

Silver City Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan



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TYRAH HANNIBAL

Downtown Action Plan

Prepared for:

Town of Silver City, NM

Silver City MainStreet

Silver City Arts and Cultural District

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1. INTRODUCTION



The Silver City Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) Plan defines the community's vision for the downtown and identifies priority projects and programs to revitalize the downtown area. The MRA Plan examines existing conditions and assets, recommends redevelopment projects and implementation strategies and identifies funding sources for downtown's future improvements. The recommendations and strategies are intended to help achieve the following vision and goals developed by the community through an extensive participatory planning process:

The New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (3-60A-1 to 3-60A-48 NMSA 1978) provides municipalities in New Mexico with the powers to correct conditions in areas or neighborhoods which “substantially inflict or arrest the sound and orderly development” within the town. These powers can help reverse an area’s decline and stagnation; however, the town may only use these powers within designated Metropolitan Redevelopment Areas (MRA). Designation of an MRA is based on findings of blighted conditions, as defined in the Metropolitan Redevelopment Code (3-60S-8), which include physical as well as economic conditions.

In October, 2010 the Town Council adopted by resolution the Silver City Downtown Action Plan. This Plan was prepared with the intent that it would be eventually adopted as a MRA Plan. In December, 2012 the Town Council approved the Silver City Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Designation Report.

This report concluded that this area demonstrated existing conditions within the downtown area that met the criteria for the underutilized and low performing designation as defined by the NM Metropolitan Redevelopment Code statute. The conditions existing in the downtown “substantially impair the sound growth and economic health and well-being” of the area. The adoption of the Silver City Downtown Action Plan as a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan will assist the community in achieving the following goals:

- Elimination of detrimental public health and welfare conditions.
- Conservation, improvement and expansion of commercial building stock.
- Expansion of commercial activity
- Improvement and expansion of available housing.
- Improvement of economic conditions through coordinated public and private investments.

DOWNTOWN VISION STATEMENT:

Downtown Silver City is the cultural heart and a vital economic center of our diverse community. It is the place where the community lives, works, and gathers for sustaining creative expression, enterprise, and heritage. Our residents, families, and visitors contribute to the success of its eclectic shops, restaurants, artistic and entertainment venues, and outstanding museums.

Goals of the Silver City Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan are:

- *Promote Historic Downtown as a destination with goods, services and amenities for both visitors and residents.*
- *Develop coherent and consistent design guidelines for street furniture, wayfinding and public signage.*
- *Enhance and improve the cleanliness and maintenance of streets and sidewalks.*
- *Provide adequate, accessible, convenient and flexible parking and service access for businesses and residences.*
- *Create a friendly environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.*
- *Proactively make historic preservation a priority in downtown revitalization.*
- *Support and promote the development of civic/community facilities including adaptive reuse of the three downtown historic theaters.*
- *Attract new businesses to the district, and support existing businesses.*
- *Develop a campus of civic offices in the vicinity of Gough Park that incorporates existing Town assets.*
- *Promote and accommodate residential use in the downtown historic area.*
- *Encourage and support adaptive reuses for buildings in the downtown historic area that preserve tradition and address contemporary code standards.*
- *Accommodate a mix of residential densities in the downtown historic area including live-work spaces and in upper floor commercial buildings.*
- *Incorporate sustainability as a guiding principal through the innovative use of our resources.*



Downtown Silver City Metropolitan Redevelopment Area

2. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ASSET INVENTORY

SILVER CITY HISTORY AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Like few other New Mexico towns, Silver City retains a high concentration of historic buildings, intimately connected to its identity and sense of place. Located at an elevation of 5,900 feet, Silver City is bounded by the Continental Divide on the west and the north in the Pinos Altos Range, low hills to the east, and the Chihuahuan Desert and the Burro Mountains to the south. The Gila and Mimbres Rivers flow to the west and east of town. According to the Forest Service, the Gila National Forest, north of Silver City, covers roughly 3.3 million acres of land, and is the sixth largest national forest in the United States.

The landscape of western New Mexico was shaped by “a series of mountain-building events” in the late Cretaceous Age.¹ These early events and subsequent faults created basins and mountain ranges that resulted in significant deposits of copper, silver, and gold within the region. It is these rich resources that defined much of the area’s development and history.

The Mogollon Indians were some of the earliest inhabitants between A.D. 1000 and 1300. The culture left behind artifacts that included: pottery (known as Mimbres pottery) with its distinctive black and white designs and images; architecture such as the Gila Cliff Dwellings; and flint and obsidian for shaping tools. The Apache Indians, a nomadic group of warriors, inhabited the area beginning in the 1300s. By 1539 the Spanish began entering the area, but settlement continued to be sparse due to Apache aggression and raids.

The establishment of Fort Bayard near Santa Rita in 1866 provided a measure of security for southwestern New Mexico. The Fort, a National Historic Landmark, continues to be an important asset to the region.

Following the discovery of silver ore near the San Vicente Cienega in 1870, the original townsite of Silver City was laid out in a grid pattern that is slightly obscured by the rolling topography of the site. Located far from the railroad, Silver City employed local materials—stone, brick, and adobe—to build lasting structures from its very beginning. Unlike other mining towns across the state that began as tent-cities or with modest frame buildings, an 1880 fire ordinance required such substantial construction. In 1874 Silver City replaced Pinos Altos as the county seat, further solidifying the town’s status in the southwestern region of present-day New Mexico.

¹ Susan Berry and Sharman Apt Russell, *Built to Last: An Architectural History of Silver City, New Mexico*, (Silver City Museum, 1995, revised addition), 3. *Built to Last* provides a detailed historical overview, building inventory, descriptions, and maps. In addition to this important work, the State and National Register nominations, the brochure “Maximizing your investment in Silver City’s Historic Districts,” and recent surveys by RRP and Van Citters: Preservation were consulted for this material.

Prior to the arrival of the Deming and Pacific Railroad in 1883, it was a laborious and costly process to freight materials and goods in and out of the region. The railroad's arrival allowed ranchers to get livestock to market in a more efficient manner. Architectural styles, including the Queen Anne, Second Empire, Italianate, and Classical Revival, reflected patterns seen in the East and Midwest. The railroad only encouraged this trend, which was already established by early Anglo settlers from places like Ohio and Massachusetts.



The town benefitted from the founding of the New Mexico Normal School, now Western New Mexico University, in 1893. A building campaign ensued in the early 1900s with prominent architects such as Trost & Trost designing handsome Mission style buildings.



The town faced many challenges in its early years. The silver crash of 1893, the flood of 1895, which destroyed the town's original Main Street, and another flood in 1904 were particularly challenging for this burgeoning town. Iron deposits at Fierro, gold at Mogollon and copper at the Hanover and Santa Rita mines alleviated much of the revenue loss from declining silver values.

The brick O.S. Warren House, constructed in 1885, was the only structure along this section of Main Street to survive the 1895 flood. Concrete from the Warren contracting business was initially used to stabilize the banks of the San Vicente Arroyo, while the Works Progress Administration (WPA) made later improvements. Today, the area is commonly referred to as "The Big Ditch," and creates a ribbon of green space and parkland skirting the districts. Both Elizabeth Warren and the WPA were involved in constructing sidewalks for the town as well.



The development of other residential sections of town such as North and Black's Addition began in the 1880s into the 1920s and 30s. Both additions feature larger lots and wider streets than the original townsite.

Around the turn of the century, the high elevations and dry, mild climate of Silver City attracted people who suffered from tuberculosis and other respiratory ailments. Several prominent hospitals and sanatoriums such as St. Joseph Sanatorium and the New Mexico Cottage Sanatorium were established. Standing on an entire block in Black's Addition, St. Joseph is a significant resource largely built between 1887 and 1908.

Not only did the arrival of the automobile in the early 1900s change the landscape in the broad respect of highway and road construction and improvements, but it also required new buildings types such as filling stations, garages, and car showrooms. Significant construction campaigns continued into the 1930s with the Art Deco-inspired Grant County Courthouse by Albuquerque architects George Williamson and W. Miles Brittelle. The courthouse includes WPA murals that depict mining and ranching scenes by Theodore Van Soelen, and landscaped grounds by the WPA. A new post office, movies theaters, and the five-story International/Moderne style Murray Hotel, the tallest building downtown, provided modern amenities to Silver City.

From the red brick residences and commercial buildings of the Victorian era to the sleek International/Moderne style buildings that marked the mid-twentieth century, the evolution and culture of Silver City is seen in its built environment and landscape.



*Photo Courtesy of the Silver City Museum
Ca. 1900 photograph of swinging bridge across what was Main Street (now the "Big Ditch"). The O.S. Warren House, which dates to 1885, is at the right of the photo.*

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

As part of the Silver City Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan planning process, previous and current plans, policies, codes and programs from the Town and other agencies were reviewed. This section summarizes plans and related policies, studies, public projects and code that affect the plan area. The goals and strategies identified in the various plans, policies and codes provide important support for the Vision and Goals and sound direction for achieving them.

TOWN OF SILVER CITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2004)

The Silver City Comprehensive Plan provides guidance to the Town for the achievement of balanced growth and development. Several of the Plan's policies and implementation measures have been realized.

These key principles form the foundation of the *Comprehensive Plan*:

1. Provide direction to both short-term and long-term economic recovery as the town seeks to collaborate with the county and other municipalities to develop a diverse and sustainable regional economy.
2. Establish principles and goals to guide the town's collaboration with Grant County in creation of a growth management strategy for the ETZ, including procedures for joint planning and development review.
3. Protect the community's historic downtown and neighborhoods, including the town's distinctive architecture and settlement patterns.
4. Preserve the quality of the natural environment, open space, water and other resources.
5. Maintain and enhance community facilities and provide park, open space and recreational opportunities to serve the entire community.
6. Protect Silver City's "small town" feel and character, and shape new growth to promote walkable livable neighborhoods and districts.
7. Ensure that the town's cultural diversity is maintained and historic traditions are protected and celebrated.

Key Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures Relevant to the MRA:

GOALS

- Encourage infill development
- Establish standard development process
- Recognize the value of preserving the Historic Districts
- Improve visual quality of Town
- Support and preserve cultural diversity and traditions
- Factor community identity and cultural diversity into development design
- Comprehensive, safe and efficient circulation system
- Enhance pedestrian-friendly atmosphere
- Enhance the bicycle-friendly atmosphere
- Traffic control devices

-
- Support the provision of an adequate affordable housing supply
 - Enhance level of public safety
 - Encourage a diverse mix of economic development and new employment opportunities
 - Maintain quality of the natural creeks and washes

STRATEGIES

- Development Incentives
- Utilize Metropolitan Redevelopment Statute And Other Statues As Applicable
- Development Process Guidebook
- Preserve And Protect Historic Buildings And Historic Districts
- Develop Sign Regulation
- Community Entryways
- Public Projects
- Pedestrian And Bicycle Flow
- Pedestrian And Bicycle Safety
- Downtown Parking, Access And Circulation
- Traffic Flow
- Affordable Housing Incentives
- House Maintenance And Improvement
- Blighted Structures
- Mixed Zoning
- Community Policing
- Traffic Education And Enforcement
- Open Space Network
- Common Goals
- Local Business
- Partnerships
- Diverse Employment
- Arts Community
- Public Involvement
- New Business
- Loans & Venture Capital Funds
- Restore Creeks and Washes

YOUR TOWN FINAL REPORT (2001)

The fall of 2001, community leaders and citizens participated in a two day intensive workshop, *Silver City Your Town: Designing Its Future*. Goals and recommendations relating to the design and planning of Silver City were developed during the workshop and presented in *Your Town Final Report*.

A Vision Statement, drafted by the workshop participants “to guide the Town’s growth and development”, expressed many of the same concerns heard from the community today:

Silver City is to maintain the existing, friendly small town character by:

- *Supporting and valuing efforts to protect and maintain our historic downtown and traditional neighborhoods.*
- *Focusing on people before vehicles*
- *Actively promoting efforts to dramatically improve highway commercial corridors to make them safer, easier to use and improve their visual character.*
- *Supporting greater protection and management of our rural areas and natural and cultural resources to limit sprawl, increase open space linkages and respect the limits of our water supply.*
- *Supporting, encouraging and expanding our extraordinary cultural diversity and spirit of volunteerism, inclusion and collaboration.*
- *Capitalizing on existing assets (such as the arts community, university and hospital) to attract new economic assets consistent with values/vision.*
- *Promoting community health and well-being.*
- *Providing, improving and maintaining infrastructure, such as schools, water supply, and other municipal services.*

Key Findings and Recommendations Relevant to the MRA:

STRATEGIES:

- Encourage a mix of land uses to reduce vehicle dependence and meet community needs
- Encourage affordable housing through neighborhood rehabilitation efforts
- Encourage infill
- Respect the character and unique qualities of individual neighborhoods
- Improving pedestrian and bicycle friendliness
- Encouraging public transportation
- Create and improve visual clues to improve wayfinding
- Implement traffic calming techniques
- Improve and maintain streets
- Emphasizing “gateways” into downtown
- Use of landscaping for beautification and identification
- Revamp downtown with site improvements
- Create transitional uses between commercial and residential areas.
- Encourage preservation and protection of natural features
- Protect a linked system of open spaces through trail corridors and greenways
- Encourage use of open spaces attached to public facilities for public gathering places
- Capitalize on the Big Ditch
- Develop and promote “public places” for gathering and socializing
- Develop open space at the confluence of Silva and Pinos Altos Creeks with a trail connection to the Big Ditch Park

-
- Protect the character of downtown and encourage restoration of historic buildings
 - Encourage diversity in buildings compatible with neighborhood character
 - Encourage compatibility and consistency of form and diversity of style along commercial corridors
 - Maintain downtown character
 - Provide incentives for reuse/redevelopment of existing sites
 - Secure financial incentives to encourage renovation of existing businesses
 - Review and revise regulations relating to development
 - Link Hudson with downtown

As part of the workshop a concept plan for the Hudson Street corridor was generated showing examples of how the strategies might be implemented. These include:

- Sidewalks and landscaping along Hudson and Pope Streets
- Emphasize entry points (gateways) into key areas of town
- Use signs, landscaping and public art to identify gateways
- Pedestrian bridges to link Hudson Street with Downtown
- Clearly marked crosswalks are included at all intersections, with specialty paving emphasizing the major “gateway” intersections.
- The confluence of the Silva and Piños Altos Creeks, the “Y” project, considers development of a public/private building and a public gathering space between Hudson and the waterways.
- Improvements to pedestrian facilities
- Signage improvements
- Improvements to landscaping
- Updates to zoning laws, standards and regulations

SAN VICENTE HERITAGE DISTRICT PLAN (2006)

The San Vicente Heritage District Plan is a plan for a sustainable economic, cultural and environmental future for significant areas along the San Vicente at the south end of Bullard. This long neglected area is rich in cultural, environmental and economic history. A collaborative effort of the Town and the community, a series of preferred activities and uses were generated. These preferred activities and uses were compared to the opportunities and constraints of the site and a preferred land use concept was generated. The southern extent of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan area overlaps the northern extent of the San Vicente Heritage Plan area.

Key Findings and Recommendations Relevant to the MRA

STRATEGIES:

- Create economic benefit
- Revitalize Blighted Area
- Protect Cultural and Natural Resources

-
- Mix uses
 - Entry features
 - Pedestrian Bridge over the San Vicente
 - Artisan-Retail Studios
 - Residential Lofts
 - Parking
 - Habitat Restoration
 - Arts and Cultural Areas

FUNDING MECHANISMS:

- Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA)
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Tax Credits/Abatement
- Revenue Bond Financing
- Business Improvement District (BID)
- Local Economic Development Act (LEDA)

SILVER CITY ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT CULTURAL PLAN (2009)

During 2008 and 2009, the downtown area was the focus of the New Mexico Main Street Arts and Cultural District Cultural Plan. As a result of this planning effort Silver City was named the first New Mexico municipality approved as a pilot city under the New Mexico Arts and Cultural District Act. The act promotes implementation of a "...cohesive strategy with place-based arts and culture as an economic niche." Its intent is the enhancement of economies through local and state partnerships offering incentives and expertise necessary for the development of sustainable Arts and Cultural Districts.

The Silver City Arts and Cultural District Cultural Plan provides a flexible and community focused framework for determining the most efficient ways the Arts and Cultural District can serve the needs of local artists and creative industries entrepreneurs. It is also intended to provide benefits to Silver City business owners, arts and culture nonprofit groups, government agencies, and visitors who travel here with the expectation of exploring and enjoying a vibrant art town.

Key Findings and Recommendations Relevant to the MRA:

STRATEGIES

- Support artists, cultural/arts groups, and cultural entrepreneurs in all disciplines.
- Foster sharing and appreciation across cultures, past and present throughout the region.
- Support the preservation, protection, and celebration of local historic resources.
- Support and encourage arts and cultural education throughout our communities.
- Identify, encourage, and promote marketable arts and cultural opportunities within the
- ACD and the larger Grant County community.

- Support the development and use of venues for the arts and cultural events.
- Inventory venue locations and advocate for venue spaces.
- Identify commercial space suitable for arts and cultural entrepreneurial activities.
- Support efforts to advance historic preservation and adaptive reuse in Silver City and the larger Grant County community.
- Support arts and cultural funding in the capital improvement planning of local, state, and federal governments.

FUNDING MECHANISMS

- TIF/TIDD (Tax Increment Financing/Tax Increment Development District)
- BID (Business Improvement District)
- USDA grants and loans
- New Mexico Finance Authority SMART funds and New Markets tax credits
- US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs



Silver City Downtown Action Plan



Arts and Cultural District

 Arts and Cultural District



Map Date: October 4, 2010

EXISTING LAND USES, ZONING REGULATIONS & HISTORIC ZONES

Existing Land Uses

Within the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan Boundary, the primary existing land uses are commercial, retail and residential. Commercial uses are located mainly along Hudson, Bullard and at the northern end of the plan area. Retail is largely clustered along Bullard, Texas, and their cross-streets. Residential uses are mixed in with non-residential uses at the western edges of the study area. Limited residential use is mixed in with the commercial areas.

Open space, including Gough Park and the Big Ditch, public institutions such as City Hall, City Hall Annex, County Courthouse and public services such as Fire and Police are also within the plan area. Some not-for-profit institutions, including the Historic Museum, are within the boundary.

Very few vacant parcels fall within the plan boundary. Scattered empty lots are found along Bullard, Hudson and north of the confluence of the waterways. Many of the parcels fronting on the former Main Street, now Big Ditch Park, are vacant, although most have severe physical restrictions to use. The San Vicente Heritage area situated at the south end of Bullard is primarily vacant, as is the southwest corner of Hudson and Broadway, a major gateway into downtown.

Town of Silver City Land Use Code (1999)

The existing Town of Silver City Land Use Code, Title XV of the Town Code of Ordinance, contains in a single document:

- Zoning
- Overlay district regulations (historic resources and flood plain)
- Subdivision regulations
- Infrastructure, streetscape, parking, signs, and other standards
- Administrative provisions

The purpose of the Town of Silver City Land Use Code is to promote and protect the public health, safety, peace, comfort and general welfare while allowing for cost saving efficiencies. The Land Use Code governs the subdivision of land, the development of land and the use of land.

TOWN OF SILVER CITY ZONING

Zoning District regulations are detailed in the Land Use Code, with regulations setting out allowable uses and density and dimensional standards within each district. Density and dimensional standards define floor to area ratio, minimum lot area, street frontage, building setbacks and maximum structure height for each zone. The plan area currently has four zoning categories. The majority of the plan area is regulated under Commercial (C) zoning with Industrial (I) zoning regulating the southeastern corner. Residential A (RA) zoning applies to the

western arm of the PLAN along College while Residential B (RB) applies to only a few scattered parcels within the area.

The Town has presently seven (7) zoning designations, as follows:

- Rural (R) - Intended to provide for annexed areas that will accommodate agricultural, ranching, natural resource uses, very low-density residential uses, until such time as other development is appropriate.
- Residential A (RA) - Intended to accommodate low-density, single-family and two-family residential development and to provide land use protection for areas that develop in such a manner.
- Residential B (RB) - Intended to accommodate moderate density single-family, two-family and multifamily residential development and to provide land use protection for areas that develop in such a manner.
- Residential C (RC) - Intended to accommodate higher density single-family, two-family, multifamily, and mobile home residential development and to provide land use protection for areas that develop in such a manner.
- Commercial (C) - Intended to accommodate a mix of commercial uses.
- Industrial (I) - Intended to accommodate areas of heavy and/or concentrated fabrication, manufacturing, and industrial uses.
- Planned Unit Development (PUD) - Intended to accommodate uses that are allowed in other zoning districts, but to allow more innovative design, massing, orientation and clustering in development patterns.

Land Use Code Update

In May, 2009, a draft Revised Land Use Code was completed and is under review by Silver City Mayor and Council. A summary of main proposed Code amendments which are relevant include:

- Addition of new residential and commercial zones more specific to areas with different characteristics
- Street setbacks
- Temporary and portable signs
- Revisions to the use table
- Accessory dwelling units
- Street standards
- Parking standards
- Adding bicycle parking and shared use parking provisions

Several new zoning categories are proposed in these revisions. Most significant for Downtown Silver City is a proposed Historic Downtown zoning district, intended to accommodate a mix of commercial uses serving residents and visitors, mixed-use buildings, and residential buildings in the historic central business core, and to provide a variety of building sizes compatible with the character of the Silver City. The zoning map is proposed to be amended to locate the new zoning districts in a phase subsequent to this Code update. Also relevant to the area are proposed changes to the Historic Overlay Zone requirements.

HISTORIC OVERLAY ZONE

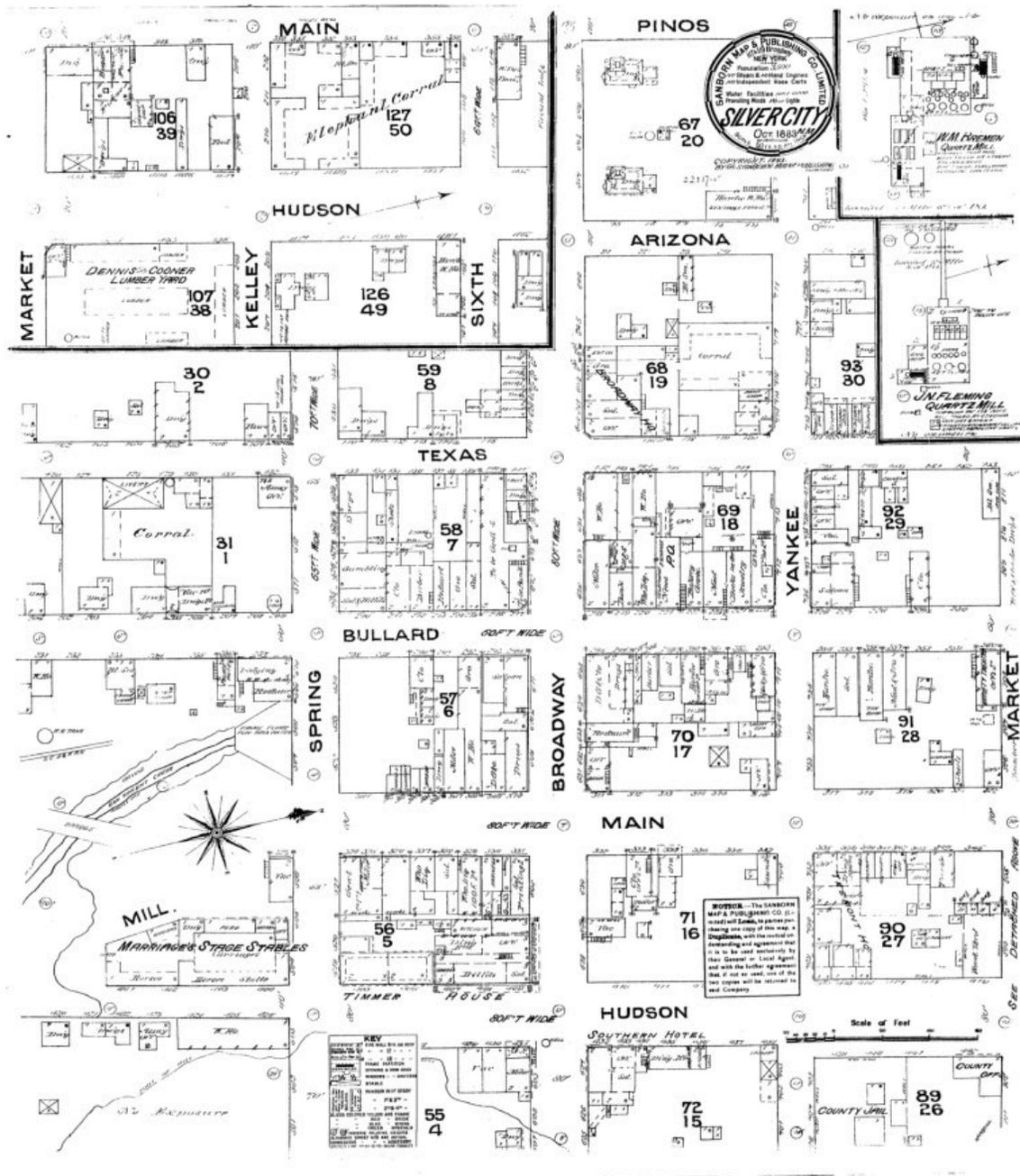
The Land Use Code includes historic overlay district regulations which are applied “over” the existing zoning designation. Lands affected by the overlay zone are subject to the regulations of the underlying zone and are subject to supplemental regulation. The Town currently has four Historic District Overlay Zones identified in the Land Use Code.

The specific purpose of the Historic Overlay Zone is to preserve the *“historic character of the Silver City Historic District, the Black’s Addition Historic District, the Chihuahua Hill Historic District and the North Addition Historic District, while encouraging new investment that reinforces the scale, height and appearance of those districts; and to encourage the reuse and maintenance of registered landmark structures within those districts.”*

Within the Historic Overlay Zoning District, the Community Development Director and the Design Review Committee review nominations and maintain a current list of registered historic structures and a current list of buildings that qualify to be registered historic structures. Also within the Historic Overlay Zoning District, the Design Review Committee can establish a list of prospective properties to be registered as Silver City Landmark Structures, a voluntary landmark designation program. Changes to structures within the Overlay Zone boundaries and new construction within the district are subject to review by the Design Review Committee.

Sanborn Maps

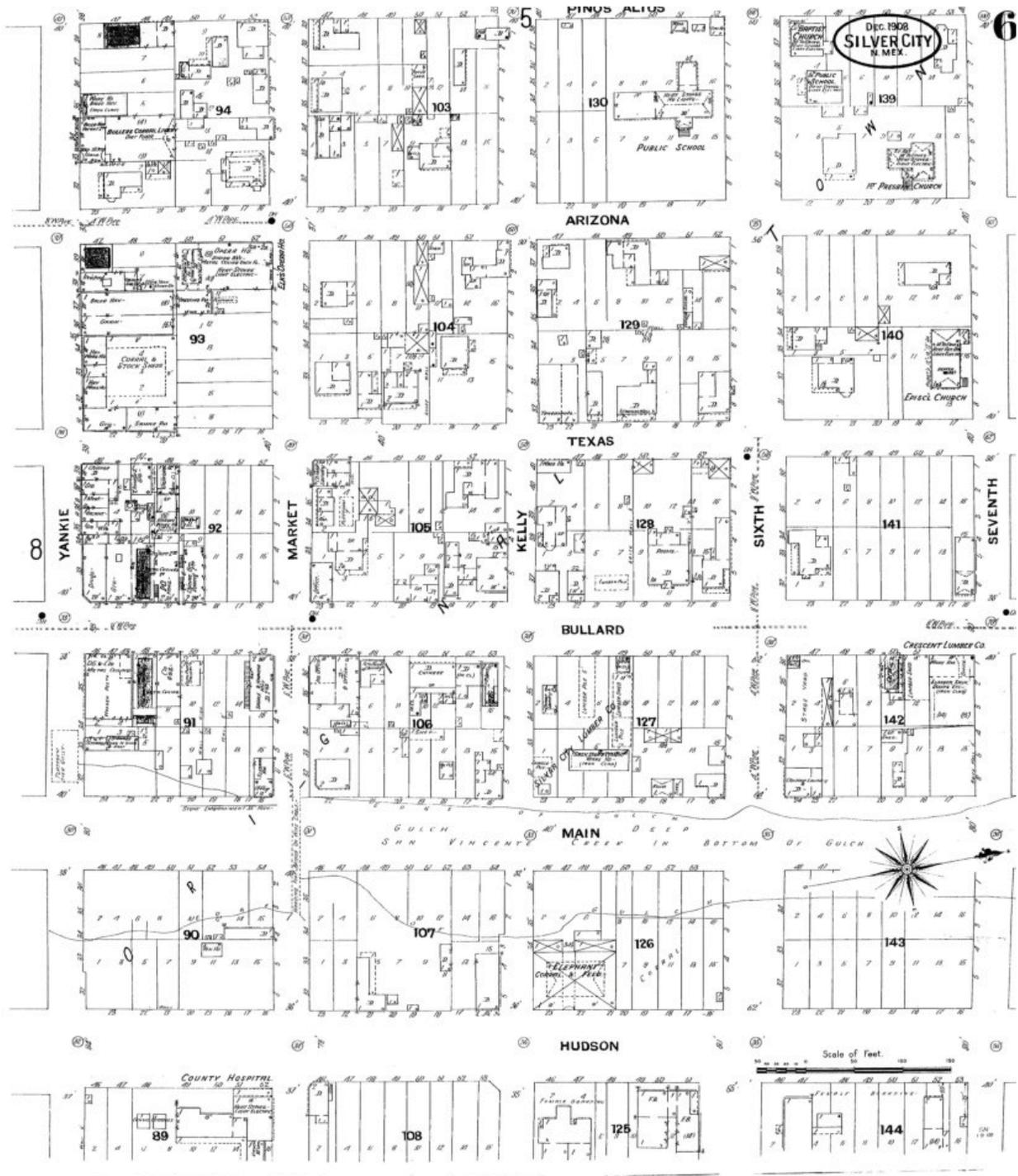
A series of Sanborn insurance maps record the evolving layout, structures and uses of Silver City from the 1880's through the late 1940's. The grid plan of today's downtown was well established in 1883, the date of the mapping shown below. The series of maps also record the changes in buildings and uses, with the lumber yards and corrals of the 19th century being replaced by theaters and auto sales and service by the 1930's and 40's.



The Sanborn Insurance index map of Silver City from 1893 reveals that the rail line ran just east of downtown. Main Street terminated at San Vicente Creek and the railroad bridge. While Hudson and Main were aligned their entire length, changes to the size of the blocks north of 9th, now College, led to the awkward intersections along 9th west of Main Street. The most notable of this pattern is still found in today's downtown where traffic jogs from Pope to Bullard via College, formerly 9th.

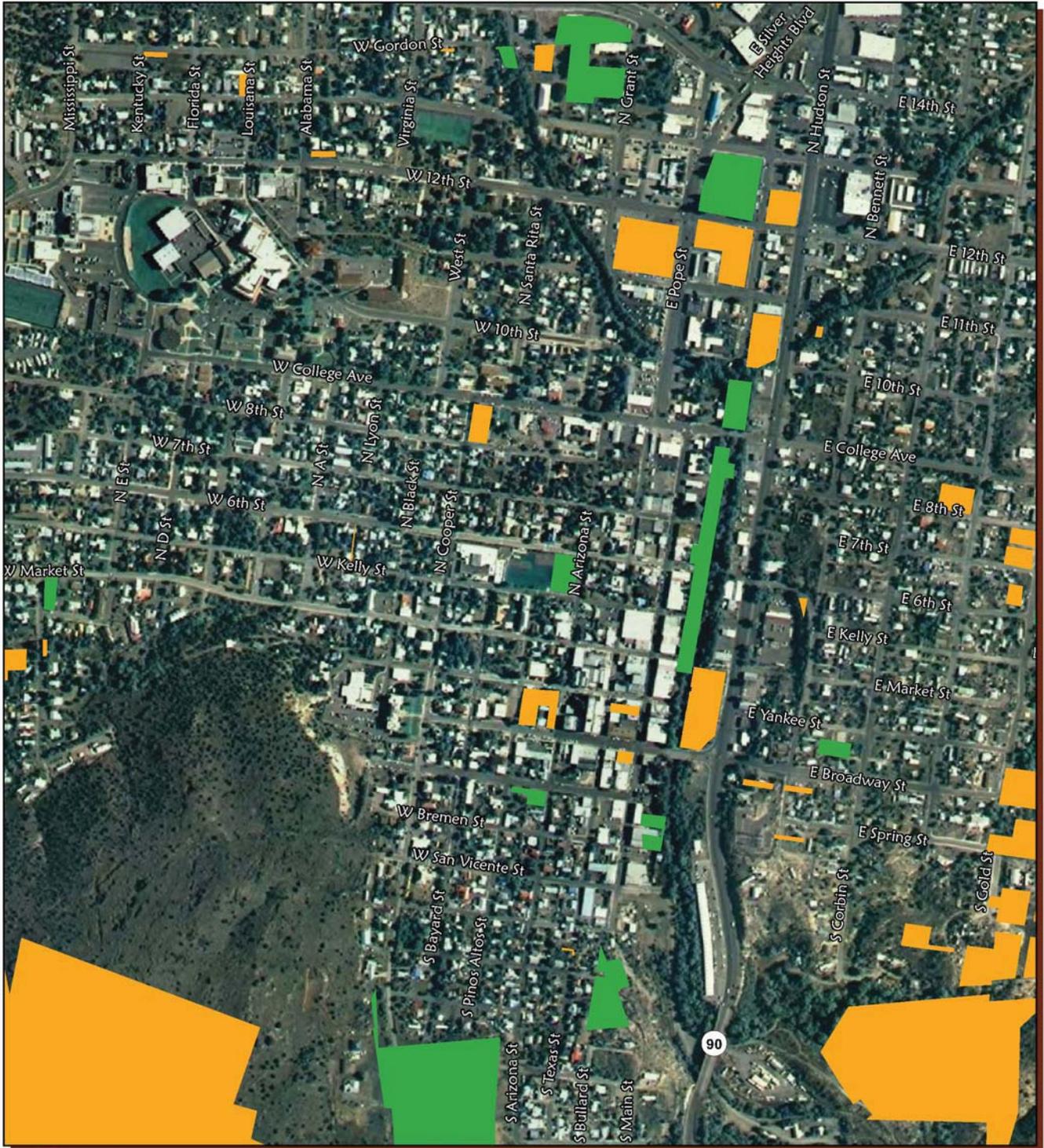


The 1902 map notes that Main Street is “badly gullied by freshets” and by 1908, the mapping below shows extensive erosion along the Big Ditch, formerly Main Street.



Publicly Owned Properties

Several parcels of publically owned properties are located within the plan area. The majority of these properties are currently in use as either public facilities or parks/open space, but several could be redeveloped for new community uses, such as a Town Civic Campus .



TRANSPORTATION AND WAYFINDING

Silver City Transportation

Transportation is the means by which people and goods move within and through a community. Within the Silver City downtown area, numerous modes of transportation are utilized. The primary movers to and from the downtown area are passenger vehicles and trucks, though the local transit system helps with local circulation. Pedestrians and cyclists are numerous within central Silver City, and these modes provide destination mobility within the area.



Photo Courtesy of the Silver City Museum.

Broadway Street between 1930 and 1938.

Roadways

Silver City is served by two state highways – US 180 and NM 90. Each of these routes is adjacent to the Downtown planning area, to the north and east, and each are functionally classified by the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) as a principal urban arterial. These routes have four travel lanes, and the remainder of the study area has 2-lane roadways except for Pope St which also has four travel lanes. The study area includes seven (7) urban collector roadways – Pope St, 12th St, College Ave, Market St, Cooper St, Bullard St and Broadway St. These make up the principal routes within central Silver City.

The streets in central Silver City are a mix of concrete and asphalt roadways. Overall, roadway condition is poor on many of the streets inventoried. Some of these streets have an original concrete road, and have been overlaid with asphalt which has deteriorated, exposing the concrete section below. The classified roadways, collector and above, are in good condition except for sections of Cooper St and one section of Broadway St.



Traffic circulation within the Silver City downtown area is on a grid system of north-south and east-west roadways. One impediment to circulation is Big Ditch Park which separates downtown from NM 90 between Broadway St and College Ave. There is one pedestrian bridge which connects the two streets on the Market St alignment. Downtown also has a number of one-way streets. The north-south couplet is Texas St (southbound) and Arizona St (northbound). The east-west couplet is Market St westbound and Kelly St eastbound. East of Bullard St, Market St is one-way eastbound and Yankee St is one-way westbound. Yankee St continues westbound one-way between Bullard St and Texas St, where it resumes two-way operation. The one-way couplets improve capacity and the amount of on-street parking, while increasing the vehicular travel distance to some destinations by up to two blocks.

Traffic flows well along Silver City streets during average daily conditions. Most streets have on-street parking and posted speed limits are low, generally 25 mph or less. Daily traffic flows were collected the week of March 15, 2010 on Bullard St south



Legend	
	Study Area
17	Existing Volumes

The volumes are based upon NMDOT data from 2008 except the italicized volumes were collected in March 2010.

of College Ave and Broadway St west of Hudson St (NM 90). Traffic volumes were also obtained from NMDOT records for 2008, the most recent counts available. The 2008 NM 90 (Hudson St) volumes from the NMDOT were erroneous, therefore current volumes were estimated based upon 2005 data. A traffic volume map was prepared for the streets within the study area.

Utility poles within central Silver City are frequently located near the face of curb, and in some cases, within the street. This is a safety concern to have a fixed object within the roadway prism. Where poles are in the street, the placement of retro-reflective sheeting should be considered to enhance nighttime visibility and safety.

Some of the street signs are not placed in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). For instance, some stop signs at all-way stop controlled intersections have the supplemental 'all-way' or '4-way' plate mounted on the stop sign face. The supplemental plate should be installed below the stop sign to not distract from the sign message. In addition, it is not appropriate to install a larger sign behind a stop sign as that obscures the unique octagonal shape of the stop sign. The stop sign has a unique shape to ensure that the message is clear even if the sign face is obliterated (by snow for instance). The 'Parallel Parking' signs installed at some locations are not oriented such that they can be read by all drivers wishing to park along the streets. In many locations they face into the street, not in line with parking traffic. In one instance, the sign faces west for parking westbound traffic, opposite the direction that drivers can see. Some signs are also installed too low. Standard mounting height on urban streets is 7 feet to minimize the number of people who might hit their head on a sign while passing under it. Finally, the one-way street signing is inconsistent as two types of signs are used, and they are mounted at varying heights and locations. Each sign is an approved sign, but a single sign type would help driver recognition. In addition, very few 'do not enter' or 'wrong way' signs are installed to indicate prohibited entry. It may be difficult for visitors to easily understand the traffic circulation prohibitions in downtown Silver City.

Operationally, the only location where a concern was noted was at the intersection of Bullard St and Spring St. There was a significant propensity of U-turns at that intersection, where southbound vehicles would start to turn right onto Spring St, then make a U-turn through Bullard St. A number of conflicts with vehicles on both Bullard St and Spring St were noted while reviewing the downtown area.

Pedestrian Facilities



Most streets within the Downtown study area have sidewalks for pedestrians. Generally the sidewalk condition is good, though some minor deficiencies with cracking and heaving were noted. The City has created interesting curb return treatments along Bullard St and Broadway St where grades do not permit standard intersection treatments. There is concern for pedestrian safety where the vertical offset from the top of sidewalk to the street approach 30' in some sections. Where sidewalk elevations exceed the street height by more than approximately

8", the City has constructed steps and ADA compliant ramps to serve all users. One concern with the ramps is that they are not aligned with the crosswalks, and striping an appropriate path between the ramps and crosswalks would provide better positive guidance for those users.

Curb ramps away from Broadway St and Bullard St are infrequent throughout the rest of the study area except for College Ave, Pope St and the state highways. A number of downtown intersections have vertical offsets approaching 18" and obstacles such as utility poles and fire hydrants are frequently located within intersection returns. In addition, a few driveway cuts were noted in elevated sidewalk sections, and the transitions at these locations greatly exceed ADA grade requirements.



Photo Courtesy of F. Milan/Silver City MS

Bicycle Facilities

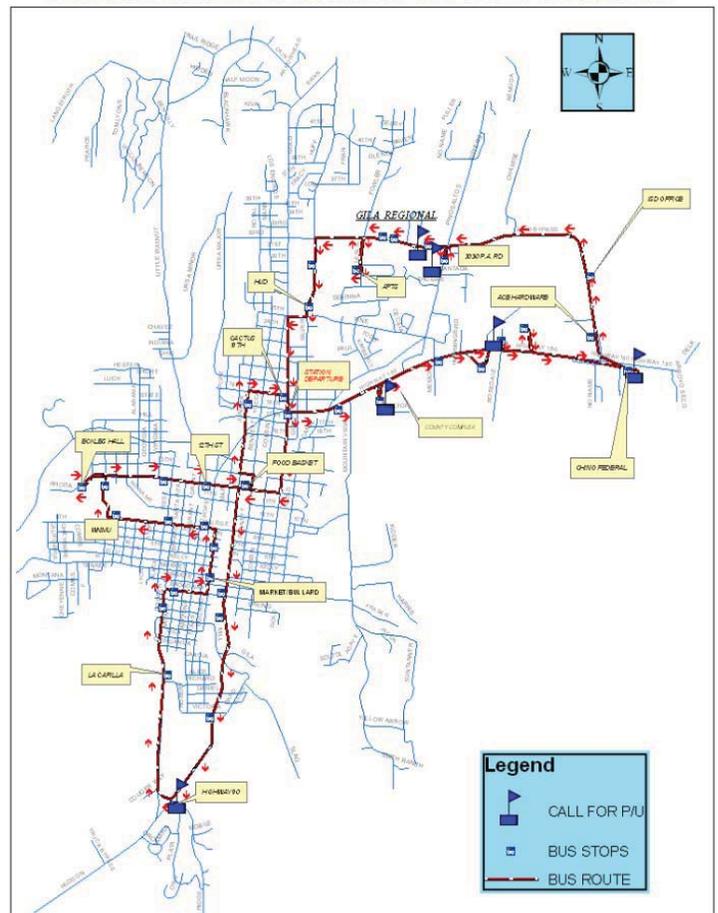
The Silver City downtown study area includes three roadways with bicycle lanes. Pope St and Hudson St (NM 90) have bicycle lanes in each travel direction. NM 180 has a shared use shoulder/parking lane/bicycle lane in each travel direction within the study area. The remaining streets do not have formal bicycle lanes or route signing, however, a number of locations have 'Share the Road' signs. Cyclists were frequent within the Downtown area during data collection, though their volume was not quantified. The infrequent bicycle parking available near a few intersections minimizes conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians. Signing along Broadway St prohibits the use of sidewalks by 'bicycles, skateboards, and scooters'.



Transit.

Silver City has a private transit service, Corre Camino, which operates a fixed route system between the hours of 6:45 am and 6:45 pm. The fixed route service operates with a headway of one hour, and has stops within the downtown study area on Broadway St, Bullard St, College Ave, and 12th St. The route also uses Hudson St (NM 90) with a stop just south of Broadway St. The service has been operating since 2001 and had an estimated 52,000 boardings in 2007. In addition to the local service, Corre Camino provides service throughout Grant County, and to Deming and Lordsburg twice per day. The local fares are \$0.75 per boarding and regional trips vary from \$1.25 to \$2.50 per boarding. Seniors and students receive a reduced rate, and a Silver City/Grant Co day pass is also available for \$2.50 per day with unlimited boardings.

CORRE CAMINO SILVER CITY BUS ROUTE



Lighting

Roadway lighting within downtown Silver City is spaced at approximately 100' along most streets. Some streets have luminaires only at intersections, and many of the luminaires do not appear to comply with the New Mexico Night Sky Protection Act. Bullard St and Broadway St have pedestrian lighting which also serves to illuminate the roadways.

Parking

A thorough parking study was performed as part of the plan area. The study inventoried the available on-street and off-street parking supply, as well as quantified the utilization of that parking on an average day. A map of the study area was prepared, and each block was isolated in the graphic below. An inventory was completed of the existing parking, including collection of the street widths, intersection return radii, existing parking restriction lengths (yellow paint on curb or signing), building offsets from the face of curb, and an estimate of the number of available on-street and off-street spaces. The findings are summarized here and the complete Parking Study is included in the appendix of this document.

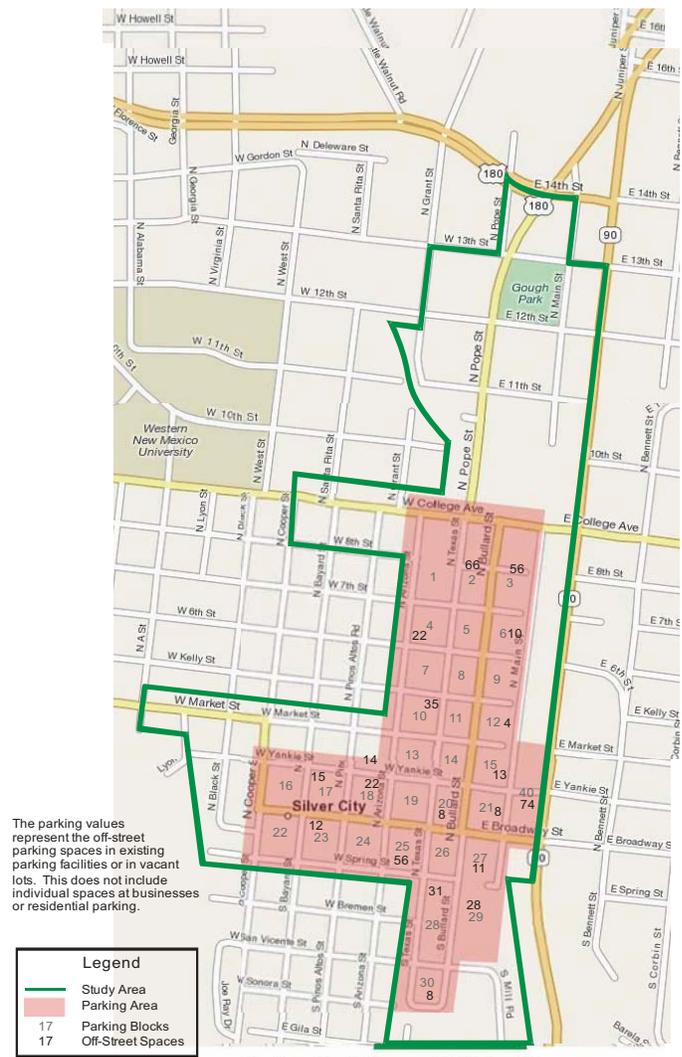
PARKING INVENTORY

Off-street parking was counted and is included in this graphic by block. The off-street parking did not include residential parking nor small areas within the commercial district where one or two vehicles could be parked. These are considered incidental spaces that would not be available to the general public, even if visiting a business.

Private parking areas were also identified and counted. In addition, a number of vacant lots within the study area were identified, and these areas were frequently utilized for off-street parking without formal space designation.

On-street spaces are approximate because there is no formal striping to adequately quantify the number of spaces. The number of spaces is estimated based upon an initial and end space length of 20', with 22' for intermediate spaces. Driveway areas are subtracted, as well as 4' either side of a driveway and 8' either side of a fire hydrant. There are also some areas where parking is restricted, either prohibited or time limited.

Parking time limits are infrequent within



Parking Study Area and Off-street Spaces

downtown Silver City. A few roadway sections have two-hour limits, and those road segments are Bullard St between Market St and College Ave, and Yankie St between Bullard St and Texas St.

Parallel parking is problematic in some areas of central Silver City because of the elevated sidewalks. Where high curbs exist, many drivers park away from the curb for passengers to exit from the vehicle. This leads to uneven offsets from the curb along each street because some drivers have passengers and some do not, resulting in narrowed driving areas. Parking offsets in excess of three feet were observed.

In addition to determining the number of parking spaces, the roadway widths were measured. These widths were used to determine if each roadway was wide enough to permit parking along each side. Roadways narrower than 30' may restrict emergency vehicle access which requires 14' for passage and fire truck setup if vehicles can park within 8.0' of the curb. Many street sections within downtown Silver City have curbs higher than 9", resulting in vehicles parked up to 4' from the curb. The high curbs can lead to severe restriction of the roadway width for emergency vehicle access when vehicles are parked along these sections.

The 31 block inventory yielded the following general results.

Total Parking Spaces	1254	100%
On-Street Parking Spaces	785	62%
Parallel	758	96%
Angle	13	2%
90°	14	2%
Off-Street Parking Spaces	469	38%
Off-Street Public Spaces	175	14%
Total Handicap Spaces	31	2%
On-Street Handicap Spaces	25	2%
2-Hour Time Limited Spaces	67	5%

The inventory data indicate that the majority of parking within the downtown area is on-street parking, and 96% is parallel parking. Angle parking is restricted to Broadway St between Texas St and Arizona St, and 6th St east of Bullard St. The small percentage of time limited parking indicates that the restrictions should minimally impact parking in central Silver City.

PARKING UTILIZATION

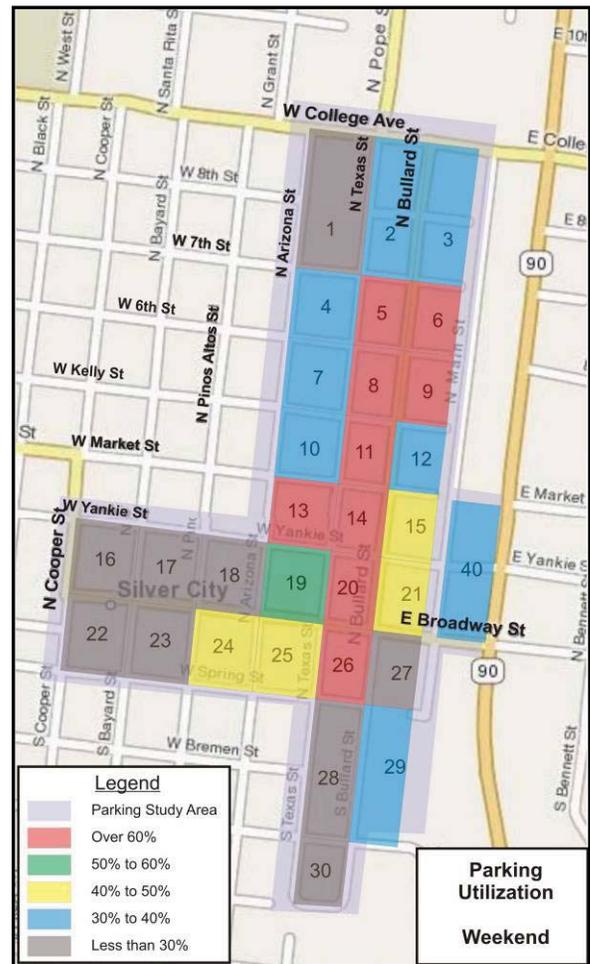
Two parking utilization studies were conducted within the study area, on Thursday, April 15, 2010 and Saturday April 17, 2010. Each parked vehicle was counted each loop through the study area at both on-street and off-street locations. Details of the methodology used to collect the data and block by block utilization summaries for both weekday and weekend inventories are included in the full document located in the appendix.

In addition to counting the spaces, three types of vehicles were noted. The primary type was a passenger vehicle, assumed to be 18' or less in length. These vehicles should fit into a standard 22' long

parking space. The second classification was a large vehicle, and full-size, dual cab pickup trucks or larger fit in this category. The final category was a motorcycle.

Summarizing the data, the downtown core experienced 54% average utilization on a weekday and 49% on a weekend. The remaining study area experienced average utilization of 30% on a weekday and 38% on a weekend. It is interesting to note that the weekend count had a higher average utilization than the weekday, 40% as compared to 35%.

The following graphics were prepared to show the average utilization percentages during the weekday and weekend counts. The weekday count showed the highest utilization near 6th St and along Broadway St. The weekend count found maximum utilization in the Bullard St corridor.



Parking Utilization by Block

Utilization fluctuated throughout the day. The minimum and maximum hourly counts are summarized in the table below.

Parking Utilization – Minimum/Maximum Hourly Summary

Block	Time	Total Spaces	Filled Spaces	Percent Filled
Weekday				
Maximum	12:00 – 1:00	1254	521	42%
Minimum	8:00 – 9:00	1254	251	20%
Weekend				
Maximum	12:00 – 1:00	1254	584	47%
Minimum	9:00 – 10:00	1254	361	29%

The weekend experienced a higher peak hour than the weekday. This may have resulted from the special event that was focused east of Bullard St between Yankie St and Kelly St. It should be noted that the highest utilization both on the weekday and weekend occurred over the noon hour. The lowest utilization occurred during the first hour of data collection each day.

An alternate examination of parking utilization along each roadway corridor confirms that the parking is aggregated along the primary commercial corridors. Bullard St, 6th St, Market St and Broadway St each average better than 50% utilization during weekdays. The weekend found Bullard St, College Ave, 6th St, Kelly St, Market St and Yankie St averaging more than 50% utilization. The 6th St corridor averaged the highest utilization both weekdays and weekends, and experienced the highest hourly utilization, 90%. (There is one anomaly in the data, Sonora St, which had utilization near twice the capacity. This result was from residential vehicles parked partially in the street where no parking should be permitted.)

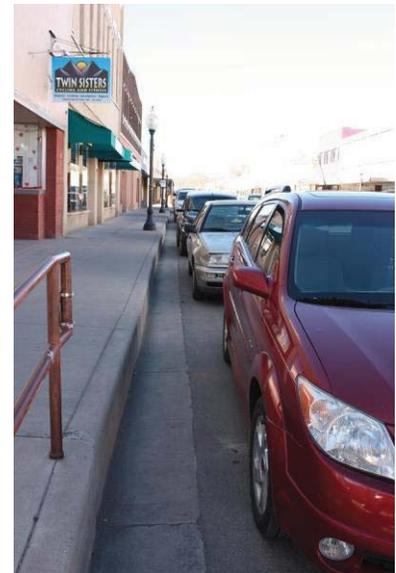
The block by block on-street segments indicated that Bullard St was the primary destination. Review of the hourly data revealed that each segment of Bullard St between 7th St and Spring St had at least one hour where there were no parking spaces available, two segments where one additional vehicle was parked over the established capacity, and one segment where two vehicles were parked over capacity. No other roadway (except Sonora St – as described above) met or exceeded capacity throughout the study period. Bullard St, between 7th St and Spring St should be considered capacity constrained, i.e., there is more demand for parking than there is capacity along Bullard St.

The vehicle types were also summarized for the two study periods. Large vehicles accounted for 3.9% of the weekday parked vehicles and 3.8% on the weekend on average. Motorcycles constituted 0.9% of the weekday vehicles and 0.6% of the weekend count. All remaining vehicles counted were standard size passenger vehicles.

ON-STREET PARKING

On-street parking in downtown Silver City has three primary concerns – parking prohibition near intersections and at fire hydrants, and the width of parking spaces. National standards are applicable in most locations within Silver City; however, there are unique features within the downtown area that require consideration of basic design principals to create standards that fit the Silver City environment. The unique features in central Silver City include:

1. Small intersection return radii. The intersection radius allows a vehicle to flow around an intersection return without encroaching into the opposite direction lane or the pedestrian zone. When there is no return radius, or a very small radius (less than 10'), a driver may have to maneuver their vehicle outside the travel lane they wish to enter to complete a turn. The presence of parallel parking aisles along each side of most downtown streets provides the required turning radius for passenger vehicles, though the turn may unsafely encroach into pedestrian space. This is especially the case for the returns that have no radius.
2. Raised sidewalks (high curbs) greater than 9 inches above the roadway. Silver City has numerous sidewalk sections greater than 9 inches high in the downtown area. These curb heights/raised sidewalks are primarily to accommodate stormwater runoff within the streets. The high curbs however, prevent passengers from opening a door and exiting a vehicle on the curb side when parked within 12" to 18" of the curb. This leads to many vehicles parking 3 to 4 feet from the curb where elevated conditions exist, reducing the roadway width for through vehicles. The picture at the right shows that as the curb reduces to a standard height, vehicles are parked closer to the curb.
3. Building offsets from face of curb less than six (6) feet. Many buildings on corners along Bullard St, Texas St and Arizona St in central Silver City have the structure constructed right on the property line. This typically corresponds to the back of sidewalk along these streets. As a result, the building is frequently constructed in the desired 'sight triangle' for motorists approaching the intersection. These structures restrict intersection sight distance.



-
4. Frequent one-way streets. The one-way streets benefit on-street parking within the downtown by permitting parking along two sides of the street. If two-way traffic were permitted, parking may have to be eliminated along some streets or restricted to one side of the street, effectively halving the parking supply along those roads.
 5. Short city blocks (typically less than 220'). The short city blocks reduce the parking supply because of required intersection offset parking prohibition.



EXISTING HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND ASSETS INVENTORY

Silver City has a long and active history in documenting, preserving, and celebrating its historic architecture. Like others, Silver City has also experienced unfortunate losses to its architectural heritage, but it continues to expand upon past work and to meet the challenges of re-using and rehabilitating historic buildings. The on-going rehabilitation of the Murray Hotel, which was often referred to as the town's "white elephant," is just one recent example. Building vacancy is probably one of the largest threats facing building preservation in Silver City today.

The study area for the Silver City Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan encompasses five historic districts (or parts thereof), including: the Silver City Historic District; the Western New Mexico University (WNMU) Historic District; Black's Addition Historic District; the Silver City North Addition Historic District; and, the Chihuahua Hill Historic District. All districts, except for Black's Addition and WNMU, are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Additionally, there are numerous buildings that are individually listed in the State and/or National Registers.

The Historic Overlay Zone includes four of the historic districts, all except WNMU. Within this framework, a Design Review Committee (DRC) was established to advise property owners about the standards and guidelines. The town created an excellent guide for property owners entitled "Maximizing your investment in Silver City's Historic Districts" that details the districts, the overlay zone, and the design standards.

Contributing resources that retain their historic integrity are assets to the community. As a whole, they create that special sense of place, serving as tangible marks of Silver City's development and history. There are, however, certain resources that are historically or architecturally more significant than others. The following list gives a brief overview and highlights some of the more significant buildings within each district:

Silver City Historic District (#197, NR-1978)

This district, roughly bounded by College Avenue on the north, the Big Ditch on the east, Spring Street on the south, and Black Street on the west, consists of the original townsite. It includes the downtown commercial resources, as well as "Gospel Hill," the early residential neighborhood.

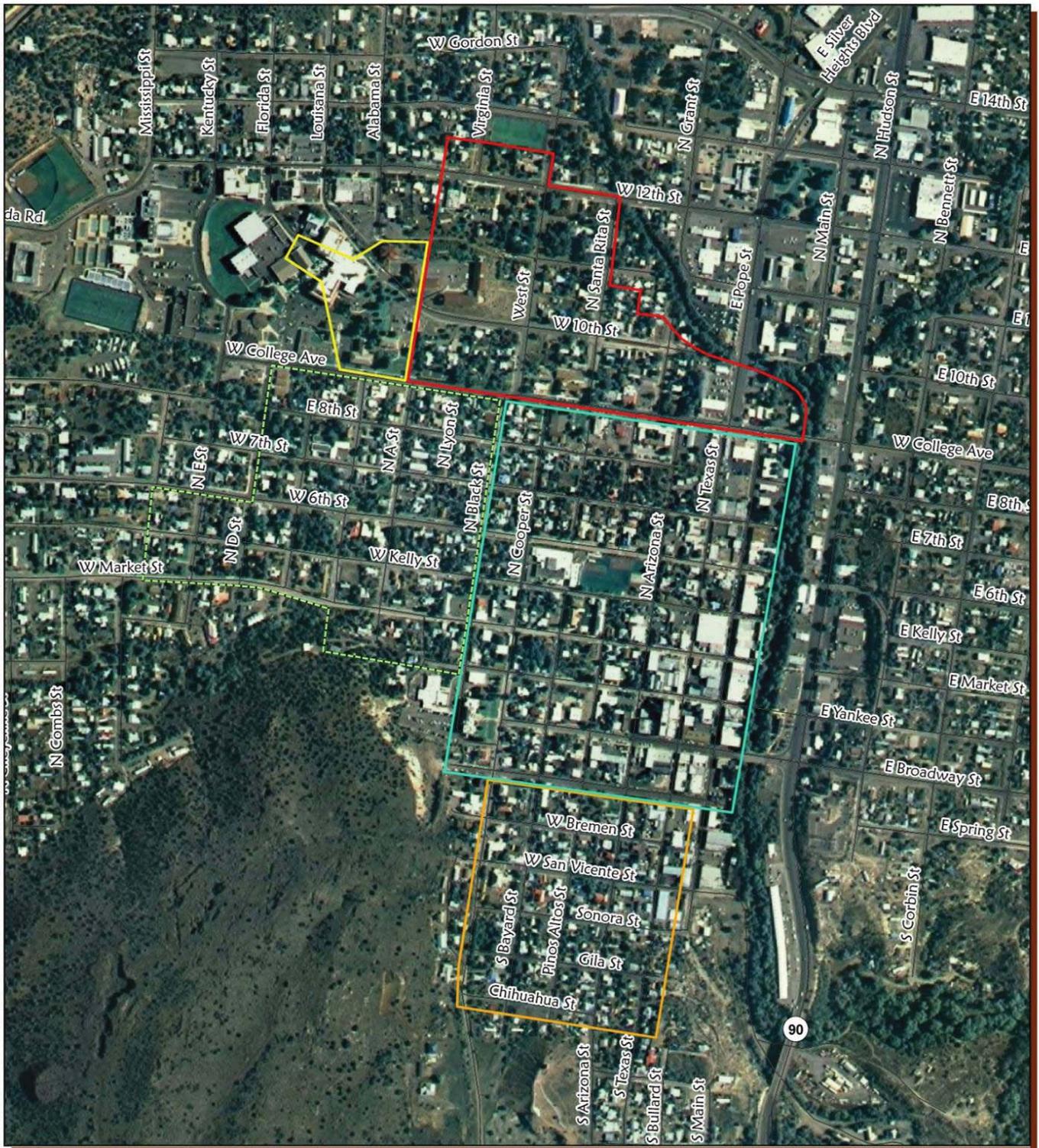
- Isaac Cohen House, 511 North Bullard Street, 1882
- Silco, Gila, and El Sol Theaters, North Bullard Street, ca. 1930-1940 (fell outside of the original period of significance)
- O.S. Warren House, 104 East Market Street, 1885 - Only original structure remaining on the original Main Street that survived the 1895 flood.
- Bennett Block or Sheridan Row, 104-112 West Yankee Street, 1882
- Silver City National Bank Building, 101 West Broadway, 1923
- Murray Hotel, 204-206 West Broadway Street, 1938, Built by J.E. Morgan & Sons, Percy McGhee, Architect (fell outside of the original period of significance).
- Bell Block, Broadway, 208-214 West Broadway Street, 1897 and 1906, Built by George H. Bell

-
- H. B. Allman House (Silver City Museum), 312 West Broadway Street, 1881
 - Silver City Elks Lodge, 315 North Texas, 1923
 - Martin Maher House, 315 North Pinos Altos, 1887
 - Grant County Courthouse, 117 Cooper Street, 1930, - Architects: George Williamson and W. Miles Brittelle
 - The “Big Ditch” serves as the eastern boundary.



Photo Courtesy of the Silver City Museum.

Looking north on Bullard Street near Market Street (probably post WWI).



Historic Districts

- Black's Historic District
- Silver City Historic District
- Chihuahua Historic District
- Western New Mexico University Historic District
- North Addition Historic District



Map Date: March 24, 2010

Western New Mexico Historic District (#846, SR-1981)

University campus, roughly bounded by College Avenue, B Street, Eleventh Street, and E Street. Majority of the buildings are attributed to prominent architects.

- Fleming Hall, 1916, Trost & Trost
- Light Hall, 1927, Trost & Trost
- Bowden Hall, 1927, Trost & Trost
- Graham Gym, 1936, John Gaw Meem
- Ritch Hall, 1906, Charles F. Whittlesey

Black's Addition Historic District (#882, SR-1982)

The district, roughly bounded by College Avenue on the north, the alley of Lyon Street on the east, Market Street on the south, and E Street on the west, is named after Robert Black, an early local architect and contractor. The neighborhood consists of a multitude of styles from the turn of the century.

- Robert Black House, 716 West Market Street, 1877
- J.M. Smith House, 403 A Street, 1886
- St. Joseph Sanatorium, block between Market, Kelly, B and C Streets, 1887
- Will Bassett Bungalow, 503 E Street, 1915
- Harry Bassett Bungalow, 515 E Street, 1916
- A.A. Luck House, 1202 West Market Street, 1940

Silver City North Addition Historic District (#883, NR-1983)

The district, roughly bounded by Thirteenth Street on the north, the San Vicente Arroyo on the east, College Avenue on the south, the alley west of Chloride Street on the west, includes examples of late nineteenth and early twentieth century residences.

- William Laizure House, 502 West College Avenue, 1891
- W.B. Walton House, 903 West Street, ca. 1905
- E.G. Shields House, 1103 West Street, 1882
- Gene Cosgrove House, 1121 West Street, 1908, I.W. Salle & Co.
- H.D. Gilbert House, 909 Santa Rita Street, 1892, William Laizure, builder
- Frank R. Coon House, 1019 Santa Rita Street, 1906, Black & Atkins
- Judge Joseph Thompson House, 902 Santa Rita Street, 1908
- Potten Row, East College Avenue, ca. 1883

Chihuahua Hill Historic District (# 906, NR-1984)

The district, roughly bounded by Spring Street on the north, Bullard Street on the east, Chihuahua Street on the south, and Cooper Street on the west, is primarily comprised of vernacular dwellings, mostly of adobe and stone construction, associated with early Hispanic residents.

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- Martin W. Bremen House, 202 South Bullard Street, ca. 1876
 - Juan Mejillas House, 112 ½ Sonora, 1870s
 - John O. Buquor House, 109 South Arizona, ca. 1886-1893
 - Luis Cartagena House, 116 Bremen Street, ca. 1893
 - Alvino Elias House, 206 South Arizona, ca. 1880

Recent Surveys within the Study Area

In general, the “fifty-year rule” guides the determination of eligibility—contributing or non-contributing status—within a National Register historic district. Thus, when the Silver City Historic District was listed in 1978 for example, any resource that was constructed after 1930 was considered neutral or non-contributing. Towns throughout the country are currently re-visiting many of their early designations and re-evaluating resources that originally fell outside of the period of significance.

In 1994, Silver City also undertook such efforts to re-evaluate resources that were labeled as “neutral” within original nominations due to construction date. Susan Berry and Sharman Apt Russell completed the update for the second edition of *Built to Last*. Judging by information found at the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division and the National Park Service, the update, which extended the period of significance to 1944, was incorporated into the original nomination at the state level only. The updated information was never officially submitted to the National Register.

In 2003, Ragins Research and Planning (RRP) of Santa Fe completed another update, which included a thorough resurvey of 102 properties within the Silver City and Silver City North Addition historic districts. This material includes a detailed historic context for the decade after World War II, as well as architectural descriptions, photographs, and determinations of eligibilities.

Another important preservation project was the survey of the Block 350 (also known as the “Warehouse District”) by Van Citters: Historic Preservation, LLC of Albuquerque in 2006. The survey included: the Bullard Hotel (1916, NR); the Texas-Louisiana Power Company Plant (1927, NR); the Silver City Power Plant Ice Storage Building (1917); the Home Furniture Company Building (mid-1960s remodel); and the Silver Liquor Company Warehouse (ca. 1950). These buildings were not included in the original Silver City Historic District boundary. Silver City was recently awarded Certified Local Government (CLG) grant funds to expand the current district to include these significant structures. The work is currently underway.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Introduction

The following memorandum report reviews recent Silver City, NM market studies, and supplements them with current market conditions, and incorporates site visits and interviews with local businesses as an input into the Silver City, NM Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan. This market study assessment may be supplemented with additional information from prime and sub-consultants and revised for final publication in consultation with local steering committee to be approved by Silver City, NM town council, as appropriate, for the final master plan. Information contained in this memorandum report may be incorporated into the community workshop, planned for March 26-27, 2010 in Silver City, NM.

The Town of Silver City, NM was recently designated one of the first two pilot New Mexico Arts and Cultural Districts in the state. The Silver City, NM Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan will define the boundaries of the Arts and Cultural District. These state designated areas bring several benefits, including financial support for local community-based planning and development, statewide co-operative tourism marketing opportunities with other arts and cultural districts, and enhanced historic and redevelopment tax incentives for economic development. Based on the market study assessment and the community planning process, the Silver City Metropolitan Redevelopment Area Plan will include strategic recommendations for plan implementation. This market study assessment and recommendations outlined in this report should be seen as a work in progress that will be informed by future community research and strategy development at the community workshop.

This report contains the following sections

- **Regional and Downtown Context**, including overview of housing and economic trends affecting the downtown;
- **Downtown Business Profile**, including mix of downtown businesses and competitive context;
- **Resident Market**, including population, educational attainment and occupational profile;
- **Visitor Market**, including overnight, pass-through and day trip visitors and profile of local attractions; and,
- **Synthesis**

Recommendations are located in Chapter 4..

Assumptions

In preparing this report, the following assumptions were made. This study is qualified in its entirety by these assumptions.

-
1. Every reasonable effort has been made in order that the data contained in this study reflect the most accurate and timely information available and it is believed to be reliable. This study is based on estimates, assumptions and other information developed by ConsultEcon, Inc. from their independent research efforts, general knowledge of the industry, and consultations with the client and community stakeholders. No responsibility is assumed for inaccuracies in reporting by the client, its agents and representatives, or any other data source used in the preparation of this study.
 2. Outputs of computer models used in this report may be rounded. These outputs may therefore slightly affect totals and summaries.
 3. This report was prepared during the period September 2009 through March 2010. It represents data available at that time.

Regional and Downtown Context

Silver City is located in New Mexico, approximately a 4-hour drive southwest of Santa Fe, the state capitol, a 3-hour drive east from Tucson, AZ, and a 2-hour drive northwest from El Paso, TX. Figure 1 is a map of New Mexico and identifies the location of Silver City. Silver City has a population of 10,400 and is the county seat of Grant County. Grant County is largely rural, with significant amount of natural lands. The region's natural resources support its traditional industries of mining and agriculture, as well as more recent tourism development. Silver City is a southern gateway city to the 3.3-million-acre Gila National Forest, which had an estimated 1.5 million forest visits in 2006. The forest and mountains offer numerous outdoor recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Silver City is located on the Trail of the Mountain Spirits National Scenic Byway, one of New Mexico's many scenic routes, and close to the Geronimo Trail National Scenic Byway.

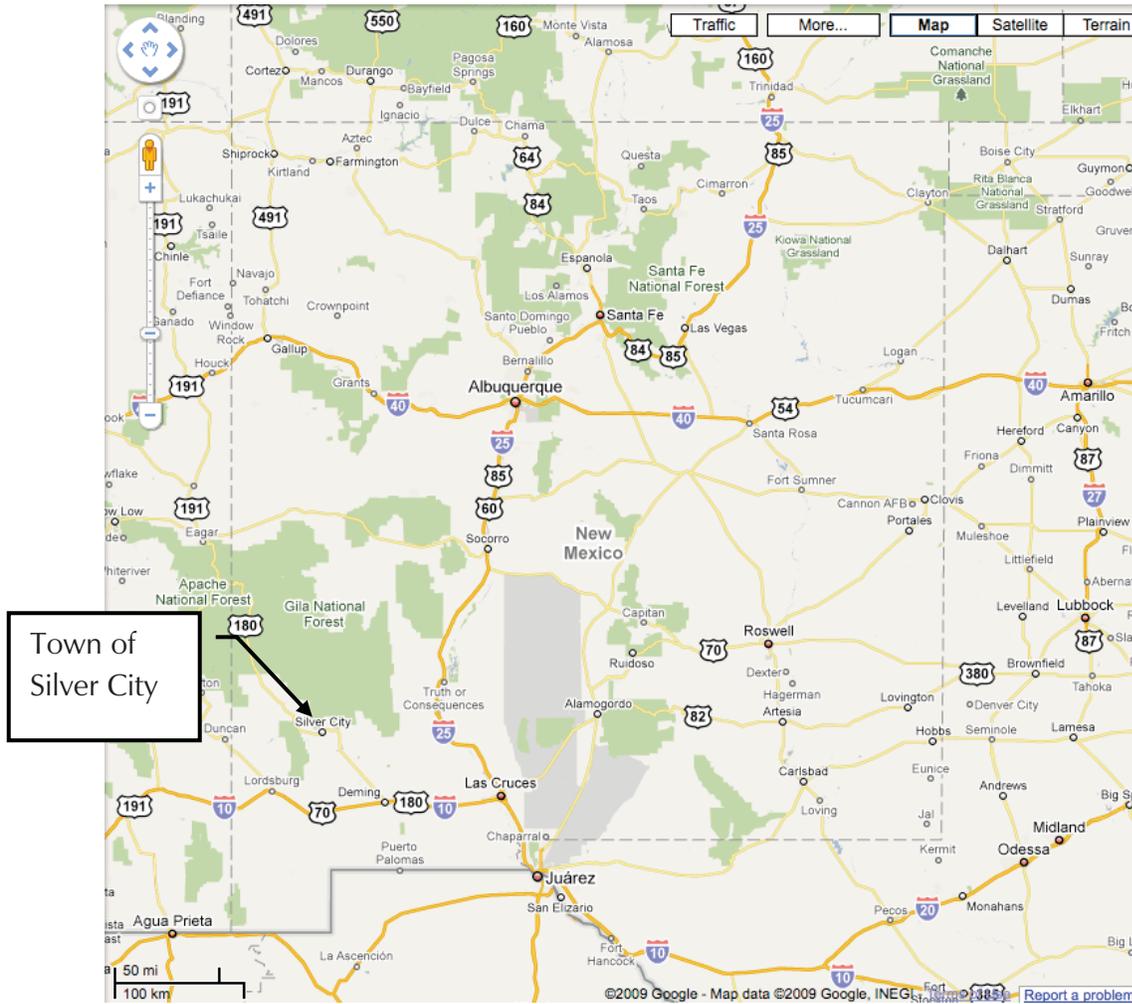
TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Silver City is located at the crossroads of state and US highways, including State Route (SR) 15, SR 90, and US 180. Figure 2 is a road map of Silver City indicating the downtown area. These primary thoroughfares are outside of the downtown area. Parallel to downtown's Bullard Street, SR 90 runs southwest to Interstate 10 in Lordsburg and US 180 runs southeast to Interstate 10 in Deming. SR 15 runs north to Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument 44 miles away in the Gila National Forest.

Figure 3 is a map that identifies the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) on roadway segments through Silver City. SR 90 adjacent to downtown has 14,800 AADT. US 180 out of Silver City to Santa Clara has 16,100 AADT. Downtown's primary thoroughfare is Bullard St., which is parallel to and one block west of SR 90. Broadway St. is the southern gateway street to Bullard St. and College St. is the northern gateway. Both Broadway St. and College St. connect to SR 90. In general, Silver City downtown is visible to both residents and visitors alike, due to its location near the two state highways. However, the downtown is reportedly not well signed from the state highways. Increased signage would enhance the downtown's visibility. Downtown Silver City is walkable, with a good density of store fronts and the Big Ditch Park.

Figure 1

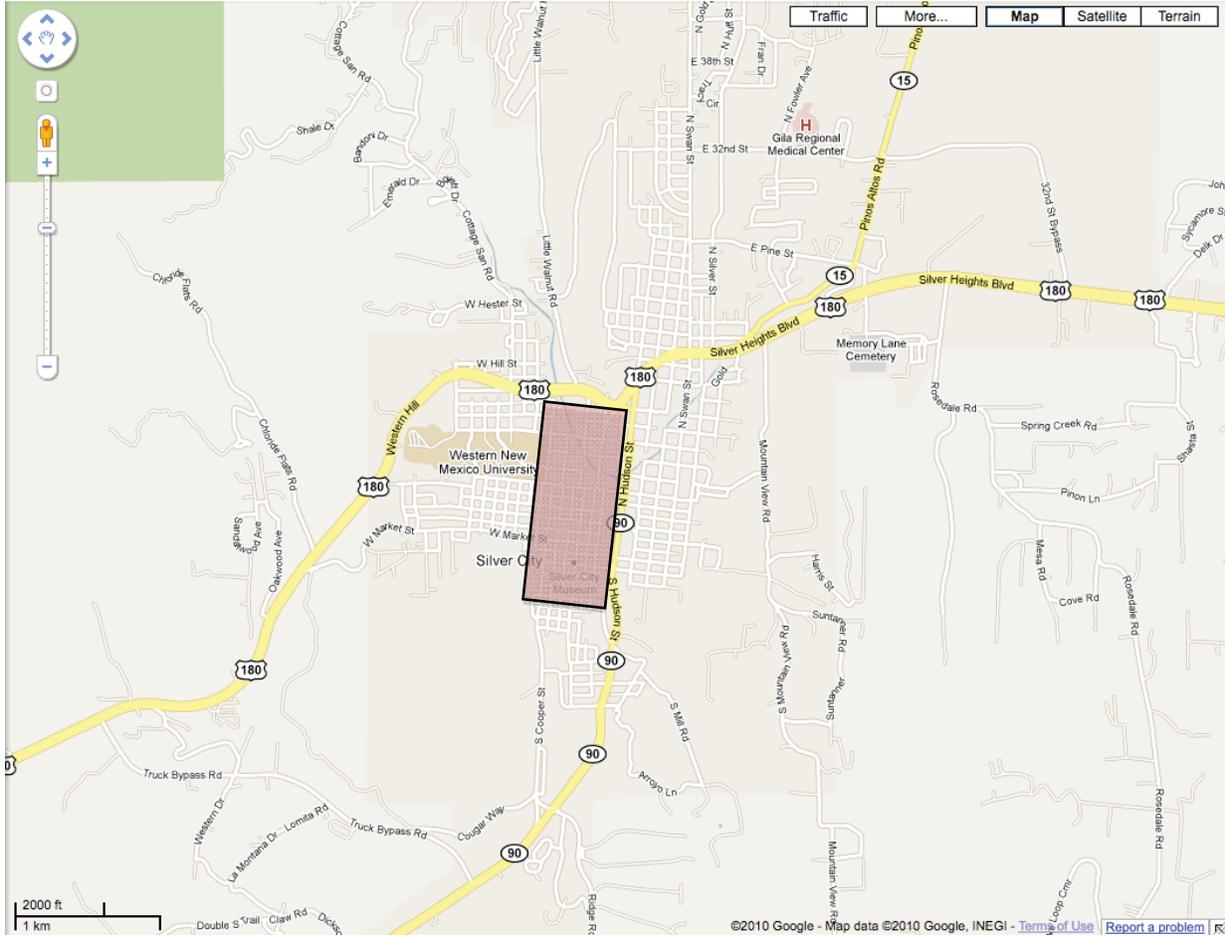
Road Map of New Mexico



Source: Google Maps.

Figure 2

Road Map of Silver City, NM



Source: Google Maps.

REGIONAL AND DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC TRENDS

The current economic recession that began in late 2007 has translated to a higher unemployment rate in the U.S., New Mexico, and Grant County. In the fourth quarter of 2009, Grant County's unemployment rate was 11.8 percent, third highest rate among all counties statewide. Job losses locally and nationally have constrained spending, especially consumer discretionary spending as well as business spending. Lending standards have tightened for consumers and businesses.

Grant County's total employment stood at 11,139 at the end of 2009, down from 12,129 at the end of 2007, a decrease of 8.2 percent in the number of jobs. Current major employers include Freeport-McMoRan, a copper mining company, with about 750 jobs and the Gila Regional Medical Center, with about 700. Global prices and demand for copper drive employment levels at Freeport, which have led to recent job losses and a major contributor to recent area unemployment. Employment at the medical center and Western New Mexico University, another large employer in the area, has held up through the economic recession.

The Town of Silver City is the central place in the region, with the university, shopping and dining, and large government and private employers. The downtown is within walking distance of Western New Mexico University and approximately 1 mile from the medical center. Newer commercial development has occurred primarily on US 180, outside of the historic downtown, and is anchored by a Wal-Mart Supercenter. It is more suburban-style, strip development, oriented towards automobiles, with larger buildings and parking lots than the downtown offers.

While located in a rural setting, like many New Mexico cities, Silver City' historic building stock, mix of residential and commercial uses, and dense urban fabric create a unique setting. Downtown Silver City is largely commercial, near several residential neighborhoods on both sides of SR 90.

RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

Data in Table 1 show residential, multi-family and commercial trend between 2003 and 2009 in Grant and Hidalgo Counties.² Sales volume and average prices have declined in residential properties. There are few multi-family and commercial property sales that occur each year.

² The southwestern county in New Mexico adjacent to Grant County, Hidalgo County has an estimated 2008 population of 4,900, most of whom are located in Lordsburg, the county seat.

Table 1
Residential, Multi-Family, and Commercial Sales Volume and Average and Median Prices,
Grant and Hidalgo Counties, 2003 through 2009

Year	Sales	Percent Change in Sales	Average Price	Percent Change in Average Price	Median Price	Percent Change in Median Price
<i>Residential</i>						
2003	351		\$112,652		\$90,000	
2004	442	25.9%	\$126,330	12.1%	\$105,000	16.7%
2005	458	3.6%	\$154,031	21.9%	\$130,000	23.8%
2006	390	-14.8%	\$174,509	13.3%	\$155,000	19.2%
2007	331	-15.1%	\$188,893	8.2%	\$160,000	3.2%
2008	236	-28.7%	\$179,068	-5.2%	\$160,000	0.0%
2009	164	-30.5%	\$156,277	-12.7%	\$145,000	-9.4%
<i>Multi-Family</i>						
2003	6		\$97,000		\$70,000	
2004	12	100.0%	\$176,625	82.1%	\$151,250	116.1%
2005	9	-25.0%	\$118,472	-32.9%	\$122,500	-19.0%
2006	12	33.3%	\$332,165	180.4%	\$200,000	63.3%
2007	10	-16.7%	\$221,950	-33.2%	\$183,500	-8.3%
2008	9	-10.0%	\$244,000	9.9%	\$197,500	7.6%
2009	3	-66.7%	\$194,667	-20.2%	\$214,000	8.4%
<i>Commercial</i>						
2003	19		\$224,847		\$196,070	
2004	20	5.3%	\$224,595	-0.1%	\$144,500	-26.3%
2005	17	-15.0%	\$301,876	34.4%	\$180,000	24.6%
2006	16	-5.9%	\$311,000	3.0%	\$172,500	-4.2%
2007	14	-12.5%	\$315,364	1.4%	\$227,500	31.9%
2008	11	-21.4%	\$172,727	-45.2%	\$150,000	-34.1%
2009	11	0.0%	\$116,673	-32.5%	\$115,000	-23.3%

Note: Data is based on sold information in the Multiple Listing Service

Source: Silver City Regional Association of REALTORS®, Inc. and ConsultEcon, Inc.

According the 2008 BBER report there are 928 housing units within a quarter mile of the downtown, an estimated 19 percent of the Town's 4,800 total housing units. According to estimates from ESRI, residential vacancy has remained virtually unchanged at 11 percent between 2000 and 2009. This vacancy rate is lower than estimates for Grant County and the State as a whole.

Downtown Business Profile

Data supplied by Silver City Main Street appear in Table 2 and profile the downtown business mix. Data in Table 3 show additional detail in selected subsectors. The largest concentrations of businesses include 65 retailers (34% of total), 38 other services (20%), 20 restaurants (11%), and 19 professional services (10%). There is also a small manufacturing cluster. There are over 193 establishments in downtown Silver City in 2010, almost double the amount reported in 2006 in the BBER report. Most businesses in the downtown are independent, self-employed owner-operators that do not employ other people. (This may account for their absence in the BBER report, based on ES-202 data, which covers only establishments paying unemployment insurance.)

The largest employers downtown include Hidalgo Medical Services, LifeQuest, and the Town of Silver City (150). There are several independent businesses that employ larger numbers of workers, including Diane's Restaurant/The Parlor/Bakery & Deli (50), Syzygy Tileworks (30), Jalisco Café (30), and Isaac's Bar & Grill (20). Total downtown employment was estimated at 1,042 jobs in 2006, approximately 15 percent of the Town's total employment. There are more likely additional downtown workers in small, owner-operated businesses. Downtown employment generates daytime activity and customer traffic for convenience-oriented businesses.

According to Main Street Silver City, the occupancy rate of the buildings downtown has fallen from 90 percent to 85 percent and 2009 was an "average" year for openings and closings. Three businesses have recently closed, including a tattoo parlor. New businesses have opened, including a coffee shop and an art gallery. The 50,000-square-foot Murray Hotel, the tallest building in town at five stories, is currently being renovated with plans for a full-service restaurant, ballroom/banquet rooms, and 65 rooms. Larger buildings not activated or converted to adaptive reuse include El Sol Theatre and the Gila Theatre.

Table 2
Business Mix, 2006 and 2010
Downtown Silver City, NM

NAICS Sector		2006	Percent to Total	2010	Percent to Total	Difference, 2006 and 2010
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
21	Mining	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
22	Utilities	2	2.0%	0	0.0%	-2
23	Construction	5	5.0%	2	1.0%	-3
31-33	Manufacturing	2	2.0%	4	2.1%	2
42	Wholesale trade	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
44-45	Retail trade	18	18.0%	65	33.7%	47
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
51	Information	5	5.0%	4	2.1%	-1
52	Finance & Insurance	6	6.0%	2	1.0%	-4
53	Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	3	3.0%	4	2.1%	1
54	Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	10	10.0%	19	9.8%	9
55	Mgt of Companies	1	1.0%	0	0.0%	-1
56	Administrative & Support Services	4	4.0%	0	0.0%	-4
61	Educational Services	2	2.0%	4	2.1%	2
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	9	9.0%	16	8.3%	7
71	Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	2	2.0%	4	2.1%	2
72	Accommodations & Food Services	14	14.0%	25	13.0%	11
81	Other Services	8	8.0%	38	19.7%	30
92	Public Administration	9	9.0%	6	3.1%	-3
Total		100	100.0%	193	100.0%	93.0%

Source: UNM BBER 2006, Silver City Main Streets 2010, and ConsultEcon, Inc.

Table 3
Detailed Business Mix in Selected Categories, 2010
Downtown Silver City, NM

NAICS Sector	Establishments	Percent to Total
<i>Retail Trade</i>		
441 Motor vehicle and parts dealers	1	0.5%
445 Food and beverage stores	4	2.1%
448 Clothing and clothing accessories stores	7	3.6%
453 Miscellaneous store retailers	32	16.6%
454 Nonstore retailers	0	0.0%
443 Electronics and appliance stores	0	0.0%
444 Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	0	0.0%
446 Health and personal care stores	2	1.0%
452 General merchandise stores	1	0.5%
451 Sporting goods, hobby, book, and music stores	13	6.7%
442 Furniture and home furnishings stores	5	2.6%
Total Retail	65	33.7%
52-54 Finance, Insurance and Real Estate and Professional Services	19	9.8%
61 Educational Services	4	2.1%
62 Health Care and Social Assistance	16	8.3%
71 Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	4	2.1%
<i>Accommodations and Food Services</i>		
721 Accommodations	5	2.6%
722 Food services and drinking places	20	10.4%
Total Accommodations and Food Services	25	13.0%
<i>Other Services</i>		
811 Repair & maintenance	5	2.6%
812 Personal & laundry services	18	9.3%
813 Religious / grantmaking / civic / professional & similar org	15	7.8%
Total Services	38	19.7%
Other Sectors	22	11.4%
Total	193	100.0%

Source: Silver City Main Streets and ConsultEcon, Inc.