, with feasible career ladders into to supervisory, managerial, and administrative opportunities. This requires recruiting either large numbers of small firms that can provide these career development opportunities in aggregate, or fewer enterprises that are relatively labor-intensive vs. capital-intensive (avoiding over-automated warehouse enterprises and industries). The City or the Nonprofit CDC that coordinates the Rail Yard build-out should explore negotiating a **“pre-apprenticeship” program for construction and economic base job development during the build-out phase**. If amenable, and the community is responsive, building trade unions could be a potential partner in this effort.

**Over the long term**, negotiations with potential developers should consider requiring a **First Source Hiring Plan** in all development agreements that includes on-the-job training requirements, local business supply chain incentives, and enterprise annual donations to neighborhood organizations (see, for example, the Santa Barbara/Martineztown agreement with First Source mentioned in Rail Yard background documents<sup>21</sup>). This requirement should be included in an amended RYMP to create the baseline condition from which specific development agreements can be negotiated. This is especially important if the City chooses to work with multiple developers in a phased build out

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<sup>11</sup> <http://communityengagement.unm.edu/programs/index.html>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.cnm.edu/programs-of-study/programs-a-z/film-technician/working-with-the-cnm-film-program>

<sup>13</sup> <https://streetfoodinstitute.org/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.casabarelas.org/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.workingclassroom.org/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/YCC/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://generationjustice.org/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://futurefocusededucation.org>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.ydinm.org/youthbuild.aspx>

<sup>20</sup> Described in Hildebrand, Kate, Housing and Economic Development in the Pocket of Poverty, [https://books.google.com/books/about/Housing\\_and\\_Economic\\_Development\\_in\\_the.html?id=z99jHAAACAAJ](https://books.google.com/books/about/Housing_and_Economic_Development_in_the.html?id=z99jHAAACAAJ).

<sup>21</sup> Embassy Suites MR Bond Ordinance Executed PDF, page 3 lines 23 – page 4 line 2.

program. This effort could also be supported with a City Council initiated campaign to establish a local hire ordinance for the City, though this would be a political tough sell in some council Districts.

The current **MOU with CNM** contains useful language about exploring a relationship to bring film-related education activities to the site, but that document contains few details. The next step in building that relationship should be an agreement that specifies the community benefits that the proposed CNM film program will bring to the adjacent neighborhoods. Community participants did not specify which community benefits they prefer regarding the CNM film initiative, but were cautious about relying solely on film production training, noting that future demand for employees is uncertain and that most film business demand is for “below the line” jobs<sup>22</sup>. The film development strategy should be part of a diversified workforce approach, providing workers living in the adjacent neighborhoods a diverse set of career development opportunities, particularly in post-production, which offer more job stability than pre-production jobs.

## ***Affordable Housing***

### ***RELEVANT PRINCIPLE***

Equitable development strategies seek to assure that residents of neighborhoods adjacent to a developing area will benefit by appropriately affordable on- and off-site housing, and ensure that existing neighborhood residents can remain, and flourish, in their communities without suffering from displacement from new market pressures (gentrification).

### ***KEY FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND EXISTING CAPACITY***

Participants’ insights centered around opportunities and challenges of ensuring housing affordability on the Rail Yards Site, and productive neighborhood stabilization strategies that could ensure that current residents can participate in a flourishing mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhood without displacement. Suggestions included expanding the existing County tax freeze for the elderly, establishing a new tax overlay zone for the Rail Yards and the adjacent neighborhoods, developing weatherization and home-owner rehab grant programs, foreclosure prevention programs, and acquisition/rehab of vacant and abandoned buildings. There was some divergence in opinion among participants about the value of mixed income and homeowner recruitment strategies to diversify neighborhood wealth, vs. focusing on deep affordability for current residents, whose median income is \$18,657, compared to the Bernalillo County median income of \$45,147<sup>23</sup>. Neighborhood concerns that developing deeply affordable housing will recruit low income residents from outside the neighborhoods is belied by the median income data from within the neighborhoods, indicating a likely gap in affordable units for many current residents.

Neighborhood participants expressed a strong desire to recruit middle income former residents back to the neighborhood (and framed part of their argument for mixed-income housing). Though some participants recommend acquisition rehab to address high levels of vacancy, others argue that this strategy could, without appropriate income restrictions, fuel gentrification.

There is an ongoing and emphatic conversation in the neighborhoods about gentrification and neighborhood stability. Both Barelmas and South Broadway residents reported surges in housing prices and displacement pressures following the 2014 RYMP. They note that for those who do not qualify for property tax abatement (for which income requirements are very restrictive, and few residents qualify), property tax increases have been problematic (even given the Bernalillo County 3% annual property increase cap).

The neighborhoods thus present a challenge for the Rail Yard redevelopment efforts: housing availability for existing

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<sup>22</sup> The IATSE Local 480 represents “below the line” crafts workers in the film industry (<https://local480.com/>). There are, however, concerns about barriers to joining the union (it is a limited membership union, that also manages an “overflow list” of workers who have requested membership but have not been admitted), and broad neighborhood knowledge about union benefits.

<sup>23</sup> [https://www.cabq.gov/council/documents/1appendix\\_e-community\\_vision\\_statements.pdf](https://www.cabq.gov/council/documents/1appendix_e-community_vision_statements.pdf)

residents (many of whom are very low income), vs. reinvigorating neighborhood income diversity with targeted homeowner recruitment strategies. Ongoing mention of crime in focus groups linked primarily to a) concern for youth well-being (instilling hope and encouraging youth aspiration), and b) community-centric policing, and physical environment that promotes safety (for instance, designing home to school pathways, ensuring publically- vs. police-surveilled community spaces). Residents agreed that their neighborhoods need proactive stabilization efforts to stop gentrification, while doing necessary revitalization in residential communities.

There was also some discussion about the City's preference to use more positive terms to describe the housing cycle in the adjacent neighborhoods. Participants expressed concern that avoiding the negative term gentrification may make it more difficult to ensure that affordability strategies avoid the particular manifestations of gentrification in downtown Albuquerque, particularly since the process of gentrification is different in Albuquerque's soft real estate market as opposed to denser, stronger housing market cities like Denver, Portland, and New York.

Albuquerque has several sites of existing capacity that can help meet equitable affordable housing goals. Of particular help is the Workforce Housing Opportunity Act, which provides a baseline for affordability requirements. The use of Workforce Housing Trust Funds (WHTF) funding in the City's purchase of the RY creates a requirement for inclusion of permanently affordable housing on the site. There is also a solid non-profit and for-profit affordable housing development sector in Albuquerque and in the state. These entities have a solid history of successful public/private partnerships, including in the greater downtown area, and demonstrate strong capacity to produce a mix of housing types, from deeply affordable supportive housing to middle income owner occupied housing. The nonprofit sector also provides substantial capacity within the adjacent neighborhoods and city-wide to provide financial literacy and homebuyer education services to the adjacent neighborhoods. Though limited, existing MRA, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME), and WHTF funds are available to leverage investment in affordable housing.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Neighborhood Information Services:** The Rail Yard Redevelopment effort could be used to leverage and support existing affordable housing initiatives already available within the adjacent neighborhoods. Community engagement around the Rail Yard Redevelopment could also serve to disseminate information about existing housing, home maintenance, and taxation programs to residents in adjacent neighborhoods. Proposed community event tabling could include vital information to expand these information networks.

**Neighborhood Stabilization:** Since the closing of the Rail Yards in the 1970's and the diversion of traffic from the commercial corridors of 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway to I-25, the neighborhoods of Barelás and South Broadway have experienced a long history of disinvestment. Redevelopment of the Rail Yards could significantly increase land and home values and lead to the involuntary displacement of lower-income residents. The City should invest in neighborhood stabilization strategies early, while property values are attainable. Strategies should address all aspects of the housing spectrum and assist renters, homeowners, seniors, and those facing foreclosure. Suggested strategies include:

### Stabilizing existing homeowners:

- Provide education to eligible homeowners to secure existing property tax freeze programs;
- Provide home improvement loans to help homeowners make necessary improvements, such as roof repair, heater replacement, etc. For lower income homeowners, provide a deferred home improvement loan option that they can pay back when they sell the property and explore home improvement grants for very low income homeowners;
- Acquire and renovate vacant homes and sell them to homeowners with a particular focus on problem properties; and
- Find innovative strategies to help older residents age in place.

### Stabilizing existing renters:

- Support the development and/or renovation of affordable rental units that are required to remain affordable long-term.

There are gaps in knowledge about the status of housing tenancy and quality in the adjacent neighborhoods. It would be useful for the City to conduct or contract for research about the actual mix of incomes in these neighborhoods; what neighborhood income indicators can be used to determine appropriate mixed income goals; and what proportion of existing homeowners are cost burdened (especially when factoring in the burden of deferred maintenance of housing stock). Current data for the adjacent neighborhoods on rates of resident property ownership vs. absentee ownership, proportion of land use designated for housing vs. commercial or residential are needed to complete an affordable housing analysis.

City Staff (including the Family and Community Services Department) could work with the City's Affordable Housing Committee (which has representatives from the banking sector, non-profit developers, and housing/homeless services advocates) to create home-improvement loan products, and help identify financing for subsidized or deferred home-improvement loans. There is currently discussion within the City Council about allowing more Workforce Housing Trust Fund money to support greater home-ownership.

**Return Home Tools:** Many participants indicated that they would like to build income diversity in the neighborhoods by inviting back former residents who have left for homes in areas with better housing stock, lower crime rates, and better schools. The City would benefit from investigating vacant and "problem" properties as a target for acquisition rehab programs, and to mount a "Return" recruitment campaign, highlighting neighborhood efforts to improve education and reduce crime, combined with marketing of existing homebuyer/mortgage assistance programs (Federal, State, and banking sector entities) that are aware of and support subsidized homeownership. There may be Fair Housing problems with prioritizing former neighborhood residents in recruitment for purchase of new and rehabbed housing, but housing organizations and the City could certainly utilize the existing social capital of the adjacent neighborhoods to ensure marketing of these homes reach former residents. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that "return home" campaigns don't promote gentrification by setting income restrictions<sup>24</sup>.

Though there is no clear consensus within and between the neighborhoods about the extent to which very affordable housing (subsidized multi-unit rental housing for those at 50% and below Area Mean Income (AMI)) is needed or desired. Participants did, however, agree that programs that improve opportunities for existing homeowners to repair, maintain, and improve their homes would help protect against displacement caused by redevelopment pressures. The City could work with the City's Affordable Housing Committee (which has representatives from the banking sector, non-profit developers, and housing/homeless services advocates) to create home-improvement loan products, and help identify financing for subsidized or deferred home-improvement loans. There is currently discussion within the City Council about allowing more Workforce Housing Trust Fund money to support greater home-ownership. It may be useful to engage the Albuquerque Affordable Housing Coalition<sup>25</sup> about the utility of allocating some WHTF money to rehab funding and first time homebuyer down payment assistance.

**Land Trust:** The RYMP proposes a land trust for the Rail Yard site, and there have been efforts in Baretas to develop a scattered site community land trust, based out of an initial collaboration with the Sawmill Community Land Trust to develop four houses at Seventh and Iron. It is worth exploring with the two neighborhood CDC's (BCC and USBC) whether the land trust model is appropriate for bringing vacant and "problem" properties on line to meet current and future affordable housing needs, especially as the Rail Yards develops. There is some resistance in both South

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<sup>24</sup> See examples from the New York City campaigns: [http://dealingwithgentrification.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/GentrificationStudio\\_WorkingPaper\\_Final\\_040418.pdf](http://dealingwithgentrification.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/GentrificationStudio_WorkingPaper_Final_040418.pdf), <https://council.nyc.gov/land-use/plans/mih-zqa/mih/>)

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pg/AlbuquerqueAffordableHousingCoalition/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/AlbuquerqueAffordableHousingCoalition/about/?ref=page_internal)

Broadway and Barelás to limited equity models for permanent affordability, expressing a concern with historical exclusion of households of color from wealth creation through equity building, and an unease about whether actual neighborhood residents would be the beneficiaries of land trust development. A mix of wealth-building and limited-equity strategies may, however, be amenable. Also, though cooperative housing has not been tried in Albuquerque beyond upper income cohousing experiments, it's worth exploring, perhaps as a component of a land trust strategy. If structured carefully, a mixed strategy of fee simple homeownership with equity subsidy repaid on sale, and limited equity (land trust) housing strategies could address both the deep affordability and income diversity goals of neighborhoods.

## ***Arts and Cultural Development***

### ***RELEVANT PRINCIPLE***

Equitable development strategies seek to ensure that residents of adjacent neighborhoods have access to arts and cultural events and objects, and benefit from culturally and historically relevant arts and activities on the site. An equitable arts and culture development will link on-site activities to existing and potential cultural capital in adjacent neighborhoods.

### ***KEY FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND EXISTING CAPACITY***

Participants noted that there are existing plans that can be utilized to ground current Rail Yard development activities regarding arts and culture with the neighborhoods, including the Fourth Street Arts and Culture Corridor Plan, the Barelás Community Coalition Fourth Street Development Plans, and all adjacent Neighborhood Sector Plans<sup>26</sup>. Participants emphasized that existing neighborhood organizations value historical artistic traditions, but that these traditions are expressed in contemporary terms. Participants expressed concern that traditional arts could become commodified in the Rail Yard redevelopment process, and marketed to a destination tourist market. They also noted that their artistic viewpoint is not parochial, and that they value the creative contributions of both local and outside artists, calling for culturally relevant styles without pigeonholing residents. This requires an arts and culture programming strategy grounded in an attitude of respect for the vitality of local arts and culture activities, rather than relying just on the attraction of regional/national artists and performers.

Participants were emphatic that arts and cultural programming on the Rail Yard site should reflect the historical architecture as art on the site, allowing it to become an amenity reflective of the proud working class history relating the adjacent neighborhoods to the site itself. In addition, attention to arts and cultural activities on the site should articulate with the robust cultural history and the current vibrant, community-based creative life of the adjacent neighborhoods. As such, though there is some clear disjuncture between the desires of the local arts and culture community and the regional and national networks of Railroad enthusiasts, both groups agree that there is great potential to frame at least some components of an arts and culture program to reflect the neighborhood pride in their history as rail yard workers. The community interest in returning "The Whistle", which once organized the neighborhoods' daily life (much as church bells did in the deeper past), is one such articulation.

There is considerable capacity to enact arts and cultural programming around the Rail Yard redevelopment, based in a robust set of arts and culture organizations located in the adjacent neighborhoods (Casa Barelás, National Hispanic Cultural Center (NHCC), Working Classroom, Story Riders After School Project, etc.) that are actively engaged in arts and culture related youth development (which feeds workforce development), and economic development (which feeds economic prosperity) initiatives.

The Albuquerque Film Office and CNM also provide important resources for promoting community responsive arts and cultural programming and development for the site, though it is not clear that these entities are in communication with community-based organizations. Film related arts represent, however, only one aspect of

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<sup>26</sup>Even though sector plans are no longer considered adopted policy or land use ordinance, these community plans, generated out of substantial community engagement, document important values and strategic directions around arts and culture.

community-based creative enterprise favored by participants.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

All of the **existing community arts organizations** (including Casa Barelás, the National Hispanic Cultural Center, Working Classroom, and the Story Riders After School Project) should be invited as active participants in arts and cultural programming on the site. These organizations already have a history of working with CABQ Cultural Services, and CABQ Equity and Inclusion, and can also benefit from collaboration directly with the MRA and other Planning Divisions.

The participant suggestion of conducting an **oral history (perhaps photo voice) project** in the adjacent neighborhoods, as a collective effort from local arts and culture organizations and the City, could surface complex community cultural meanings, and engage elders as a font of cultural knowledge. The exhibit could be pitched to the Wheels Museum as a permanent exhibit, and these results could also be source material for commissioned murals that document the Rail Yard history from a neighborhood perspective, located either on-site, in adjacent neighborhoods or both. There is considerable capacity in the adjacent neighborhoods for community-based mural art. This kind of project, collected in a participatory way, could also generate the web-based and hard copy **“Story Map”** suggested by one participant documenting the working history of the site and its surrounding neighborhoods. Timing for an oral history project would be critical as Rail Yard workers are elderly and many have already passed on.

**Cultural programming in the Rail Yard include or coordinate with venues in the adjacent neighborhoods.** The CABQ Rail Yards website<sup>27</sup> could announce neighborhood events, and cross-link Rail Yard and related event notifications back to Arts and Culture and ONC web and social media presence. The participant suggestion of hosting a **Reunion Day** to welcome community members home with tours is also productive, though its timing will need to be linked to an actual opening of the site to the public. As phases of the Rail Yard development are built out, there are opportunities for cross-marketing neighborhood events like the annual Barelás Fiesta with Rail Yard events and exhibits. The City can facilitate connections to its Arts Walk and Arts Crawl programs.

### **Environmental Justice**

#### **RELEVANT PRINCIPLE**

Equitable development principles ensure that current development: a) help mitigate and institute restorative justice<sup>28</sup> regarding past environmental practices; b) help mitigate current environmental conditions on the site and in adjacent neighborhoods; and c) ensure that future development activities meet the “triple bottom line” (Slater, 2011) of economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, and social sustainability.

#### **KEY FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND EXISTING CAPACITY**

Though not a specific convened topic, the issue of environmental justice (regarding past and current industrial practices) and the likelihood of environmental impacts from future development was a steady theme through all four focus group sessions. Participants in the adjacent neighborhoods and San José expressed concern over three central environmental issues: 1) concern over the environmental contamination and remediation potential in the Rail Yard site (and need for full (technical) information about current state of ground water and asbestos contamination); 2) transparency about remediation efforts and challenges; and 3) addressing environmental concerns of current rail-related economic activities in the San José neighborhood. Participants appeared satisfied with the Planning Staff descriptions of the existing environmental status plans of the site and the feasibility of remediating the site to housing standard, though expressed ongoing concerns about groundwater contamination and the likelihood of that plume to contaminate South Broadway water.

The concerns about current rail-related economic activities to the south of the site presents a greater challenge, since

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.cabq.gov/culturalservices/the-yards>

<sup>28</sup> <http://restorativejustice.org/#sthash.aFzGcpHi.dpbs>

the City does not own those railroad properties. Residents of San José do, however, suggest that the City can help regulate commercial land uses in the neighborhood; review environmental studies on petroleum off loading and noise and air quality pollution to revise local, state, and federal environmental regulations (or partner with San Jose in pursuing legal options); and use sustainable economic development multipliers created within the Rail Yard development to incentivize alternative economic activities in that neighborhood (particularly warehouses along Commercial). These findings suggest promotion of triple bottom line development with strict environmental performance standards for businesses developed on site, and for new and existing neighborhood businesses incentivized by Rail Yard development.

Noise has also been a major concern in South Broadway (and to a lesser extent in San José), and neighborhoods all for noise abatement considerations in the physical development of the site, as well as restriction of high noise arts and cultural activities on the site (heavy metal concerts were mentioned).

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The City, in collaboration with the proposed CDC should **develop sustainability criteria** to guide business incubation and recruitment strategies for the Rail Yard site and in adjacent neighborhoods. Care should be taken to recruit and develop businesses that are sustainable all along their value/supply chains to address concerns that some products (for instance solar panels) have large environmental benefits, but have high footprint impacts on local production areas.

There is some promise that promoting sustainable economic development strategies on the Rail Yard site could **create multipliers** within San José to incentivize alternative economic activities in that neighborhood (particularly warehouses along Commercial and the southern part of Broadway stretching into San José). It is worth using the language of the “triple bottom line”<sup>29</sup> in all amendments to the RYMP and related MRA plans, incorporating strict environmental performance standards for businesses developed on site, and for new and existing adjacent neighborhood businesses linked to Rail Yard development. BNSF activities may be influenced productively by multiplier effects from Rail Yard redevelopment activities. These activities could have a positive impact, incentivizing sustainable activities in surrounding neighborhoods by helping to transform the train related supply chain. It is important to consider that Rail Yard activities will have downstream impacts in redevelopment planning efforts.

These opportunities from Rail Yard development can **incentivize development of sustainable businesses** along South Broadway and Commercial that take advantage of economies of agglomeration incentivized by recruitment of sustainable enterprises on Rail Yard site. Mechanisms to promote these non-polluting industry multipliers may include CDC application for new market tax credits to incentivize clean business development on the site and in San José. Ongoing market monitoring and development of a system of performance metrics to provide timely data on externalities produced by existing businesses in San José may also be productive. Local activists in San José are a good source for baseline information on neighborhood pollution. The challenge of ongoing Rail Road activities to the south of the site requires a long-term community economic development strategy, which may lead to development of an MRA plan specifically for the San José neighborhood. Care needs to be taken not to eliminate economic benefits of Railroad employment and multipliers through excessive regulation. An incentive and stimulus approach is worth exploring.

### **Community Engagement**

#### **RELEVANT PRINCIPLE**

Equitable development principles are grounded in a philosophy of broad and effective community engagement. Needed community improvements and changes are often best understood by community residents, and many negative outcomes of redevelopment efforts derive from lack of engagement in, and respect for, community knowledge. Equitable development is an asset-based development approach, whereby neighborhood participation in

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<sup>29</sup> <https://sustain.wisconsin.edu/sustainability/triple-bottom-line/>

development decision making recognizes, and helps build on, community diagnostic and adaptive capacity (Isaac, 2017), leading to a resilient, and self-determined community best poised to reap community benefits from development.

### *KEY FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND EXISTING CAPACITY*

The principle of respect for neighborhood expertise and effective, ongoing neighborhood participation in Rail Yard redevelopment decisions was a drumbeat through all focus groups and most interviews. Many participants indicated that while they were gratified to participate actively in writing the RYMP, they felt dismissed and ignored as the Master Developer came on board. Participants also felt that past delays and evasions on the part of the master developer belied a commitment to fulfilling the promises made implicitly and explicitly to the neighborhoods during the RYAB plan making process.

Though most participants expressed appreciation for the City's current commitment to community engagement, the process was also challenged by some participants. Initially, focus group participation was limited to organizations based in Barelás and South Broadway. Residents from the San José neighborhood came to the 2<sup>nd</sup> focus group meeting uninvited. Though they were welcomed and encouraged to participate (and were formally invited to subsequent focus groups), the Consultant Team and City were challenged for designing an initial engagement process that was not full and effective.

The adjacent neighborhoods have a mixed history of competition and cooperation, and there are mixed perceptions of neighborhood capacity for shared self-advocacy around community economic development and political mobilization. The concerns are well-founded, but it is important to note that there is considerable available experiential and professional expertise among adjacent neighborhood residents and organizations in environmental analysis, economic and housing development, political organizing, and coordinated service delivery. Focus group participants noted that neighborhood residents have incomplete knowledge of social and economic support programs available to them, and representatives of neighborhood organizations expressed a willingness to serve as information clearing houses to connect service providers to residents. Participants also suggested that human services and community-based agencies be invited to locate offices on the Rail Yard site, perhaps locating a multi-service community center on the site.

Participants from these adjacent neighborhoods, South Broadway, San José, and Barelás have committed to convening "study groups" on all of the focus group topics and others that they determine. They conceive of this process as parallel to the City engagement initiatives, and call on City agencies to share full information (including technical reports) with them, and make City staff and as appropriate to present to study groups to help ground the discussion in expert knowledge. I have been informed by one participant that the first study group meeting has been scheduled. Neighborhood self-organizing is very promising, especially given the relatively low current degree of common purpose and proposals from which to negotiate community benefit agreements.

Neighborhood organizations, service providers and individual residents spoke often about the importance of transparency of information, a concern derived from 1) a lack of trust that the public is getting full information when the City gets it about market opportunities, developer interest and development MOU's, agreements, and environmental challenges and opportunities; and 2) whether community supplied information and knowledge is being taken seriously in City decision making.

### *RECOMMENDATIONS*

**Neighborhood Communication:** The City (perhaps through the Office of Neighborhood Coordination) can play a key role in helping neighborhoods announce study groups and other events, disseminating technical information as Rail Yard feasibility studies become available, and making staff available to consult with neighborhood study group teams. As noted above, the adjacent neighborhoods have already begun a series of study groups around rail yard development efforts. The neighborhood participants see this effort as distinct from the City-driven community engagement initiatives. The City now has sign in sheets for focus group participants (most of whom included emails) that can be used for initial outreach efforts.

**Inter-Departmental City Communication:** One of the concerns of neighborhood participants was a perceived lack of coordination between City agencies and departments in matters that affect the Rail Yards Redevelopment and its adjacent neighborhoods. The MRA, other Planning divisions, the Economic Development Division, and the Mayor's office are already collaborating closely though that may not be visible to neighborhood residents and organizations. It may be useful to expand and share the social mapping/stakeholder mapping that the MRA has already done regarding the site, to make key contact people known. It may also be useful to invite active participation from key staff in Family and Community Services and the City Council staff in ongoing plans for City-driven community engagement. The Housing Authority and the City's Affordable Housing Committee are also positive City resources to be included in the Rail Yards communication loop. Other departments already engaged with the Rail Yard development (public works, environmental division) may benefit from a briefing on the equitable development components of the development plan, be invited to participate in knowledge and information sharing with neighborhoods, and asked to be available as technical assistants and information sources for neighborhood inquiries.

The **Rail Yards Advisory Board (RYAB)** as currently configured, with a priority on elected officials over neighborhood representatives, is perceived by neighborhood residents as a quasi-governmental entity that is not completely in touch with community needs. The RYAB is seen to play an important role in guiding Rail Yard development, but not as a major center for community engagement. Though some participants suggested increasing the proportion of neighborhood residents on the RYAB (including adding a representative from the San José neighborhood), this shift may make reaching a Board quorum even more difficult than it already is. That said, the RYAB plays an important function in utilizing its convened political and social power to help build broad state-wide and national financial support Rail Yard redevelopment. The RYAB was largely responsible for mobilizing over \$7 million in redevelopment funding for the site. The addition of a non-profit CDC to the redevelopment mix presents positive options for collaborative promotion of the redevelopment project.

**Community engagement in amending plans and collaborating in development agreement negotiations:** As noted in previous sections, there may be value in amending the RYMP, but an intensive participatory process focused only on plan amendments may create a sense of burnout among active community members. Plan amendment should be carefully considered so that revision of the Plan does not distract neighborhoods from moving forward with collaborative study groups, targeted engagement, and participation in political and planning processes.

It should also be noted that neighborhood residents still find an important role for their Sector Plans as documentation of their neighborhood vision and strategic direction. Though obviously these plans have been absorbed into the IDO, they continue to be useful locally. It appears that the South Broadway Sector Plan has been reconfigured as an MRA Plan. It may be worth exploring whether the Barelás Sector Plan aligns fully with the Barelás MRA Plan and amend the MRA Plan accordingly. It does not appear that the San José neighborhood ever had a Sector Plan, and is only partially covered by any MRA Plan. Over the medium to long term, San José's needs could be addressed either by creating an MRA plan (with a strong sustainability focus) for that neighborhood, or expanding the Rail Road MRA plan to include the lands south of the Rail Yard site (and the source of most of the concern for the San José neighborhood). In addition to amending MRA Plans, the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) community assessment process can be seen as an assertion of community values and expectations.

**Logistics of community engagement:** Neighborhood participants wish to be involved in the redevelopment process every step of the way. Feasibly, that will mean the City working directly with existing neighborhood CBO's to facilitate outreach to the community. This strategy has limitations, however, as not all CBO's represent all segments of the residential population, and each CBO already has a portfolio that may not allow for active engagement in Rail Yard redevelopment. Proposals, for instance, for a door to door survey is beyond the capacity of most CBO's in the neighborhoods at this point. The City could, however, help build human and financial capacity of those organizations with help in fundraising, grant making, and organizational development technical assistance as requested.

The CABQ Rail Yards website already has considerable information available to community participants but it is worth expanding – for instance, with links to technical documents and to key staff people who can consult/assist in public interpretation of technical documents. It will also be important to vet and link reports and other documents

submitted by community members (such as the San José Petroleum Offloading Study came up several times in the focus groups). The website (or a CABQ sponsored Facebook page, or other City community engagement sites) can also be used to moderate ongoing community comment and dialogue (perhaps topically organized). These electronic venues can also post both City and neighborhood engagement calendars.

The participant recommendations for tabling at community events and fiestas as a means of reaching residents of adjacent neighborhoods represents an excellent way to demonstrate City commitment and presence in seeking community benefits and provides sources of information for residents who do not routinely access internet sources. The proposed story map can also be produced in hard copy and distributed in neighborhood community and senior centers along with hard copies of periodic newsletter updates of Rail Yard redevelopment progress. The City's Office of Neighborhood Coordination is also a logical source for dissemination of such material, but should not be the only distribution mechanism, as that communication only reaches members of formally recognized Neighborhood Associations. Finding a location on the Rail Yards site to house offices of community-based organizations and social service agencies could also facilitate neighborhood-scale communication and service provision.

**Managing expectations from engagement:** All communication about Rail Yard Redevelopment should be framed as a very long term project, as expectations in 2014 were very high, and disappointment about the lack of progress was/is particularly difficult to come back from. There is considerable interest from the adjacent neighborhoods in the Rail Yard Redevelopment Project, and so there is danger of overly high expectations again. As soon as feasible, the City should announce its phasing strategy, with a realistic timeline for development and build out, and for the expected community benefits the development is intended to create.

**Who should be engaged:** Though there are obvious legitimate community interests beyond the immediately adjacent neighborhoods, these recommendations suggest that equitable development and engagement strategies should prioritize those adjacent neighborhoods, which would feel the immediate potential negative economic, social, and environmental impacts of development in the Rail Yards. There is neighborhood concern that non-adjacent neighborhoods in the downtown area have different needs and interests, and may exert undue influence if engagement expands to other, more affluent or already gentrified neighborhoods.

Community engagement efforts should begin with existing community-based organizations in the adjacent neighborhoods and be flexible enough to include new neighborhood-based organizations as they develop. The proposed CDC should draw a substantial part of its board of directors from those organizations, recognizing that they may not have majority representation given the need to have subject matter experts on the board as well.

**Larger political and strategic directions:** Though there is insufficient community cohesion and shared vision to initiate Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) at this point, openness on the part of CABQ administrators and legislators to participating in that mobilization can help rebuild trust between neighborhoods in the Historic Neighborhoods Alliance (HNA<sup>30</sup>) and the City, build real capacity to hold actual development practices to equitable development principles, and ensure long term community benefits during a phased and somewhat piecemeal development process (multiple developers, with multiple development agreements, TIFs, TIDDs).

The Rail Yard Equitable Development Plan has the potential serve as a starting point for community mobilization around a CABQ Community Benefits Initiative towards an CABQ Community Benefits Ordinance. The feasibility of this, of course, depends on the progress and outcomes of equitable development strategies in the Rail Yards redevelopment.

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**ATTACHMENT I: PARTICIPANTS**

<b>Participant Last Name</b>	<b>Participant First Name</b>	<b>Participant Affiliation</b>
Abeyta	Esther	San Jose Resident
Abeyta	Steven	San Jose Resident
Aranda	James	CABQ Planning
Archibeque-Guerra	Julia	Barelas Neighborhood Association
Armijo	Frances	South Broadway Neighborhood Association
Baca	Marylou	San Jose Resident
Bennet	Anzia	Three Sisters Kitchen
Chavez	Connie	Sawmill Community Land Trust
Chavez	Dorothy	Barelas Neighborhood Association
Colonel	Gwen	South Broadway Neighborhood Association
De Champlon	James S.	Casa Barelas/ABQ Cultural Services
Dodson	Amber	ABQ Film Office
Dorn-Jones	Diana	United South Broadway Corporation
Forehand	Joy	Workforce Connections
Garcia	Eddie	South Broadway Neighborhood Association; Rail Yard Advisory Board
Griego	Eric	Barelas Community Coalition; Rail Yard Advisory Board
Gutierrez	Daniel	New Mexico Medical Society
Isaac	Claudia	Consultant Team
Iverson	Karen	CABQ, Metropolitan Redevelopment
Lofton	Mike	Homewise
Martinez	Arthur	Workforce Connections
Martinez	Chuy	Casa Barelas
Martinez	Joe	Casa Barelas
Munoz	Jesus	Not listed
Ortega	Joe	YES Housing
Pedraza	Lucas	CABQ Economic Development
Piper	Alaska	Barelas Community Coalition; Rail Yards Market
Price	Olivia M.	San Jose Neighborhood Association
Quinones	Pancho	Resident

Rogers	Cristina	Barelas Neighborhood Association; Barelas Community Coalition
Romero	Ron	Casa Barelas
Saavedra	Alejandro	Barelas Community Coalition
Sandoval	Marco	Story Riders Afterschool Program
Silva	Julianna	WEST, Barelas Community Coalition
Stone	Deborah	South Broadway Neighborhood Association
Thompson	Charlie	South Broadway Neighborhood Association
Valarde	Rebecca	Mortgage Finance Authority
Vanneman	Brian	Consultant Team

**ATTACHMENT II: FOCUS GROUP HANDOUTS**

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### **Equitable Development and Economic Prosperity**

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“Equitable development is an approach to creating healthy, vibrant, communities of opportunity. Equitable outcomes come about when smart, intentional strategies are put in place to ensure that everyone can participate in and benefit from decisions that shape their neighborhoods and regions.”

- Policy Link, <http://edtk.policylink.org/>

“(The Rail Yards Master Development Plan seeks to) “catalyze future neighborhood redevelopment in collaboration with the Barelmas and South Broadway neighborhoods”

- Albuquerque Rail Yards Master Development Plan, <https://www.cabq.gov/council/projects/completed-projects/2014/albuquerque-rail-yards-redevelopment>.

Equitable development strategies seek to ensure that business development supports the economic prosperity of the local community, supports local “value chains” that enhance the business environment for existing locally owned businesses, and generates new on- and off-site businesses that support socially & environmentally responsible local entrepreneurship.

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### **What the Rail Yards Master Development Plan Says about Equitable Development**

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- Provide the opportunity for micro-businesses to locate at the Rail Yards.
- Develop local business enterprises as well as recruiting appropriate outside firms.
- Provide necessary safeguards for developing new commercial and light industrial uses alongside existing and future residential uses, both adjacent to and within the site.
- Provide for goods and services that meet the needs of neighborhood residents and businesses.
- Prohibit uses such as emergency shelter, retail sale of alcoholic drinks for consumption off-premise, off-premise signs, sale of gasoline and liquefied petroleum gas, adult amusement establishments and adult store, cold storage plant, and pawn shops.
- Leverage direct investment, policies, legislation and formation of public-private partnerships to promote local economic prosperity.
- Consider the establishment of a small business incubator or second stage incubator on the site.
- Provide safe, well-designed physical connections between the Rail Yards site and adjacent neighborhoods, emphasizing east/west access points along Second Street. and Commercial, to create retail edges that ensure consumer access to businesses in both neighborhoods and Rail Yard enterprises.
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### Other Equitable Development Community Benefits to Consider

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- Triple bottom line developer preferences in RFP.
- Taxation & commercial linkage strategies such as Tax Increment Financing, Business Improvement District with community benefits by-laws, and impact fees for non-affordable commercial and housing development.
- Revisit the vendor mix at the Rail Yard Market (for example the Española and South Valley Farmer's Markets, and the Oakland Weekend Market).
- Incentivize development of worker owned cooperatives.
- Support existing local CDC's in economic development with local and minority contracting incentives, in partnership with local CDFI's.
- Recruit retail focused on community centered products (locally valued and affordable). Monitor CRA requirements for bank investment in local CED initiatives.

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### Our Questions for You

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- What aspects of the current master plan that deal with economic prosperity do you like and where there are gaps?
- What are the current business development needs in the community?
- What policy solutions would help current Barelas and South Broadway business remain in the community and/or develop new local businesses, and where do we have capacity in the community to implement these solutions?
- What advice can you give us about how to structure community engagement moving forward in the Rail Yard development process?

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### **Equitable Development and Economic Prosperity**

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“Equitable development is an approach to creating healthy, vibrant, communities of opportunity. Equitable outcomes come about when smart, intentional strategies are put in place to ensure that everyone can participate in and benefit from decisions that shape their neighborhoods and regions.”

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- Albuquerque Rail Yards Master Development Plan, <https://www.cabq.gov/council/projects/completed-projects/2014/albuquerque-rail-yards-redevelopment>.

Equitable development strategies seek to assure that residents of neighborhoods adjacent to a developing area will benefit by appropriately affordable on- and off-site housing, and ensure that existing neighborhood residents can remain, and flourish, in their communities.

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### **What the Rail Yards Master Development Plan Says about Affordable Housing**

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- Provide for a range of housing types, such as apartments and/or live/work units, that are either market rate and/or workforce housing in order to meet market demand for mixed-use, urban dwellings and to help enhance activity and vibrancy on- and off-site.
- Meet the Workforce Housing Trust Fund requirements of at least 30 affordable housing units on the site.
- Integrate new housing developments with the Rail Yards edges to ensure integration with existing neighborhoods.
- Assure complementary housing scale and design that respects and relates to the scale of development on the Rail Yard edges, for example by stepping up building heights towards the interior of the site.
- Phase development activities to minimize adverse impacts of construction on new housing residents on-site.
- Encourage infill workforce housing development on existing vacant lots and support housing rehabilitation programs in adjacent neighborhoods to strengthen existing communities, minimize displacement and integrate with the redevelopment of the Rail Yards.
- Acquire additional land for complementary redevelopment opportunities by the City and Developer.
- Foster partnerships for redevelopment opportunities through public, private and/or public-private partnerships to maximize development opportunities on sites that abut or are adjacent to the Rail Yards and that support the aims of the Master Plan.
- Buffer residential development on-site from areas developed for the visiting public.
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### Other Affordable Housing Community Benefits to Consider

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- Explore taxation relief solutions such as local expansion of property tax exemption eligibility and tax relief for owner occupied housing rehabilitation.
- Develop incentives and/or requirements for developers to contribute to the Workforce Housing Trust Fund (WHTF), possibly through Real Estate Transfer Taxes.
- Institute government initiatives such as rent stabilization, just-cause eviction controls, tenant-centric code enforcement, and inclusionary zoning.
- Explore on-site Land Trust and cooperative ownership models, while supporting existing neighborhood limited equity ownership initiatives.
- Support existing housing CDC's and recruit non-profit and private developers to create subsidized on & off-site affordable housing development, including infill development incentives (using financing such as LIHTC, HOME funds, and the WHTF). Create incentives for employer assisted housing.
- Monitor local mortgage lending (CRA required) and predatory lending practices.
- Support anti-predatory lending legislation.
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### Our Questions for You

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- What aspects of the current master plan that deal with affordable housing do you like and where there are gaps?
- What are the current housing needs in the community?
- What policy solutions would help current Barelás and South Broadway residents remain in the community and/or meet current housing needs, and where do we have capacity in the community to implement these solutions?
- What advice can you give us about how to structure community engagement moving forward in the Rail Yard development process?

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### **Equitable Development and Workforce Development**

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“Equitable development is an approach to creating healthy, vibrant, communities of opportunity. Equitable outcomes come about when smart, intentional strategies are put in place to ensure that everyone can participate in and benefit from decisions that shape their neighborhoods and regions.”

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“(The Rail Yards Master Development Plan seeks to) “catalyze future neighborhood redevelopment in collaboration with the Barelmas and South Broadway neighborhoods.”

- Albuquerque Rail Yards Master Development Plan, <https://www.cabq.gov/council/projects/completed-projects/2014/albuquerque-rail-yards-redevelopment>.

**Overview: equitable development ensures that employment opportunities created on-site meet the employment needs in and capacity of adjacent communities, provide incentives and requirements for well-paid, career-ladder local jobs, and enhance the educational and training opportunities for adjacent residents especially youth.**

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### **What the Rail Yards Master Development Plan Says about Workforce Development**

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- Generate employment opportunities, with a mix of living and high wage jobs, as well as job training.
- Embrace the concept of creating “synergy” between the jobs created at the Rail Yards and employment of neighborhood residents, in order to raise the economic status for Barelmas and South Broadway neighborhoods.
- Promote planning and policies that create new employment opportunities which accommodate a wide range of occupational skills and salary levels.
- New jobs to be located convenient to areas of most need.
- Leverage opportunities for improvement in occupational skills and advancement.
- Consistent with the Barelmas Sector Plan, emphasize sustainable job creation, rather than rely solely on construction jobs during the redevelopment phase.
- Provides opportunities to generate quality, living-wage and high-wage jobs and programs that will link those jobs with community residents.
- Include provision in Development Agreements that provide opportunities for educational training at the Rail Yards.
- encourage the practice of first-source hiring, through legislation, contracting requirements and/or incentives to hire local employees, and incentives to hire graduates of New Mexico institutions.
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### Other Workforce Development Community Benefits to Consider

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- Require on-site enterprises pay at least the *current* living wage rate ([livingwage.mit.edu](http://livingwage.mit.edu)).
- Amend Albuquerque Living Wage Ordinance to track fluctuations in current living wage.
- Work with State and Counties to strengthen content and reinforce enforcement of wage theft laws.
- Conduct a local human resources assessment focusing on the adjacent neighborhoods.
- In addition to first source neighborhood hiring, prioritize contracting minority-owned, woman-owned, and small disadvantaged businesses.
- Recruit businesses on site that generate employment in regional emerging employment sectors, such as value added food processing, film production, and information services....
- Encourage cooperatives and other employee-ownership models, which predict higher than average wages and allow for worker asset development through profit sharing.
- Locate an office of NM Workforce Development Agency, and other organizations/agencies that do employee development, technical assistance, and placement services on the site.
- Prioritize unionized labor in new on-site commercial and manufacturing. Job training facilitates located on and off site.

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### Our Questions for You

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- What aspects of the current master plan that deal with workforce development do you like and where there are gaps?
- What are the current employment needs in the community?
- What policies and programs would help Barelás, South Broadway, and San José residents benefit from the Rail Yards Development, and where do we have capacity in the community to implement these solutions?
- What advice can you give us about how to structure community engagement moving forward in the Rail Yard development process?

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### **Equitable Development and Workforce Development**

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“Equitable development is an approach to creating healthy, vibrant, communities of opportunity. Equitable outcomes come about when smart, intentional strategies are put in place to ensure that everyone can participate in and benefit from decisions that shape their neighborhoods and regions.”

- Policy Link, <http://edtk.policylink.org/>

“(The Rail Yards Master Development Plan seeks to) “catalyze future neighborhood redevelopment in collaboration with the Barelmas and South Broadway neighborhoods.”

- Albuquerque Rail Yards Master Development Plan, <https://www.cabq.gov/council/projects/completed-projects/2014/albuquerque-rail-yards-redevelopment>.

Equitable development strategies seek to ensure that residents of adjacent neighborhoods have access to arts and cultural events and objects benefit from culturally and historically relevant arts and cultural activities on the site. An equitable arts and culture development will link on-site activities to existing and potential cultural capital in adjacent neighborhoods.

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### **What the Rail Yards Master Development Plan Says about Arts & Culture**

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- Provide “the necessary framework to direct new development that respects the historic condition and context of the Rail Yards property”.
- Prioritize redevelopment of and recognition of the Round House as an important element of Albuquerque’s history.
- Provide the opportunity for the WHEELS Museum to be located within the Round House.
- The site will include a museum or other appropriate facility that informs visitors of the history of the Rail Yards and the site’s relationship to the history of Albuquerque.
- Locate cultural facilities strategically to ensure neighborhood and general public accessibility.
- Develop standards for community use of public spaces. Standards for cultural and community events, art installation and performance, and farmers’ markets, mobile restaurants and other groups will be developed as required.
- Acknowledge and accept the concept of architecture as art.
- Include venues for artistic expression that celebrate Albuquerque’s vibrant art community. Traditional and digital murals are appropriate mediums of artistic expression.
- A Rebuilt Smokestack may be developed as a venue for Public Art.

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### Other Arts & Culture Community Benefits to Consider

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- Develop a local community arts plan with participation by neighborhood residents (especially neighborhood artists), local artists, and representatives of key area arts venues.
- Conduct cultural assessment mapping exercise in adjacent neighborhoods to determine the appropriate mix of performing arts, gallery, and museum spaces on the site.
- Connect educational and entrepreneurial activities around the CNM Film Program to Arts & Cultural programming on the site.
- Consider artist live/work spaces in the housing component on the site.
- Consider including an arts incubator component in a business incubator located on-site.
- Plan for permanent and/or pop-up public art installations to ensure broad public access to arts-activated spaces.
- Consider linking arts and cultural events on-site to community fiestas and events in adjacent neighborhoods, and events in the NHCC.
- Engage with organizations such as Working Classroom to develop on-site and adjacent-neighborhood mural programs involving local youth mentorship and activism.

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### Our Questions for You

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- What aspects of the current master plan that deal with arts and culture do you like and where there are gaps?
- Assuming there is an artistic space in the Railyards, how do you imagine the Railyards serving the community? Imagine 6 things that you might see at the Rail Yards.
- What organizational space needs exist in the community?
- How do we keep the arts accessible and reflective of the community?

## **ATTACHMENT III: FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES**



## City Of Albuquerque Planning Department

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June 8, 2019

### MARCH 20, 2019 RAILYARDS ECONOMIC PROSPERITY FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

The Railyards Affordable Housing and Equitable Development Focus Group Conversation took place at Dennis Chavez Community Center on March 20, 2019, commencing at 6:05pm. A total of 18 participants were present. MRA Manager Karen Iverson, Economic Development Manager Lucas Pedraza, and Planning Administrator James M. Aranda were present on behalf of the City of Albuquerque. UNM Professor Claudia Isaac—a subcontractor for the Railyards Project—facilitated the focus group.

Dr. Isaac kicked off the meeting with an overview of the event. Next everyone in the room introduced themselves. Mr. Aranda then updated those in attendance on the status redevelopment efforts of the Railyards by the City—and provided some context into the City's short term engagement efforts. Dr. Isaac then led the focus group conversation. The meeting ended at approximately 7:50pm. A bulleted list of notes from the focus group conversation and the "insights and ideas" cards are included below. Please send comments and/or corrections to James Aranda at [jmaranda@cabq.gov](mailto:jmaranda@cabq.gov) and Claudia Isaac at [cisaac@unm.edu](mailto:cisaac@unm.edu).

#### **Attendees:**

Esther Abeyta (San José Resident), Steven Abeyta (San José Resident), James Aranda (CABQ Planning), Frances Armijo (SBNA), Anzia Bennet (Three Sisters Kitchen), Dorothy Chavez (BNA), Gwen Colonel (SBNA), Diana Dorn Jones (USBC), Eric Griego (BCC, RYAB), Daniel Gutierrez (NMMS), Claudia Isaac (Consultant Team), Karen Iverson (CABQ, Metropolitan Redevelopment), Mike Lofton (Homewise), Joe Ortega (YES Housing), Lucas Pedraza (CABQ Economic Development), Alaska Piper (BCC, Rail Yards Market), Cristina Rogers (BNA, BCC), Alejandro Saavedra (BCC), Charlie Thopson (SBNA), Deborah Stone (SBNA), Rebecca Valarde (MFA), Brian Vanneman (Consultant Team)

#### **Summary of Key Outcomes:**

There are a number of local entrepreneurial initiatives and existing local business that could benefit from business development at the RY's as long as those supply chains and market multipliers are considered in business incubation and/or recruitment. Business development and workforce development initiatives must be coordinated to ensure local benefit. A diverse mix of small and medium sized enterprises are most likely to create links to existing businesses and neighborhood entrepreneurial potential. Enterprise development on the RY site must not contribute to environmental degradation, especially since the surrounding neighborhoods, especially San José are burdened with polluting industries. The relative low incomes of neighborhood households call for a mix of price points in commercial enterprises on the site. Participants' largely agree that business development goals are more likely to be met through an incremental, phased development strategy rather than by seeking another master developer.



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### Focus Group Notes

#### **Question 1: What aspects of the current master plan that deal with economic prosperity do you like and where there are gaps?**

- Zoning changes have taken place over time [the context on which the Master Plan was based has changed]
  - car lots are no longer desirable [in South Broadway]
- The San Jose neighborhood was not engaged in the Master Plan process
- Original vision of the Master Plan needs to change—the site is only 27 acres [which will only allow for so much employment] parking will take up a large amount of space on the site
  - Utility, practicality and return on investment will limit what happens on the site
- People have not had much access to the Master Plan
- [In Barelás] the planning process for the Master Plan had extensive community engagement
  - Had previously engaged in Barelás Sector Development Plan/zoning initiatives
  - Internally we were conducting pláticas and charrettes prior to engaging in Master Plan
- Q: What is the process for bringing on a developer?
- There are many unanswered questions—great ideas but no movement forward
- Q: What is the path forward?

#### **Question 2: What are the current business development needs in the community?**

- Need to make the Railyards site accessible to surrounding communities (not a walled/gated off)
- The Railyards are a national treasure, need fluid connections to both sides (east and west)
- [Economic] opportunities must resonate with residents
  - Healthy mix of micro and macro entrepreneurs
  - Should offer opportunities/jobs to community members most in need
  - Thoughtful community engagement will ensure appropriate business development and
- Q: How many jobs will be created [on the site]?
- Require a First Source Hiring agreement
- The RYAB feels accountable for selecting Samitaur
  - One maser developer is a risky strategy. This is an opportunity to revise the plan so as to diversify development capacity.
- The Railyards can be a giant incubator that fosters local food-related industry
- An early proposal to develop sound studios was unappealing because it was walled off from the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Convention Center has mixed appeal among participants
- Q: How do we turn inward?
- The Railyards should be a job creator/a site for jobs; and so development priorities should go to businesses that create substantial jobs (“500 would be awesome”) accessible to skill-sets and education levels of neighborhood residents, and provide career ladder opportunities.
- Food business entrepreneurs
  - Small manufacturing/food producers



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- A central location for food-packing facilities (up to 50 people) is needed
- Needs for an environmentally-sound, USDA certified slaughterhouse (not a large facility)
  - For craft/artisan meat goods
  - Small scale butchery
- Tree/Plant germination program/businesses (Example: Growing Justice)
- Incentives for small, local CDC's and 501©3's that provide community and public use, for instance a farmer's market.
- We need jobs that keep our children here
- Businesses must be affordable and/or target needs
- Balance between high and low income [retail and service] needs
  - Lavanderias, drug stores, small shops
- Karen Iverson gave an overview of the site's environmental health considerations and the City's voluntary remediation efforts
  - 
  - Esther: An Offloading Study was conducted in the San José neighborhood that needs to be considered.

### **Question 3: What policy solutions would help current Barelas and South Broadway business remain in the community and/or develop new local businesses, and where do we have capacity in the community to implement these solutions?**

- We need First Source Hiring with an enforceable agreement that includes:
  - On job training
  - Local business development
  - Example: Embassy Suites First Source Agreement—Embassy Suites makes annual contribution to Santa Barbara/Martineztown NA
    - Need to establish a neighborhood-driven committee
- Could explore establishing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or Tax Increment Development District (TIDD) that includes/benefits surrounding neighborhoods
  - Q: Is there a willingness to reopen the Master Plan?
  - The details of the TIF or TIDD need to be carefully considered to ensure that neighborhoods benefit from the tax increment provisions, and not just developers (e.g. claw back provisions, limiting the amount of tax increment that goes into the TIF and what stays in the general fund)
- The site is in a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area, and there is an MRA Plan that applies.
  - Q: Is there openness from the City to update the MRA Plan?
- Small business should generally be located in the commercial corridors in Barelas and South Broadway [4<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway)
- Tax incentives should focus inward – “grow our own jobs”
- Q: What are some the uses (both public and private) can we bring in?
- Strike a balance between filling spaces and creating the public good
- Focus on office space is misguided in the current Albuquerque economy.
-



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- The development has to be unique in order to compete with other regional business centers. This could be rail-focused (a distribution hub approach).
- There are good examples of developments in similar sites in other Cities (Minneapolis, Nashville, Anaheim,
- The space can possibly attract solar manufacturing
- Solar manufacturing is a dirty/polluting industry
- Could support film industry, but ensure that the jobs available to local residents pay prevailing wage and provide career ladder opportunities.
- The site needs both larger economic-base jobs—food tech jobs and value added agriculture as well as small scale entrepreneurship.
  - Not all economic-base jobs are created by firms recruited from outside the region.
  - The State has a lot of incentives for economic base jobs, but fewer for small businesses.
- Noise [resulting from events at Railyards] has been a major issue in South Broadway for the last 4 years
  - The site needs sensitive buffers—noise generating uses should be articulated to the center of the site
- Q: [What are the pros/cons of] one master developer vs multiple developers?
- BNSF moves millions of dollars in merchandise through Albuquerque every day how about a BNSF office?
- Q: How do we ensure that kids in the neighborhoods will want the jobs created?
  - Could add a small community office for workforce development for new jobs opening at the Rail Yards, where jobs could be posted, applicants could be interviewed, and job seekers could connect to CNM/UNM training programs.
- We need a thoughtful process that checks in with key actors in the neighborhoods to ensure that the site remains open to the surrounding communities as the commercial development phases in.
  - People in the neighborhoods have fixed incomes
  - Take into account homeowners (affordability)
  - Explore a tax freeze for small enterprises similar to the freeze proposed for lower income homeowners.

### **Question 4: What advice can you give us about how to structure community engagement moving forward in the Rail Yard development process?**

- [The site's] environmental health needs to have the highest level of transparency
  - Public report and presentation can be accomplished through the existing Rail Yards website at [CABQ.gov](http://CABQ.gov).
  - Results of environmental testing and a summary of what it means need to be available to community, again, possibly through the web site.
  - The City could coordinate/ set up workshops.
- The City should issue a calendar/timeline of events for the Railyards



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- Simultaneously, the communities (Barelas, South Broadway, San José) should meet internally/amongst one another. Participants will receive the email list from this focus group, and neighborhood organizations can create their own calendar of topical study groups:
  - Linked to topics/benchmarks
    - I.e.: Environmental Health, Economic Incentives, History, etc.
  - Possibly monthly or bi-monthly meetings: One topic at a time
    - The neighborhoods could organize topic study sessions
  - City liaison provides information/tech assistance
  - Inclusion of all three neighborhoods in this internal process will be critical.



## City Of Albuquerque Planning Department

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June 8, 2019

### MARCH 19, 2019 RAILYARDS AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

The Railyards Affordable Housing and Equitable Development Focus Group Conversation took place at the Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce on March 19, 2019, commencing at 6:15pm. A total of 14 participants were present. MRA Manager Karen Iverson, Economic Development Manager Lucas Pedraza, and Planning Administrator James M. Aranda were present on behalf of the City of Albuquerque. UNM Professor Claudia Isaac—a subcontractor for the Railyards Project—facilitated the focus group.

Dr. Isaac kicked off the meeting with an overview of the event. Next everyone in the room introduced themselves. Mr. Aranda then updated those in attendance on the status redevelopment efforts of the Railyards by the City—and provided some context into the City's short term engagement efforts. Dr. Isaac then led the focus group conversation. The meeting ended at approximately 7:45pm. A bulleted list of notes from the focus group conversation are included below. Please send comments or corrections to James Aranda at [jmaranda@cabq.gov](mailto:jmaranda@cabq.gov), and Claudia Isaac at [cisaac@unm.edu](mailto:cisaac@unm.edu).

#### **Attendees:**

James Aranda (CABQ Planning), Julia Archibeque-Guerra (BNA), Frances Armijo (SBNA), Connie Chavez (SCLT), Dorothy Chavez (BNA), Gwen Colonel (SBNA), Diana Dorn Jones (USBC), Eddie Garcia (RYAB), Claudia Isaac (Consultant Team), Karen Iverson (CABQ, Metropolitan Redevelopment), Mike Lofton (Homewise), Joe Ortega (YES Housing), Lucas Pedraza (CABQ Economic Development), Cristina Rogers (BNA, BCC), Rebecca Valarde (MFA)

#### **Summary of Key Outcomes**

Participants' insights centered around opportunities and challenges of providing affordable housing affordability on the Rail Yards Site, and productive neighborhood stabilization strategies that could ensure that current residents can participate in a flourishing mixed use neighborhood without displacement, including expanding the County tax freeze for the elderly, weatherization and home-owner rehab subsidies, foreclosure prevention programs, and rehab of vacant and abandoned buildings.

#### **Focus Group Notes**

**Question 1: What aspects of the current master plan that deal with affordable housing do you like and where there are gaps?**

- Like the mixed-income housing requirement
- Need more [multi]-family housing (Not just single family housing)
- Need to protect long-time residents [of Barelás, S. Broadway, San Jose]
- Additional affordable senior housing is needed as well
- Q: What is considered affordable?
- A: 80% of AMI is considered affordable (roughly \$55,000/year for a family of 4)
- Ideally not more than 30% of income should be spent on housing costs (mortgage/rent)



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- Plan does not have enough specificity on what will happen to the [existing] housing right along railyards site
- If a development plan [for railyards] is put in place a displacement plan/plan for relocation is needed/desired
- Connectivity and access to the site are important to the surrounding neighborhoods
  - How safely people can access the site is important (infrastructure)
  - The [Guadalupe] overpass cut off access to the railyards and neighborhoods on the other side

### Question 2: What are the current housing needs in the community?

- 50% of Barelás residents are renters
  - Plan needs to talk about next steps: how to transition renters into homeowners
  - Low income renters tend to move from one rental to another within Barelás
- When our generation dies, the kids will not want to stay in the old neighborhoods, most will sell and move out (How do we keep our people in our communities?)
- Q: Is the goal to develop a [housing] plan? Should there be a percentage of different housing types [on the railyards site]?
- Q: What about infrastructure on railyards site?
- Whatever happens on railyards site will have impacts on surrounding area and it will get harder to buy homes as time goes on
- The ability [for homeowners] to do home repairs/rehab is very important
- Barelás tends to have high vacancy rates
- Abundance of vacant lots [in S. Broadway] are bank-owned makes it difficult to rehab/rebuild to create new affordable housing
- Both Barelás and South Broadway are changing rapidly

### Question 3: What policy solutions would help current Barelás and South Broadway residents remain in the community and/or meet current housing needs, and where do we have capacity in the community to implement these solutions?

- A tax overlay to prevent displacement
- State tax abatement to secure elderly population's housing
- Expansion of any existing [property] tax freezes
- Identifying vacant properties, rehabbing them and selling them as affordable housing a challenge but needed
- Recently Councilor Benton mentioned the passage of an equitable Community Investment ordinance that allocates public monies based on a ranking of neighborhoods with highest need
- 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge project in Washington DC can serve as a model for equitable development
- Build up family-owned housing stock
- Establish and fund a down payment assistance program for home buyers
- Explore land trust models



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- First Source hiring agreements with surrounding neighborhoods (challenging to access/find information on available jobs)
- Target the businesses/industry that we actually want on the site
- Quality of Life—the railyards will have impacts across the metro area
- Environmental remediation needs to happen ASAP
  - Karen Iverson responded in regard to the site’s environmental health status and plans for remediation
- City staff assured participants that community members can review the actual environmental health data/reports?
- Julia: My father worked in the Machine Shop for over 40 years and he never faced any major health issues—he died of natural causes
- Q: How much will project cost? What will attract millennials to live on site?
- Drug Nuisance Abatement Order
- State Rep. Stansbury commissioned funds for a city-wide affordable housing survey
- Community engagement is critical
- Educate community about how restrictive funding sources are to establish realistic expectations
- Look at diverse funding sources (i.e. foundations, churches, etc.)
- Local CDC’s (USBC and BCC) have expertise in infill housing development, and receive less resistance from residents than outside developers. The City could help build capacity of our local CDC’s to lead infill development.
- Q: Has anyone surveyed families whose children attend Coronado ES about if they are interested in moving to Barelmas?
- How can Coronado ES families invest in Barelmas?
- Real grocery stores that serve the needs of residents in affordable housing can complement affordable housing development.
- Recruit households who have moved out of neighborhoods for home ownership.

### **Question 4: What advice can you give us about how to structure community engagement moving forward in the Rail Yard development process?**

- The Railyards is an emotional site; the City must include people at every step of the way
- Pace engagement to the neighborhood. “If you move too fast, you will fall face first”
- Railyards tours for residents of surrounding communities would be great (Railyards Day)
- Holding pláticas [conversation sessions] in the communities
- Reinforce the idea of a “complete neighborhood” with community involvement booths with all three neighborhoods manning booths.
- Tabling community events and gathering places such as neighborhood fiestas, such as Sacred Heart Church, Casa Barelmas, Barelmas Senior Center, Cesar Chavez Community Center, [with updates/information on the railyards efforts]
- Conducting participatory public art (especially during the Railyards Market season)
  - Example: Wish Wall



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- Hold family railyards days where descendants of railyards workers can reunite
- City could develop and designate Cultural Overlay zones to ensure equitable development
  - Look at protections in Sector Development Plans/IDO
- Now is the time to put attention/effort on finding out what resources are needed to stabilize surrounding neighborhoods [once development begins it is too late]

**Insights that do not relate directly to affordable housing** (These points relate to employment potential of the RY Development, and will be brought up in the workforce development session):

- Do outreach at Washington Middle School and Albuquerque High School to expand job opportunities for youth in the neighborhoods
- Promote jobs in tech areas and film that pay well.



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April 29, 2019

### APRIL 9, 2019 RAILYARDS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

The Railyards Workforce Development Conversation took place at 6:00 pm on April 9, 2019, commencing at the Herman Sanchez Community Center. A total of 16 participants were present. MRA Manager Karen Iverson, Economic Development Manager Lucas Pedraza, and Planning Administrator James M. Aranda were present on behalf of the City of Albuquerque. UNM Professor Claudia Isaac—a subcontractor for the Railyards Project—facilitated the focus group.

Dr. Isaac kicked off the meeting with an overview of the event. Next everyone in the room introduced themselves. Mr. Aranda then updated those in attendance on the status redevelopment efforts of the Railyards by the City—and provided some context into the City’s short term engagement efforts. Dr. Isaac then led the focus group conversation. The meeting ended at approximately 7:45. A summary of notes from the focus group conversation and the “insights and ideas” cards are included below. Please send comments and/or corrections to James Aranda at [imaranda@cabq.gov](mailto:imaranda@cabq.gov) and Claudia Isaac at [cisaac@unm.edu](mailto:cisaac@unm.edu).

#### **Attendees:**

Esther Abeyta (San José Resident), James Aranda (CABQ Planning), Frances Armijo (SBNA), Dorothy Chavez (BNA), Gwen Colonel (SBNA), Joy Forehand (Workforce Connections), Diana Dorn Jones (USBC), Eddie Garcia (SBNA/Ryab), Claudia Isaac (Consultant Team), Karen Iverson (CABQ, Metropolitan Redevelopment), Arthur Martinez (Workforce Connections), Joe Martínez (Casa Barelás), Lucas Pedraza (CABQ Economic Development), Cristina Rogers (BNA, BCC), Ron Romero (Casa Barelás), Julianna Silva (WEST, BCC).

#### **Summary of Key Outcomes**

Job-related community benefits can be derived throughout the Rail Yard planning, development, and build out phases of the project, starting with strategies to prepare existing residents of adjacent neighborhoods for high quality jobs in Rail Yard enterprises, continuing with recruiting local residents for development related (construction...) and commercial activities on the site. This is consistent with the first source hiring requirements recommended by participants in the economic prosperity focus group, but shifts attention away from low-skill, low pay jobs likely to be accessible to current residents (whose education levels tend to be lower than the City as a whole), to building on- and off-site education and training capacity targeted to local participants.

Participants also indicated that resources for training and job placement already exist in the community, and are available to residents of the RY-adjacent neighborhoods, but neighborhood-based organizations are not being utilized fully to help direct residents to those programs. Neighborhood participants committed to helping with that pipeline in their respective communities.

A common theme in all of the focus groups, jobs created (and businesses recruited) as part of the Rail Yard Development must attend to the historical and contemporary environmental pollution, particularly in the RY-related enterprises located in the San José neighborhood. This includes replacing the jobs in existing polluting industries with opportunities for clean, safe employment.



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### Focus Group Notes

#### **Question 1: What aspects of the current master plan that deal with economic prosperity do you like and where there are gaps?**

Participants seemed to be both interested in supporting the workforce development aspects of the Rail Yards Development Plan and concerned that past efforts have lacked full transparency and accountability.

It became apparent that participants felt past administrations have not maintained the necessary transparency and accountability needed to instill trust, faith, and hope in projects like these, and so expressed some distrust that current community engagement efforts will bear fruit in the actual development process.

Participants were very much focused on the possibility the RY development plan offers brings for creating jobs and new opportunities for the community. Participants felt there was a real possibility that modifications of this plan could create jobs and reduce the crime rates in the communities that surround the Rail Yards. However, there was concern that the developer, if left to begin without a contracted obligation to focus on the community, could bring in jobs that the community is not yet able to fill. Therefore, participants believed that the 2014 plan does not sufficiently emphasize helping residents surrounding communities become ready for jobs created by the RY development, particularly those who have challenges finding jobs, such as those been incarcerated before, and/or the youth in the area.

Concerns participants voiced as missing from the plan were:

1. Recruiting businesses that generated substantial numbers of jobs, generating high quality jobs, and providing training needed to fill those jobs;
2. Some strategy to rebuild trust within the community after high expectations for jobs raised in the 2014 plan did not come to fruition;
3. Identification of potential employers and businesses from the neighborhoods who are interested and can afford to work in the Rail Yards; and
4. Promises (contractual if possible) to hire from within the neighborhood job pools before hiring from the rest of Albuquerque or bringing in employees from out of town.

There was some concern about the specificity of job creation and workforce development in the original plan. Some participants felt there were too many “ifs” in the plan. One stated, “How do we train and prepare if we don’t know who is wanting to do business in the railyards and what jobs there will be?” Others argued that the City need not wait for the implementation of the RY development plan for job development, and rather should and could focus on long term preferred job recruitment, rather than waiting to tailor job training to the existing commercial and manufacturing market.

#### **Question 2: What are the current business development needs in the community?**

Participants had several ideas for additional considerations to incorporate into the plan. Participants were passionate about making sure the local communities were not overlooked in the planning of Rail Yard development in regards to job creation.

Suggestions were made that training could take place within correctional facilities and local high schools and middle schools to ensure that folks will have the skills needed to work in the Rail Yards, both during construction and after. Participants noted that Middle School is an important starting point, not only because that is where critical math and literacy skills are designed (and where young people can, if



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encouraged, begin to map out a career in STEM and other lucrative fields). Perhaps more importantly, participants noted that middle school is a prime recruitment age for gang and other criminal associations, and when first time adjudication often feeds the school to prison pipeline rather than a school to workforce pipeline.

There was vibrant discussion around the type and social mobility potential of jobs to be created in the neighborhood. As noted above, the discussion broke into two schools of thought. The first highlighted the need to conduct a labor force analysis as part of this current development planning activity, which identify who is currently in need of employment opportunities in the neighborhoods, and what types of jobs they are able to fill (essentially who is willing and able to work at jobs that will be created by the plan). The other school of thought argued that planners, neighborhood organizations and schools could work together with youth to determine the types of jobs they may be interested in, and then work to incorporate those kinds of jobs into what is likely to be a long-term development process. The second school of thought was that the plan could indicate the types of jobs that will be created in the Rail Yard development, and there could be training offered to prepare residents to take on those jobs. These two points of view shared the position that a diverse set of tools are available to facilitate job development, on- and off-site, including paid apprenticeships, and on-the-job training. Regardless of the plan direction, participants agreed that there is a firm need to rebuild trust in the neighboring communities that development on the RY will benefit their youth. Participants cited huge losses of hope and aspiration—especially around jobs—and suggested that huge emphasis be placed on repairing the lost trust and relationships.

Participants noted that San José's employment needs are somewhat different from those of South Broadway and Barelás, given the history of environmentally polluting industries (and accompanying workplace safety and neighborhood contamination issues in that neighborhood, directly related to Railroad activities. In this neighborhood, stricter enforcement of environmental and workplace regulations, combined with new job opportunities that can replace the regional rail enterprises located just south of the site, would be a major benefit to that neighborhood.

### **Question 3: What policy solutions would help current Barelás and South Broadway business remain in the community and/or develop new local businesses, and where do we have capacity in the community to implement these solutions?**

One key theme in this response was the accessibility of the Rail Yards Advisory Board (RYAB). Participants commented that the RYAB should be much more accessible physically, and should collaborate with local organizations to improve relationships. Some noted that there is an opportunity in the current City focus on remediation and site planning in the northern part of the site to remove the unsightly and unwelcoming fencing that surrounds the site. This edge-condition concern of all three neighborhoods related to setting the stage for neighborhood residents to return to the idea that the Rail Yards is their employment center, as it was when the site was functioning as a train maintenance and repair facility.

Another strong theme in the discussion was the strong potential for collaborations/partnerships to advance workforce related benefits. Specific organizations discussed include:

- Workforce Connections –training (with funding available), education, and employment support.
- Office of Neighborhood Coordination (ONC)
- New Mexico Youth Conservation Corp



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- Father's Building Futures
- Schools – Albuquerque High School, Jefferson Middle School, others?
- Youth (in general)
- Adopt a School programs
- CNM and CNM Digital Media Labs
  - Work with CNM to create virtual reality, mock-ups, what goes on behind the scenes in film
  - Interns could create some virtual reality for the site – both training and creative activity.
- Existing workforce development resources: WESST & Partners – engaging schools with entrepreneurship training; helps support/ train small businesses to create jobs.
- CABQ “Incremental Development Program” trains people to be developers – discussion about implementing the program in Barelás.

Participants emphasized that there are already agencies, organizations, and group with the capacity to implement many of these workforce development ideas even before any development agreements are promulgated for the site.

Suggestions on how to collaborate:

1. Create mechanisms to connect agencies and organization to folks who might be able to use them – One participant stated: “it doesn’t necessarily have to be the city doing [the training] or some big agency, we can do it, we’re powerful people,” but folks need to know what is out there and what is being offered. The participant gave an example of the computer literacy classes that are offered for free at Casa Barelás. Folks could really benefit from that training if they knew it were taking place.
2. Figure out how to collaborate with big companies, businesses, and corporations that are willing to (and interested in) invest(ing) in the people from these communities.
3. Listen to the youth – see what they are aspiring to, what are they interested in, and try to work those ideas into the development plan.
4. Use partnerships and collaborations to create mentorships and internships for youth and apprenticeships for aspiring workers.
5. If conducting a Labor Force Analysis around the railyards, include veterans, victims of domestic violence, dropouts, single parents, persons who have been unemployed for a long time, persons previously incarcerated, etc.
6. Focus on workforce development and partnerships that share the same goal – start earlier in the three communities: Barelás, South Broadway, San José (emphasize youth).
  - a. Hold “kick-back sessions” among youth from the three neighborhoods;
  - b. Hold sessions both in the three communities and at the railyards with youth to give them a taste of what will be happening there and job potential: filming, clean energy construction.

### **Question 4: What advice can you give us about how to structure community engagement moving forward in the Rail Yard development process?**

The common themes that emerged among participants were twofold:

1. Incorporate the community and more specifically, the youth, as early as possible; and



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2. Be transparent and accountable throughout the process.

In regards to bullet one, a participant noted, “Our children are excluded” because of cost of entrance to programs or other barriers. Most of the students are part of the free lunch program, so if they cannot afford food, they cannot afford entrance to these events. The Rail Yards should incorporate a different price point for folks that live in the communities that surround the Rail Yards, that would ensure locals can participate and benefit (otherwise the locals get pushed out by those coming from outside because of the financial barriers).

Additionally, participants felt the youth could assist in the direction of the development planning, be trained in web development, film, etc. and could really use this development to their benefit if they are given the opportunity to be included. Their training could incorporate the history of the Rail Yards and communities they come from, and the youth could be motivated around the idea of building off something that was once such a great piece of economic development for Albuquerque in the past. One participant stated, “Let’s not be afraid to think big: the Rail Yards were built in a time when the city was really small...It became the biggest economic employer. This can happen again... We can build on that history” and incorporate it into event programming and training programs for the youth.

In regards to the second bullet, participants suggested that the Rail Yards consider the community more. When it comes time to build, one participant suggested that the city employ a singular master developer to simplify the accountability component. The participant felt it would be easier to hold that one developer accountable for creating the jobs, fulfilling the promising, etc. rather than what has happened in the past where several developers are involved and no one can be held responsible. In line with hiring of the developer, participants suggested the development plan include language that would legally bind developers to hiring locals first. Participants felt the accessibility of the Rail Yards Advisory Board (RYAB) was also imperative in this regard. As reiterated throughout the focus group, trust and faith are diminished and need to be restored in order to ensure community engagement in the redevelopment going forward.

The participants shared that RYAB meetings are held during the day, which means people cannot attend and cannot speak. In one of the more recent meetings, one participant recalled the RYAB chair saying goals of this development plan may not be set in stone, which is cause for concern, as participants explained, because this deepens the distrust. Participants commented that the RYAB could be one of the strongest partners in administering community benefits, but is not there yet.

In addition to the common themes that emerged, participants suggested that addressing the digital divide could be an effective way to increase community engagement in the redevelopment. One participant explained that many people in the three communities surrounding the Rail Yards do not have access to internet/computers at home, so making resources and training available to them is important. Additionally, participants in this group mentioned the redevelopment should focus efforts on connecting youth to nature using green space or virtual reality technology.



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April 29, 2019

### APRIL 11, 2019 RAILYARDS ARTS AND CULTURE FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

The Railyards Arts and Culture Conversation took place at Casa Barelás on April 11, 2019, commencing at approximately 6:15 pm. A total of 18 participants were present. MRA Manager Karen Iverson, Economic Development Manager Lucas Pedraza, and Planning Administrator James M. Aranda were present on behalf of the City of Albuquerque. UNM Professor Claudia Isaac—a subcontractor for the Railyards Project—facilitated the focus group.

Dr. Isaac kicked off the meeting with an overview of the event. Next everyone in the room introduced themselves. Mr. Aranda then updated those in attendance on the status redevelopment efforts of the Railyards by the City—and provided some context into the City's short term engagement efforts. Dr. Isaac then led the focus group conversation. The meeting ended at approximately 7:40 pm. A summary of notes from the focus group conversation and the "insights and ideas" cards are included below. Please send comments and/or corrections to James Aranda at [imaranda@cabq.gov](mailto:imaranda@cabq.gov) and Claudia Isaac at [cisaac@unm.edu](mailto:cisaac@unm.edu).

#### **Attendees:**

Esther Abeyta (San José Resident), Steven Abeyta (San José Resident), James Aranda (CABQ Planning), Frances Armijo (SBNA), Marylou Baca (San José Resident), Dorothy Chavez (BNA Casa Barelás), Amber Dodson (CABQ Film Office), Claudia Isaac (Consultant Team), Chuy Martínez (Casa Barelás), Joe Martínez (Casa Barelás), Jesus Muñoz, Lucas Pedraza (CABQ Economic Development), Olivia M. Price (San José Neighborhood Association), Pancho Quiñones (Resident), Cristina Rogers (BNA, BCC), Ron Romero (Casa Barelás), James S. de Champlon (Casa Barelás/ ABQ Cultural Services), Marco Sandoval (Story Riders Afterschool Program).

#### **Summary of Key Outcomes**

Arts and Culture on the RY site should reflect the historical architecture as art on the site (becoming an amenity reflective of the proud working class history relating the adjacent neighborhoods and the site itself. In addition, attention to arts and cultural activities on the RY site should articulate with the robust cultural history of all three neighborhoods, and the current vibrant, community based creative life of the three neighborhoods. There are existing plans that can be utilized to ground current RY development activities re arts and culture with the neighborhoods, including the Fourth Street Arts and Culture Corridor Plan, and the BCC Fourth Street Development Plans, and all three Neighborhood Sector Plans (despite the fact that they are no longer considered ordinance, these community plans generated out of substantial community engagement, document important values and strategic directions around arts and culture).

#### **Question 1: What aspects of the current master plan that deal with Arts and Culture do you like and where there are gaps?**

Participants repeated concerns expressed in earlier focus groups that the issues they had were often not with the 2014 plan itself, but the lack of accountability since 2014. That said, there are a number of elements in that plan that continue to resonate with residents.



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Participants focused on the possibilities the plan offers to incorporate art into the Rail Yards. Yet another participant regarded that while the plan is beautiful, there is concern that it may be difficult to follow through to fruition. There was a shared sentiment among all participants that transparency and accountability has not been present in the past and concern that the plan may be just a plan with no true end product. One participant highlighted the importance of connecting the communities outside the Rail Yards into the development plan: "I think I like the idea of really connecting the community to the Rail Yards. So not developing the Rail Yards but developing the full communities that surround the Rail Yards" (4-11-2019 recording minute 27:02).

In terms of the arts and culture programming, participants suggested several things that may be missing. The theme that emerged through many of their responses was to make sure the neighboring communities do not get overlooked or pushed out by the programming. Several participants noted that arts organizations like the Casa Barelvas, NHCC, Working Classroom, School-based arts programs, and all of the Community Centers in the three neighborhoods have arts and cultural assets that could be coordinated with activities and installations on the RY site.

- A strategy to mitigate issues that are arising regarding parking near the Rail Yards. Some suggestions were:
  - Building a parking structure, either underground or above ground with a greenhouse; or
  - Making the Rail Yards area permit parking only, although this causes issues for locals who wish to entertain guests or families and will not have sufficient parking to offer.

**Question 2: Assuming there is an artistic space in the Railyards, how do you imagine the Railyards servicing the community? Imagine 6 things that you might see at the Railyards.**

Participants had several ideas for additional considerations to incorporate into the plan. Participants were passionate about making sure the local communities were not overlooked in the planning of Rail Yard development in regards to the programming offered, stressing programming that is culturally relevant, and family friendly (while attending to neighborhood concerns about noise).

Overall, participants are supportive of incorporating multimedia forms of art (studio art, sculpting, painting, drawing, theater, dance, music, etc.) though there was some discussion of whether murals should be included. For example, one participant felt murals could be a waste of money considering they are subjective and can be painted over if the next regime does not like them; another participant felt there would be limited appropriate area for the mural since the Rail Yard space is majority windows.

Participants suggested subsidizing entrance to events for locals, offering tickets to locals first and ensuring that the events are interesting to locals (not just Blue Grass or other non-traditionally New Mexican offerings but a mix of New Mexican, Burqueño, and out-of-town experiences). Concerns participants voiced as missing from the plan were:

- Emphasizing local community history and culture;



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- One participant felt the Rail Yards development should “bring back the whistle,” which was a local symbol of the end of the workday and was important for folks in the area.
- Other participants cited inclusion of the community and town history, especially regarding the churches. Folks cited Truth or Consequences has done a good job with this and suggested looking to their city murals as an example
- Historical art could help connect to the history. One participant suggested creating some art piece that could illustrate an homage to the acequias that used to connect everyone, drawing parallel to the railroads, and how they were also once used to connect everyone.
- Education, activities, and interaction with the youth;
  - Participants agreed that the programming at the Rail Yards should be geared towards families and youth.
    - One participant remarked (and others agreed) that the educational components of the art is very important. The participant mentioned: “teach[ing] youth about traditional art and traditional music is very important.”
  - Participants also liked the idea of incorporating a sculpture garden that could be interactive and could be a space for people to come together to build something.

### Question 3: What organizational space needs exist in the community?

Participants’ suggestions were to:

- Use the space in non-traditional ways;
  - Participants felt the building space could be rented out to other kinds of businesses like local radio and TV stations
  - Participants also felt the space could be used to educate and increase awareness around important topics in the city. The example provided with the increase in cycling routes and folks getting out using their bicycles without understanding the safety and legal policies for doing so. The idea is that the space at the Rail Yards could also be used to bolster education around cycling in Albuquerque and other similar local issues.
  - Additionally, participants felt the space could be used for offices for local businesses.
- Partner with local events and organizations (beyond just having events at the Rail Yards):
  - One participant suggested checking in with local partners/organizations to say “hey what are you doing” to make sure not to duplicate efforts. Introducing the idea of saying, “what are you *not* doing that we can do and how can we support each other” (4-11-2019 recording 48:00). They suggested cross marketing each other’s events and activities and including local organizations in planning events so there is no competition for participants.
- Engage with teachers and introduce the arts earlier in the schools (most art programs have been cut) – or find some other way to introduce art to the youth.



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### Question 4: How do we keep the arts accessible and reflective of the community?

Participants shared many similar insights as in previous focus groups, particularly with regard to engaging the community in ongoing Rail Yard redevelopment. The common themes that emerged among participants were twofold:

1. Incorporate the community and more specifically, the youth, as early as possible; and
2. Be transparent and accountable throughout the process.

In regards to bullet one, a participant noted, “Our children are excluded” because of cost of entrance to programs or other barriers. Most of the students are part of the free lunch program, so if they cannot afford food, they cannot afford entrance to these events. The Rail Yards should incorporate a different price point for folks that live in the communities that surround the Rail Yards, that would ensure locals can participate and benefit (otherwise the locals get pushed out by those coming from outside because of the financial barriers).

Additionally, participants felt the youth could assist in the direction of the development planning, be trained in web development, film, etc. and could really use this development to their benefit if they are given the opportunity to be included. Their training could incorporate the history of the Rail Yards and communities they come from, and the youth could be motivated around the idea of building off something that was once such a great piece of economic development for Albuquerque in the past. One participant stated, “Let’s not be afraid to think big: the Rail Yards were built in a time when the city was really small...It became the biggest economic employer. This can happen again... We can build on that history” and incorporate it into event programming and training programs for the youth.

In regards to the second bullet, participants suggested that the Rail Yards consider the community more. The community does not want a shopping center, so the development plan should not be geared towards the creation of a shopping center. Participants also noted the original Fourth Street Arts and Culture Corridor plan from 26 years ago said the Rail Yards development would include the surrounding communities, but nothing has come of that so far. Honoring that plan from 26 years ago, even before the development starts taking place, participants felt the city could do more to show respect for the communities by cleaning them up (installing decent fencing, painting, etc.). Participants suggested the development plan include language that would legally bind developers to hiring locals first. As repeated throughout the focus group, community trust and faith in projects like this are diminished and need to be restored in order to ensure community engagement in the redevelopment going forward.

Participants shared that engaging events will incorporate art that is different and innovative, and are geared toward the local communities. The art should be more than a painting on a building; it should be open air, street performers, interactive, maybe involve graffiti and art not traditionally considered art. It should incorporate the local history and traditions, incorporate youth and families, and it should change from event to event.

Community engagement might also increase if the planners can ensure neighboring communities do not get overlooked or pushed out by the programming. Participants suggested subsidizing entrance to events for locals, offering tickets to locals first and ensuring that the events are interesting to locals (not just Blue Grass or other non-traditionally New Mexican offerings but a mix of New Mexican, Burqueño, and out-of-town experiences). Participants recommend leveraging local talent, food, art, and culture as a way to draw



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in locals and outsiders alike, generating income from the outsiders and appreciating the local communities and talent at the same time. One participant noted that it is time to move away from the lack of faith people have in the local talent. They remarked that the local knowledge is worth more than what could be brought in from elsewhere in terms of other talent. There is “no shortage of talent” right here. In sum, participants believe this the variety in the art programming and respect and faith in the local communities will help increase community engagement in the redevelopment plan.