



Belén
The Hub City

2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Adopted by City Council
January 3, 2023



ORDINANCE NO. 2023-03

**AN ADOPTION UPDATING AND AMENDING THE CITY OF BELEN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PURSUANT TO NEW MEXICO STATUTES CHAPTER 3.
MUNICIPALITIES § 3-19-9. MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the planning commission to prepare for adoption by the governing body a master plan for the physical development of the city and the area within the planning, platting, and zoning jurisdiction of the city, and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan is to be updated periodically, not to exceed every five years, and

WHEREAS, updating the Comprehensive Plan is critical for the City of Belen to continue to be considered for and to receive various State and Federal funding grants, and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that the Comprehensive Plan continue to be evaluated on a continual basis for potential necessary amendments and to reflect physical and economic local, state and national needs, trends and changes, and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission has worked with Planning Staff and a Planning Consultant during ongoing Commission public meetings and workshops to prepare the updated and amended Comprehensive Plan, and

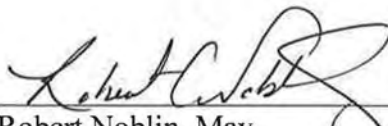
WHEREAS, the Planning Commission unanimously voted to move the updated and amended Comprehensive Plan forward to the City Council on November 28, 2022 for City Council Public Hearing and Adoption, and

WHEREAS, the City Council having considered this matter in a public hearing held on Monday, January 3, 2023 at 6:00 P.M., in the Library Meeting Room at 333 Becker Avenue, Belen, New Mexico 87002.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED that the amended and updated Comprehensive Plan is hereby approved and adopted as set forth above.

This Ordinance shall become effective five days after publication of its adoption.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 3rd day of January, 2023.


Robert Noblin, Mayor

ATTEST:


Dorothy Flores, City Clerk



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Robert Noblin, Mayor

City Council

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Sites Southwest

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION



A comprehensive plan is an official document that is adopted by a local government as a policy guide for making future decisions regarding the physical development and overall improvement of the community. The plan indicates how Belen residents and their elected officials envision the community to develop over the next 20 years and beyond. Moreover, a comprehensive plan is a legally binding document of the City that provides a basis for regulations and programs necessary to manage the current and future development of the City. The comprehensive plan is also a “living document”, meaning that it is subject to change over time, as Belen grows and evolves, to incorporate and adapt to those changes.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to present strategies that will guide and manage future development in the City of Belen. The primary emphasis of this Plan is on land use activities as an indicator of health, character, and municipal functions in the community. This Plan focuses on Belen's future while considering recent economic development and growth, including new housing production, a major new residential subdivision and retail growth. A comprehensive plan's focus is typically twenty years in the future, recognizing that changes in the community should be looked at annually, with a comprehensive update every five years.

The Community Profile presents essential information on the regional setting, present character of development, local development history, population and housing statistics, local economy, transportation and circulation systems, and the major public services and facilities available to Belen residents. This background information provides a basis for envisioning development patterns and land use activities that will define the community of Belen in the future.

A key component of the Belen Comprehensive Plan process is the formulation of broad goals and specific objectives to ensure a desirable future for the city. These goals, with their subordinate objectives, are presented in the following categories: Sustainability; Cultural Resources; Land Use; Housing; Transportation, Infrastructure; Community Services and Facilities; Economic Development; Parks, Recreation, and Open Space; and Hazard Mitigation. These goals and objectives set the stage for a more specific proposed implementation plan to follow the Comprehensive Plan. The implementation plan will identify future actions, how they are to be met, and priorities to accomplish the community's vision.

Implementation of this plan will be subject to the policy directives established by the governing body of the City, as deemed appropriate for the conditions and opportunities that may arise in the future.

BELEN'S VISION

The City of Belen strives to support our culturally rich community by preserving our history and traditions, encouraging sustainable growth, creating limitless opportunities, and embracing innovative ideas.

LOCATION

Belen is in Valencia County, 35 miles south of Albuquerque and 43 miles north of Socorro. The city is the southernmost municipality in the Albuquerque metro area.

The city is located adjacent to I-25 and on the west side of the Rio Grande. Residents and businesses benefit from the multiple modes of transportation access to the site, which include the interstate highway, BNSF rail line, commuter rail, bus transit, and a regional airport. State highway 314 connects the communities along the middle Rio Grande south of Albuquerque.

The City of Rio Communities abuts Belen on the east side of the river. The Village of Los Lunas lies to the north of Belen. Unincorporated agricultural communities of Los Chavez, Tomé, Adelino, Los Trujillos, Gabaldon, and Jarales surround the incorporated municipalities.

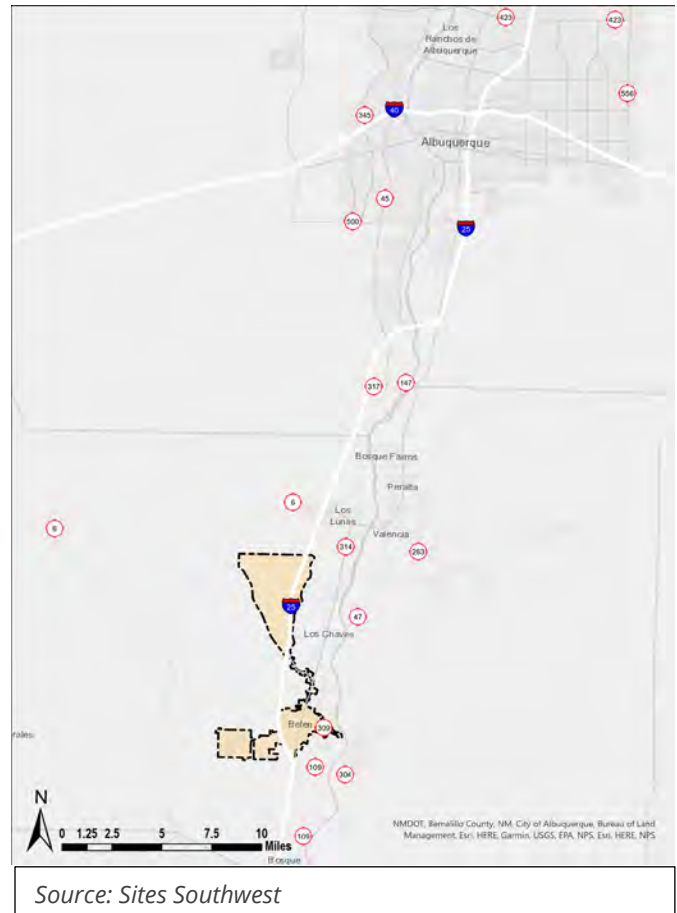
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community engagement process for establishing a Comprehensive Plan is vital to identify the challenges and opportunities within a community. Residents help to inform the vision and priorities of the plan. This section will explain the process taken to engage Belen residents.

Early in the plan update, City staff communicated with existing organizations, including the Belen MainStreet Partnership, the Greater Belen Chamber of Commerce, and the Belen Historic Preservation Committee to obtain opinions and attitudes concerning the present status and growth potential of Belen and an overall vision for the city. The initial input was followed by public workshops and a series of presentations to the Belen Planning and Zoning Commission. The intent of this public participation was to ensure strong community support for goals, objectives, and strategic action recommendations, which are incorporated in this Plan.

The public engagement process involved three phases of input, each of which provided an opportunity for community members to provide their ideas and concerns.

FIGURE 1. BELEN REGION



INTRODUCTION

- **PHASE 1:** Visioning and SWOT Analysis
- **PHASE 2:** Developing the Comprehensive Plan
- **PHASE 3:** Adopting and Finalizing the Comprehensive Plan

PHASE 1: Visioning and SWOT Analysis

Visioning

The visioning process for Belen began with a public visioning meeting conducted by City staff in 2021. This visioning meeting identified the City's assets and opportunities, needs and goals for the future. The visioning process identified the following objectives:

Community character

- Make Belen a desirable place to live, work and play
- Preserve historic properties
- Maintain a clean and beautiful city
- Diversify the types of development in the city

Local economy

- Create an Economic Development Plan
- Develop a city brand
- Expand retail businesses

Public safety

- Provide adequate public safety
- Improve social services

Infrastructure

- Maintain adequate infrastructure
- Address flooding

SWOT Analysis

The visioning process that kicked off the update to the Comprehensive Plan identified the following characteristics and concerns that have been sorted into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, or a traditional SWOT analysis. Strengths and weaknesses are *internal* characteristics that the community can build on or resolve. Opportunities and threats are *outside* influences that the community can anticipate improving the community or mitigate to avoid negative impacts.

This way of looking at ideas helps frame how local strategies can build on strengths, capitalize on opportunities, and mitigate weaknesses and threats.

TABLE 1: SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Opportunities
Downtown Belen History Family oriented, vocational, hospitable community Intermodal transportation - interstate, rail, and air Alternate transportation—commuter rail, trails, transit	Hospital Retail Expansion of water- and energy-efficient industries Tourism Bedroom community of Albuquerque Central railroad hub in New Mexico
Weaknesses	Threats
Homelessness, need for social services Lack of a Flood Control Board Vacant property Lack of adequate hotel accommodations Lack of senior services	Flooding Wildfire

Existing Conditions Review

As part of the initial visioning, the planning team evaluated existing conditions, including demographics; market and development trends; growth projections; status of historic, cultural, and natural resources; housing; economic development; community facilities and services; infrastructure (water supply, storm water drainage, and wastewater); transportation; emergency services (fire protection, medical services, and law enforcement); and land use. City staff and participants in public meetings confirmed existing conditions, provided information on planned projects and identified needs.

PHASE 2: DEVELOPING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Planning and Zoning Commission Hearings

The Comprehensive Plan update was discussed at a Planning and Zoning Commission hearing to get feedback from this appointed group with a primary responsibility for land use planning and administration in Belen. At the first meeting, the Commission discussed general ideas and issues to be considered in the plan. The Commission discussed goals and objectives of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan. They identified goals that are no longer applicable, suggested new goals appropriate to where Belen is today, and updated existing goals to account for community change in the past 20 years.

Community Workshop 1

A community Town Hall, conducted in August 2022, provided an opportunity for the community to identify key concerns and positive aspects of living, working, and playing in Belen. The community was also asked to indicate the characteristics and places in Belen that should be protected and to identify their highest priorities for change in the community. The input from the Town Hall is incorporated into the guiding principles of the plan, the SWOT analysis, and the goals for the comprehensive plan sections.

FIGURE 2: COMMUNITY WORKSHOP



Community Workshop 2

On September 22, the planning team led an interactive community workshop to refine the comprehensive plan's goals, policies, and actions. This workshop was held at the Belen Public Library and was attended by 24 citizens, business owners, City staff and Chamber and MainStreet representatives. Participants were asked to revise and add anything missing to each of the plan elements' goals, policies, and actions. The team then incorporated this input into a revised draft plan and implementation section.

PHASE 3: Adopting and Finalizing the Comprehensive Plan

Planning and Zoning Commission Hearings

The Planning and Zoning Commission discussed the draft Comprehensive Plan at two public hearings. The first was to discuss the plan and suggest changes. Prior to this hearing, the plan was distributed to participants in public workshops and to City staff for review. Comments from the public were considered for inclusion in the plan.

The purpose of the second hearing was to review the final draft plan, make final changes from the commission, and make a recommendation to the City Council.

City Council Adoption Hearing

TBD

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The plan is organized in the following chapters.

- Introduction
- Community Profile
- Sustainability
- Cultural Resources
- Community Facilities and Services
- Land Use
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Parks, Trails, and Open Space
- Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Hazard Mitigation
- Implementation

INTRODUCTION

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SECTION 2

COMMUNITY PROFILE



Belen is in southern Valencia County, approximately 33 miles south of Albuquerque. Neighboring municipalities include Los Lunas, Bosque Farms, and Rio Communities and the unincorporated communities of Jarales, Adelino, Los Chavez, and Tomé. Belen is referred to as the "Hub City" because of the transcontinental freight trains that stop, refuel, and receive services in Belen.

El Camino Real, which is a designated scenic byway and one of the oldest and most historic trails in the United States, runs through Belen. El Camino Real served as the main highway for the Spanish for over three centuries and extended 1,150 miles from Mexico City to Santa Fe. Interstate Highway I-25 runs parallel to this historic corridor, connecting Belen to New Mexico's major cities along the Rio Grande.

HISTORY

Native Americans established the earliest known settlements in the Belen area. With the coming of the Spanish in 1598, several ranchos were built in what is now Tomé, Valencia (north of Belen), and Las Barrancas (south of Belen).

In the 18th century, the Spanish set their eyes on the Rio Abajo lands because of their agricultural value in the Rio Grande valley. The upper portion of the Rio Grande, from La Bajada Hill north near Santa Fe, was referred to as Rio Arriba, while the lower portion, south to El Paso del Norte, was referred to as Rio Abajo.

In 1740, a royal grant by the King of Spain was given to Captain Don Diego de Torres, his brother-in-law, Antonio de Salazar, and 31 other Spanish settlers to establish the community of Belen. The settlers were given industrial land allotments that became their land after living on it for five years. The settlement was known as Nuestra Senora de Belen, or Our Lady of Bethlehem. Later, the community was referred to as, simply, Belen.

The plains surrounding the Belen area were ideal for stock raising, which figured prominently in the Belen economy at that time.

As the population increased, settlers began to disperse into ranchos throughout the valley. These ranchos were built around a plaza (town square), in accordance with settlement guidelines established by the Spanish colonial power in the Laws of the Indies. The settlers diverted water from the river to acequias (ditches) to channel water for irrigation. Farming adjoined the various plazas, and sheep, cattle, and horses grazed in the common lands of the grant.

In 1750, a military outpost was established in Belen in response to conflict between the settlers and the Apache and Comanche people from the east and Navajo people from the northwest. The last raid in Belen occurred in 1864, when Navajo raiders drove cows, goats, and sheep away from the city. In that year, the Navajo people were driven by the U.S. military from their homelands in Arizona and western New Mexico to eastern New Mexico, in a brutal and deadly forced removal now known as the Long Walk.

During Spanish and Mexican rule, sheep became the basis of the economy in the Rio Abajo. By 1840, New Mexico flocks had grown to an estimated one and half million sheep. By 1880, there were four million sheep (most of which were located in the Rio Abajo), and this number did not decline until around 1910.

Throughout its history Belen has been known as a place of trade. El Camino Real ran along the Rio Grande, linking Santa Fe with Mexico City. During the 18th century, mission supply caravans carried friars, settlers, mail, religious items, merchandise, and various other freight materials along El Camino Real. Fur trappers and traders followed El Camino Real throughout the 19th century. Belen was a port of entry for caravans moving south to El Paso, Chihuahua, Parral, Durango, and Mexico City. A branch customs house was established in Belen in the early 1800s. Traders from Santa Fe often conducted business in Belen with merchandise not sold at Taos, Albuquerque, or Tomé. Mutton, dried beef, chili, onions, and beans were taken to Bernalillo, Acoma, Laguna, and Socorro in trade for wine, grapes, and other commodities.

Under Spanish jurisdiction, New Mexico was annexed as a territory of Mexico after the Mexican Revolution of 1821. In 1848, the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War, and the New Mexico territory was annexed to the United States. Although Belen was loyal to the Union during the American Civil War, the Confederate flag flew briefly over the City from March to July 1862. Finally, in 1912, New Mexico was admitted to the Union as the 47th state.

The construction of a railroad through Belen in 1907 linked and Amarillo, Texas, and created boom in Belen's economy, easing delivery of foods from outside region into Belen and the export goods from the region to manufacturing plants in the eastern U.S. A roundhouse, cooling station, shops, 100-ton plant, depot, and a Harvey House facility were opened with the construction of the cut-off. the Harvey House is maintained museum by the City of Belen.



FIGURE 3: HISTORIC BELEN DEPOT AND TRAIN

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Following the arrival of the railroad, transcontinental freight trains were required to stop in Belen for fuel and water, and to change crews. The railroad became a magnet for the rural population surrounding Belen, in addition to luring many unemployed eastern laborers.

The construction of the Belen cut-off and its support facilities affected the community economically, socially, and culturally. It also dramatically affected the community by transforming its status from rural to urban. The population increased 300 percent during that time, and many farmers and families came to Belen to work for the railroad. Belen was incorporated in 1918. The railroad has continued to support the Belen community.

In 1980, the Santa Fe Railroad employed about 380 workers, primarily train operators and mechanical and freight office personnel. Local hotels provided accommodations for out-of-town workers, restaurants provided their meals, and stores provided their clothing, medicine, and other needs.

FIGURE 4: BELEN STREETSCAPE, MID-CENTURY



The first automobiles came to Belen in the early 20th century, creating a need for roads and bridges. Construction has been ongoing, as the population and needs have increased. After World War II the highway system was improved, which allowed citizens of Belen to commute to jobs in Albuquerque. In the early 1960's work began on I-25. This interstate highway supports businesses that cater to travelers, such as hotels, gas stations and restaurants. Auto dealerships are also actively involved in sales throughout the region.

Commonly referred to as the "Hub City", Belen is an economic and social hub for the surrounding region. Many people in outlying areas shop at local stores, socialize, and pray at local churches, and take advantage of the variety of services Belen has to offer.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Rio Grande borders Belen on the east, and beyond it, a gradually sloping plateau rises to the Manzano Mountains. To the west of Belen, a mesa escarpment and uplands form the divide between the Rio Grande and the Rio Puerco valleys. Belen has an arid climate, with an average annual total precipitation of about 8 inches. Most of this precipitation occurs during the summer monsoon months, between July and October.

The Rio Grande deposited sediments in the valley around Belen over the course of centuries, resulting in rich farmland. Belen's deep, well drained soils formed in clayey alluvium of old oxbow lakes underlain by loamy alluvium several feet thick. Dry tablelands to the west and east of the valley are elevated as much as 300 feet above the valley floor. At the time the Belen land grant was established in the late 18th century, these tablelands were covered with native grasses, which became the grazing land for herds of sheep kept by the settlers. The Rio Grande in central New Mexico supports a cottonwood-willow riparian forest, commonly known by its Spanish name, bosque.

Wetlands sustained by the river are home to diverse wildlife and have historically supplied water for irrigation; however, as wetlands have been converted for agriculture and urban development, and the flow of the Rio Grande has diminished due to drought and diversion, these functions have been impacted. The Whitfield Wildlife Conservation area was established on a 97-acre tract in Belen in

FIGURE 5: WHITFIELD WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AREA



2003 by the Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District, and additional tracts have been added to the Conservation Area Complex in years since. The Conservation Area Complex is comprised of moist meadow units and new wetlands maintained by the Conservation District, as well as existing wetlands and restored native vegetation in riparian buffer zones for food and shelter for wildlife. Native plants that provide food for resident and migrating birds and other wildlife have been planted and are protected within the Conservation Area Complex.

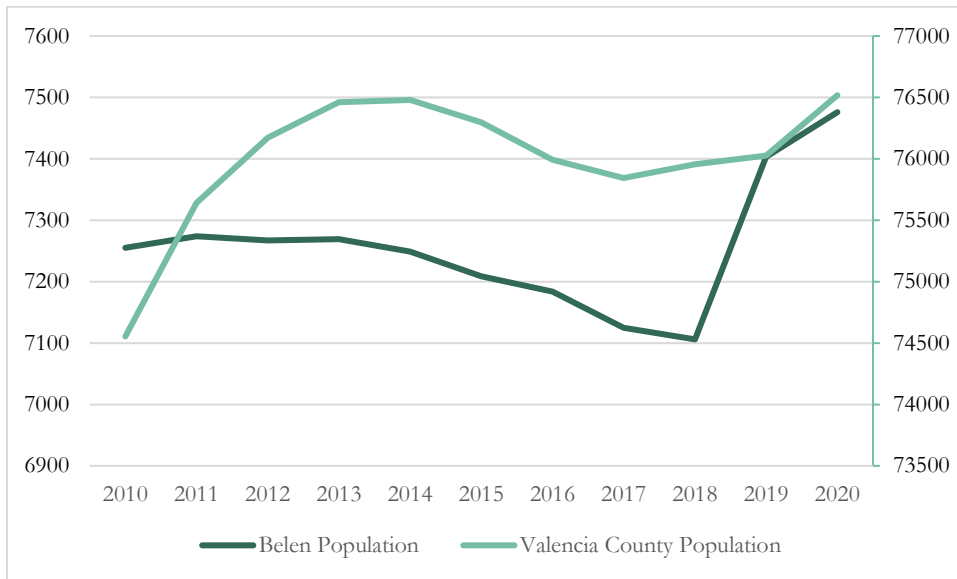
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Population

With a population of 7,476 residents in 2020, Belen is the second most populous city in Valencia County. Belen's population has fluctuated between 7,100 and 7,500 over the past decade and has grown significantly over the decades since 1940.

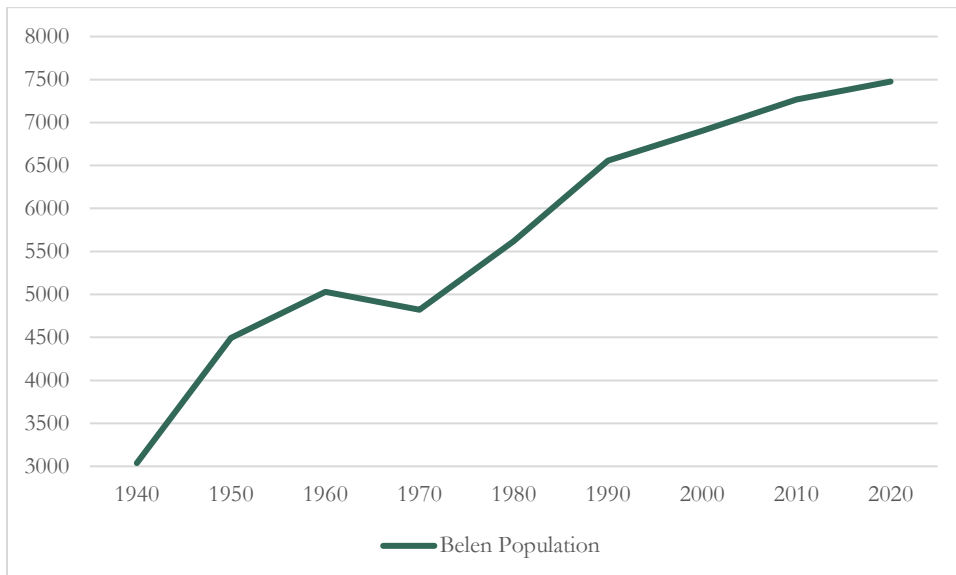
COMMUNITY PROFILE

FIGURE 6. BELEN AND VALENCIA COUNTY RECENT POPULATION GROWTH



Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 5-year estimates 2010-2020

FIGURE 7. POPULATION CHANGE, 1940 TO 2020

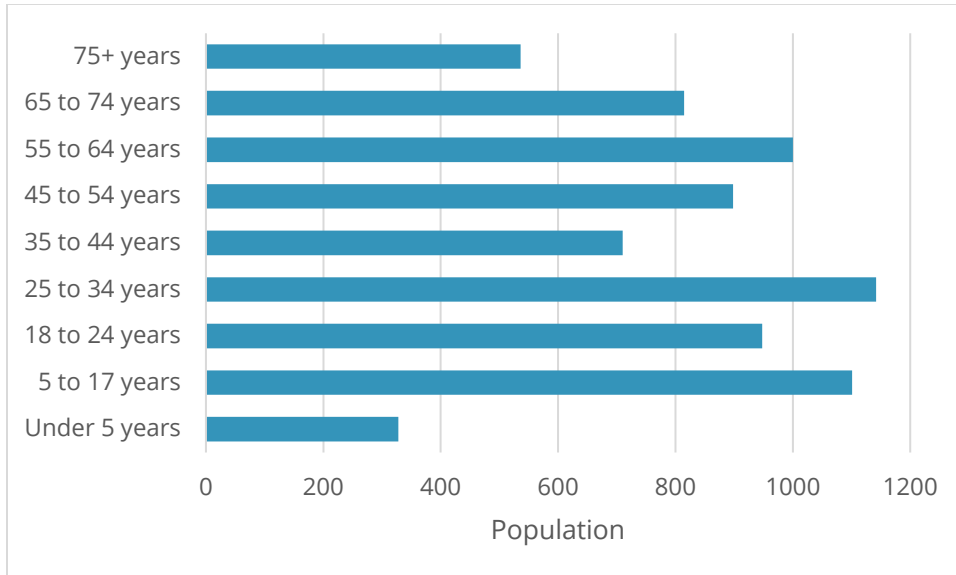


Source: US Census, Decennial Census, 1940-2020

Age & Sex

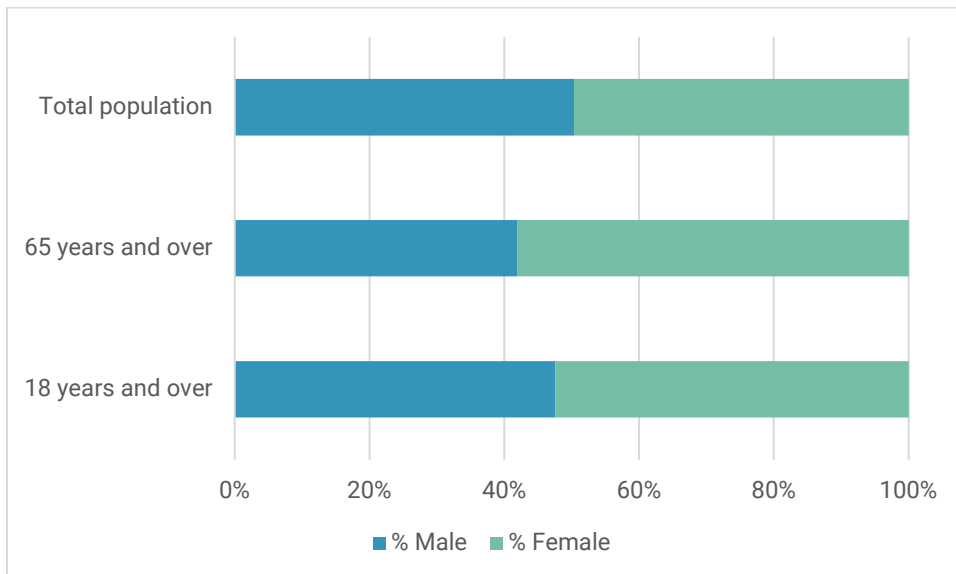
The median age in Belen is 38.9, slightly below Valencia County's median age of 39.5. The population of Belen is 51.5 percent male and 48.5 percent female.

FIGURE 8. AGE DISTRIBUTION



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

FIGURE 9: SEX BY AGE FOR BELEN RESIDENTS

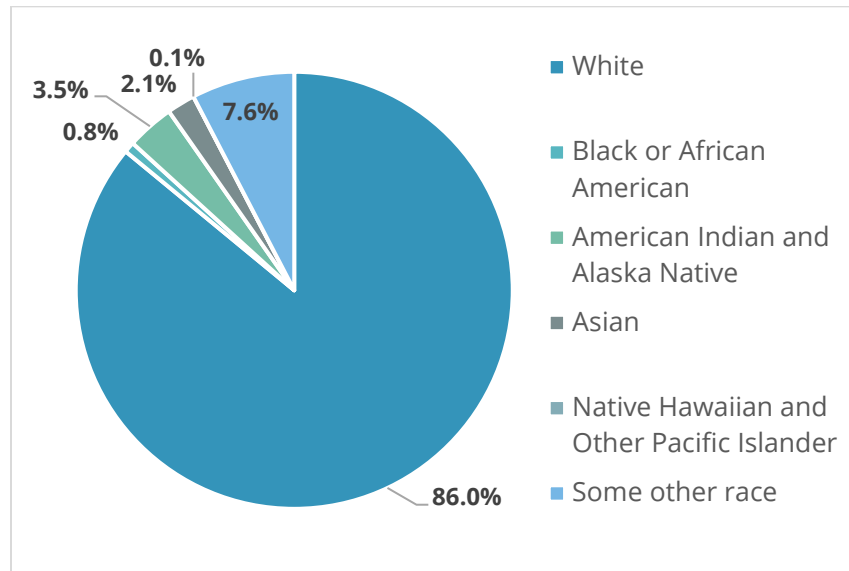


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Race & Ethnicity

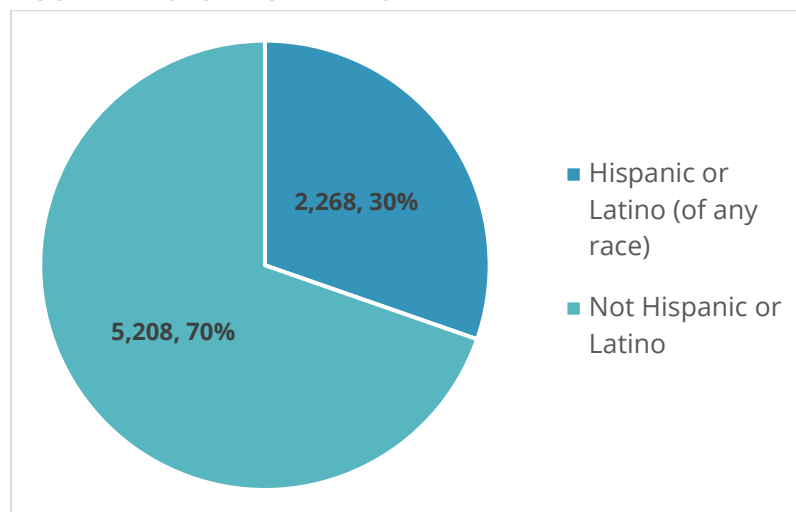
Belen's population is 86 percent white, American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.7 percent Black or African American, 3.1 percent Asian, and 19.5 percent some other race. Seventy percent of Belen's population is Hispanic or Latino. Belen has slightly higher proportion of White residents relative to surrounding Valencia County, which is 84.1 percent White, and a lower proportion of American Indian or Alaska Native residents compared to Valencia County, which has 6.2 percent American Indian or Alaska Native population. Belen has a higher percentage of Hispanic or Latino residents compared to Valencia County, with 60.6% of Valencia County residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino.

FIGURE 10. POPULATION BY RACE



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

FIGURE 11. POPULATION ETHNICITY



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Households and Families

In 2020, Belen was home to 2,679 households. There are 1,588 family households and 1,091 non-family households. Non-family households include unrelated people living together and people living alone. Most non-family households are people living alone.

The average household size is 2.75 people, and the average family size is 3.45 people. Less than a quarter of the households in Belen have children under 18, and 38 percent of households have one or more people over 65.

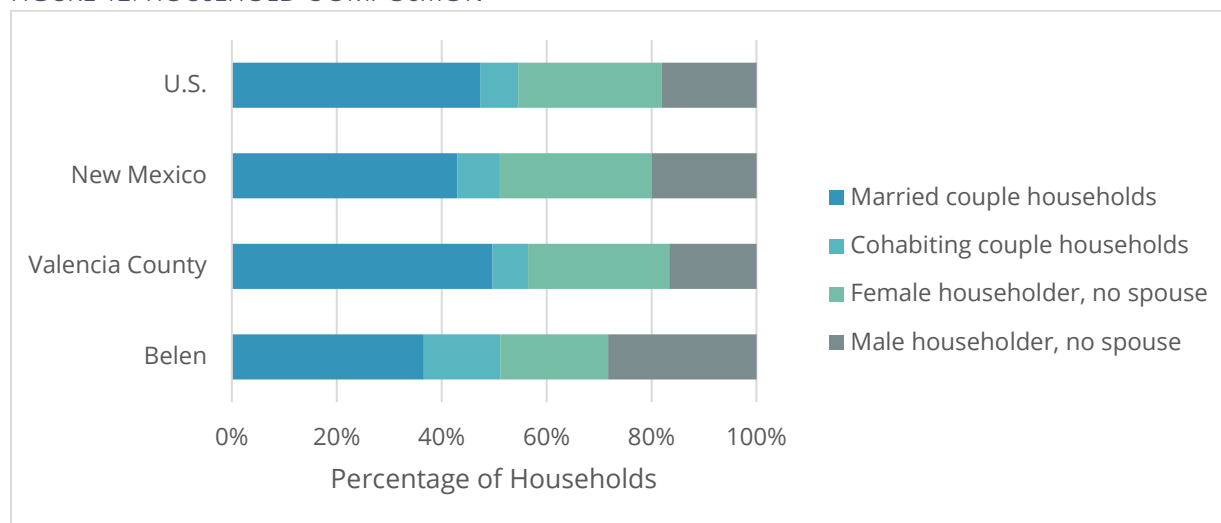
TABLE 2: HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS, 2020

HOUSEHOLDS	Valencia County	Belen
Total households	27,489	2,740
Average household size	2.71	2.56
HOUSEHOLDS		
Married couple household	13,143	730
Cohabiting couple household	1,674	207
Non-family households	8,460	1,049
Total families	19,029	1,691
Average family size	3.27	3.19
HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE		
Households with one or more people under 18 years	30.9%	638
Households with one or more people 65 years and over	33.0%	1,016
Householder living alone	25.0%	745
Householder living alone 65 years and over	11.8%	256
People living in group quarters	2,004	131

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Relative to Valencia County and New Mexico, Belen has fewer married-couple households and more non-family households. Belen also has a larger percentage of female single-parent households.

FIGURE 12. HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Income & Poverty

Annual median household income is lower in Belen than in Valencia County and New Mexico. Income includes earnings and other income received on a regular basis, such as Social Security, public assistance, retirement income, child support, and disability benefits.

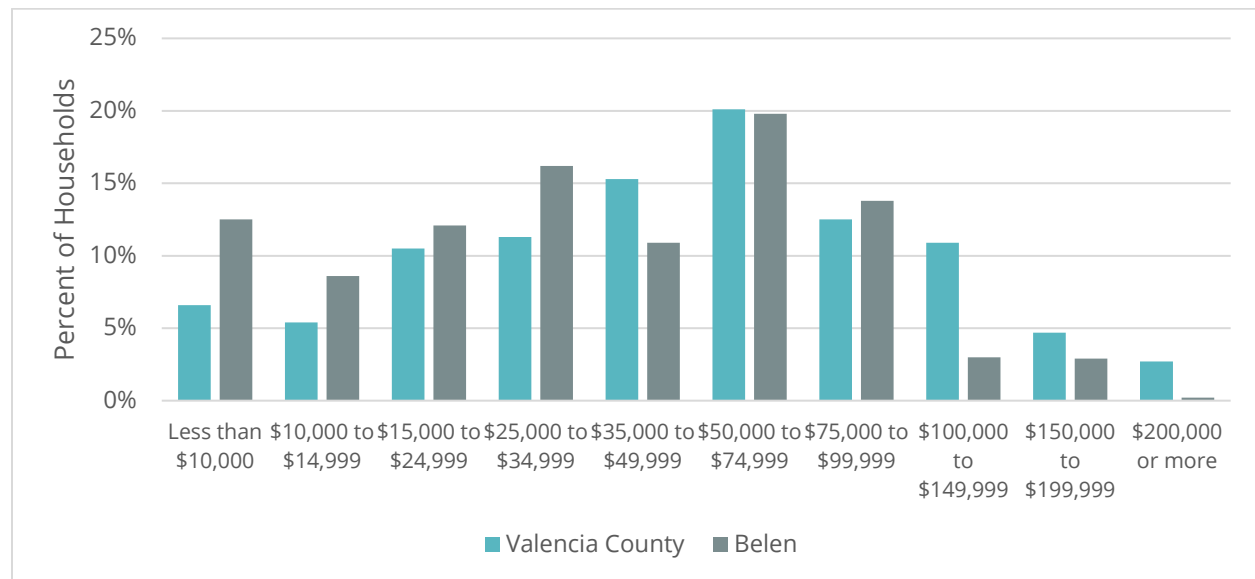
TABLE 3: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND BENEFITS, 2020

Household Income and Benefits (2020 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)	
Belen	\$35,448
Valencia County	\$50,801
New Mexico	\$51,243
United States	\$67,521

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Twenty-two percent of families in Belen have annual incomes that are below the federal poverty level, compared to 12.5 percent of Valencia County families. Families with children are the most likely to have incomes below the poverty level. Female headed households with children, and especially those with children under five years old, have the highest poverty rate in both Belen and Valencia County. In Belen 75 percent of female headed households with very young children had income below the poverty rate, compared to half of these households in the County. The result is that over half of pre-school age children in Belen are in households with incomes below the poverty level, compared to a third of young children in Valencia County.

FIGURE 13. HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND BENEFITS DISTRIBUTION



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

TABLE 4: PEOPLE WHOSE INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS IS BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL, 2020

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES AND PEOPLE WHOSE INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS IS BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL	Valencia County	Belen
All families	12.5%	21.7%
With related children of the householder under 18 years	19.3%	38.3%
With related children of the householder under 5 years	28.0%	75.0%
Married couple families	7.4%	10.8%
With related children of the householder under 18 years	11.7%	6.7%
With related children of the householder under 5 years	28.0%	--
Families with female householder, no spouse present	28.6%	31.6%
With related children of the householder under 18 years	38.3%	47.9%
With related children of the householder under 5 years only	50.3%	75.0%
All people	16.6%	23.3%
Under 18 years	21.7%	37.5%
Related children of the householder under 18 years	21.7%	37.5%
Related children of the householder under 5 years	33.2%	54.2%
Related children of the householder 5 to 17 years	18.1%	32.8%
18 years and over	15.0%	20.2%
18 to 64 years	16.5%	20.2%
65 years and over	10.2%	20.3%
People in families	14.2%	20.0%
Unrelated individuals 15 years and over	28.6%	34.4%

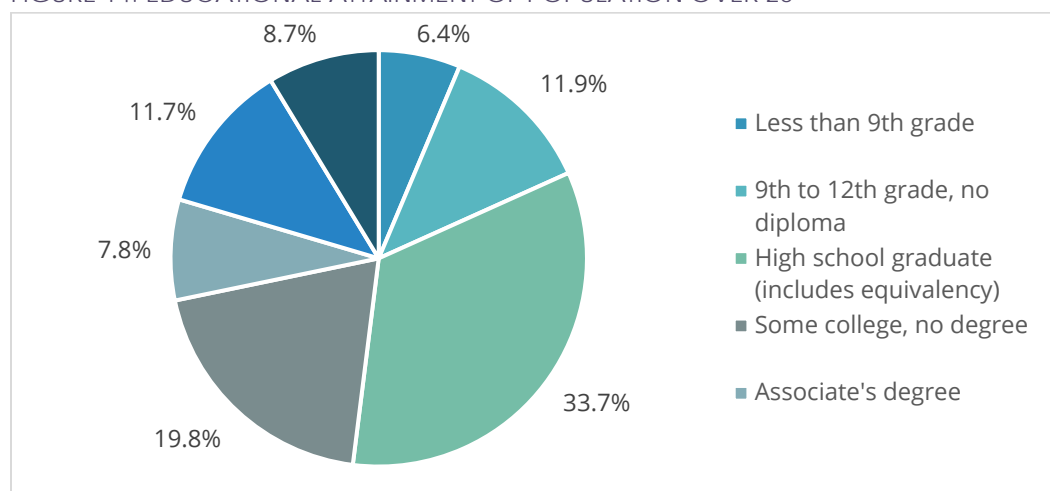
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Education

The Belen Consolidated School District includes two high schools (Belen High School and Infinity High School), a middle school (Belen Middle School), and seven elementary schools. Three of the elementary schools, Central Elementary, Rio Grande Elementary, and Belen Family School, are located in Belen. Belen also has several private schools, including Saint Mary's Catholic School (pre-kindergarten through 8th grade) and Canon Christian Academy (kindergarten through 12th grade).

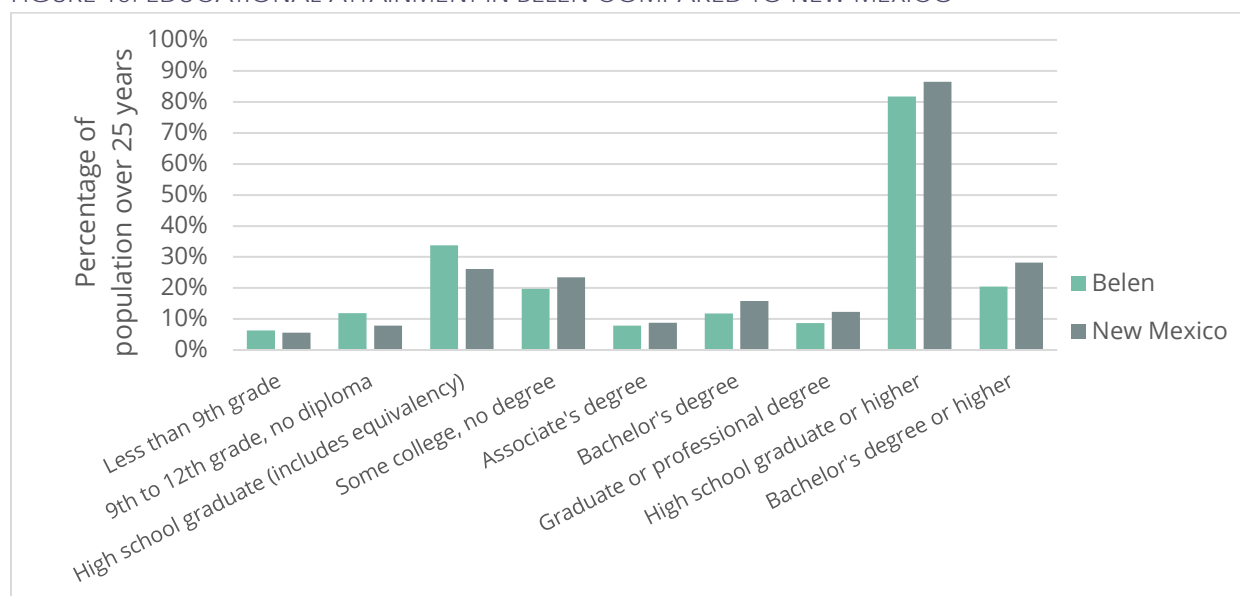
The percentage of high school graduates or equivalent in Belen is similar to that in New Mexico, with 34 percent of the population 25 years of age or older in Belen having graduated or received a certificate. Belen residents are less likely than the state average to have completed a Bachelor's degree or higher.

FIGURE 14: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION OVER 25



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

FIGURE 15: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN BELEN COMPARED TO NEW MEXICO



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Section 3

SUSTAINABILITY



The City of Belen has a strong commitment to sustainability, including supporting renewable energy and resource conservation. Not only does this contribute to a more resilient City, it also creates a place where sustainability-minded businesses and residents can thrive.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Solar energy accounted for 39 percent of all new electricity-generating capacity added to the U.S. grid in the first half of 2022. Much of this growth was in residential solar, but commercial and utility-scale solar installations have continued, despite the supply chain issues that have affected the ability to build new solar installations. Over the past ten years, solar electricity generating capacity additions have increased from only four percent in 2010 to more than 40 percent in 2022.

Wind-generated energy is the fourth-largest energy generator in the United States and generates a quarter of the energy in eight states. Overall, wind power provides 9.8 percent of energy in the United States. Several communities in New Mexico, including Roswell and Taos, have included wind energy ordinances in their zoning ordinance.

Utility- and Commercial-Scale Solar

The Belen area has the potential to be a regional pioneer in solar facilities. The southwest's solar resources and the land resources on Belen's west mesa make Belen an ideal location for large-scale solar facilities. Such facilities could help the City attract clean industrial manufacturing companies, or any business wanting to use green energy.

FIGURE 16: PNM SOLAR ARRAY NEAR SANTA FE



The City is working with several companies on facilities in locations on the west mesa. These include potential community solar projects as well as larger utility-scale projects.

Community Solar Programs

The Community Solar Act, signed into law in 2021, promotes community solar programs that allow electric utility customers who would not otherwise have access to energy from solar installations to purchase shares in a renewable energy facility to offset their monthly energy consumption. While the program is still being developed, there is interest in private solar companies to develop facilities that tie into electrical distribution lines. The selection of community solar projects in New Mexico will be a competitive process.

The west mesa is also a potential location for utility-scale solar projects where electricity is sold to wholesale utility buyers rather than end-use consumers. These are typically much larger than community-scale projects. One of the drivers of demand in the immediate area is the Facebook data center in Los Lunas. However, utility-scale projects could support other industrial manufacturing companies interested in green energy.

Individual Solar Systems

The City can contribute to the increase in use of renewable energy in Belen by installing solar facilities on public buildings, converting to electric vehicles where practical, and providing charging stations for electric vehicles in public parking lots.

Land Use and Zoning for Large Solar Systems

It is important that the City's policies, ordinances, and permitting processes support the implementation of renewable energy technology and programs.

Solar facilities currently use the SU-1 overlay zoning category to allow projects without affecting underlying zoning. The existing approach, using a special use overlay, is an appropriate approach. However, the City could adopt specific criteria that address potential environmental factors such as water use, habitat conservation, and land use impacts. Development standards can encourage growth in this industry while balancing environmental protection with energy demands and climate goals.

Local zoning codes can support the installation of solar facilities by individuals by removing barriers to rooftop and ground-mounted solar panels. Updates to the City's land use codes should accommodate these facilities.

Wind Farm

Typically, a wind farm needs approximately 2 to 40 acres per megawatt of capacity depending on the size of the turbines and facility needs. Larger utility-scale turbines require more spacing between each other for optimal power generation capabilities.

Community members in Belen have expressed interest in exploring opportunities to establish wind energy capabilities on the west mesa. Additional studies and analyses are needed to determine if a wind farm would be feasible based upon climate, location, and infrastructural needs of potential sites.

FIGURE 17: WIND FARM, NEW MEXICO



Land Use and Zoning for Wind Turbine Farms

A special use zoning overlay of SU-1 would allow the City to establish a wind farm. Similar to solar systems, this would be the most appropriate zoning and the City could consider developing specific criteria to address water use, habitat conservation, and land use impacts. The City may have to update its land use codes to accommodate height variances needed for larger wind turbines.

The City may consider removing barriers to its ordinance to allow for smaller wind turbines if deemed feasible.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION

The goal of resource protection and conservation, along with other comprehensive plan elements, is to ensure that the community's natural resources and ecosystem services continue to support residents' health, safety, and welfare. Ecosystems can support biodiversity, manage flooding, support agriculture, and help maintain clean air and water. Resource protection also offers economic benefits by supporting industries that rely on these resources, such as water for agriculture and open spaces for tourism and outdoor recreation.

Water

Water resources are precious in New Mexico, and in 2022 the City of Belen adopted a municipal water conservation plan to spell out the City's plans for conservation efforts. The plan is consistent with state and regional water resource planning.

The plan identifies actions for existing residential and non-residential water users. The plan's actions recognize that conservation by non-residential users would supplement the programs already in place for residential users. In addition to continuing existing

conservation programs, the 2022 plan sets the following new goals to further water savings:

- Reduce the amount of non-revenue water to 20 percent through more accurate metering,
- Improve operational efficiency by reducing water loss and reducing use at times of high demand, and
- Increase water use efficiency by industrial, commercial, and institutional water users over the next five years.

The comprehensive plan process included a recommendation look at more ways to increase residential water use efficiency.

Natural Areas

The Rio Grande bosque is a significant natural amenity for the region. While the bosque is outside the city limits, the City can be a partner in maintaining a healthy bosque and supporting initiatives to improve this public open space.

The Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) manages two properties adjacent to the bosque as wildlife sanctuaries with public access. These include the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area and the Rio Abajo Conservation Area.

The Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area is an established facility located north of River Road on the east side of the Rio Grande. This area was recently impacted by the Big Hole Fire, which damaged a significant portion of the conservation area. However, the area is recovering and the SWCD and Friends of Whitfield are doing restoration work.

The Rio Abajo Conservation Area is a 240-acre property south of Belen on the east side of the river that includes both bosque and uplands terrain. The SWCD will restore native vegetation to preserve habitat and biodiversity.

In addition to special projects, the SWCD offers education programs and

FIGURE 18: RIO ABAJO CONSERVATION AREA



volunteer opportunities for adults and children.

The Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District manages levees along the Rio Grande regional irrigation canals through the Belen area. The Belen Division of the MRGCD operates and maintains about 505 miles of irrigation ditches that benefit 30,100 acres of agricultural land in Valencia and northern Socorro counties.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL 1. *Establish the City of Belen as a leader in the region's transition to renewable energy resources.*

Policy 1.1. Expand opportunities for development of industrial, commercial, and community-scale solar projects in appropriate locations.

Action 1.1.A. Ensure that updates to the future land use plan identify locations for solar facilities that serve regional industries and neighborhoods. Priority areas for solar energy development should minimize impacts on other locations in the Belen area, such as agricultural land.

Action 1.1.B. Update the City zoning ordinance to enable community- and utility-scale zoning facilities in appropriate locations.

Action 1.1.C. Review the City permitting process to remove barriers to approval of solar facilities on residential and commercial buildings.

Policy 1.2. Support the implementation of renewable technologies in the City of Belen.

Action 1.2.A. When updating the City Zoning Ordinance, review requirements in residential and commercial zones to remove barriers to installation of individual systems on residences and businesses.

Action 1.2.B. Take advantage of opportunities to install solar facilities on City buildings.

Action 1.2.C. Provide EV charging stations in public parking lots, such as at City Hall.

Action 1.2.D. Undertake to convert a portion of the City's fleet to electric vehicles as current vehicles are replaced.

Action 1.2.E. Incentivize home builders and developers to add solar power and water conservation technology to new homes by allowing density bonuses in their developments.

GOAL 2. *Balance protection and conservation of Belen’s natural resources with growth opportunities for future generations.*

Policy 2.1. Encourage conservation of water by businesses and residents.

Action 2.1.A. Continue to build public awareness of and adherence to the City’s 2022 Water Conservation Plan.

Action 2.1.B. Follow the guidance of the City’s Water Conservation Plan to improve metering accuracy, increase operational efficiency, and reduce residential and non-residential water use.

Action 2.1.C. Establish metrics and monitor progress toward achieving the goals of the Water Conservation Plan.

Policy 2.2. Protect the Rio Grande and bosque in the Belen area.

Action 2.2.A. Collaborate with regional agencies, including the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) and the Valencia SWCD, on initiatives to maintain the bosque and conservation areas near Belen and provide ongoing environmental education to Belen residents.

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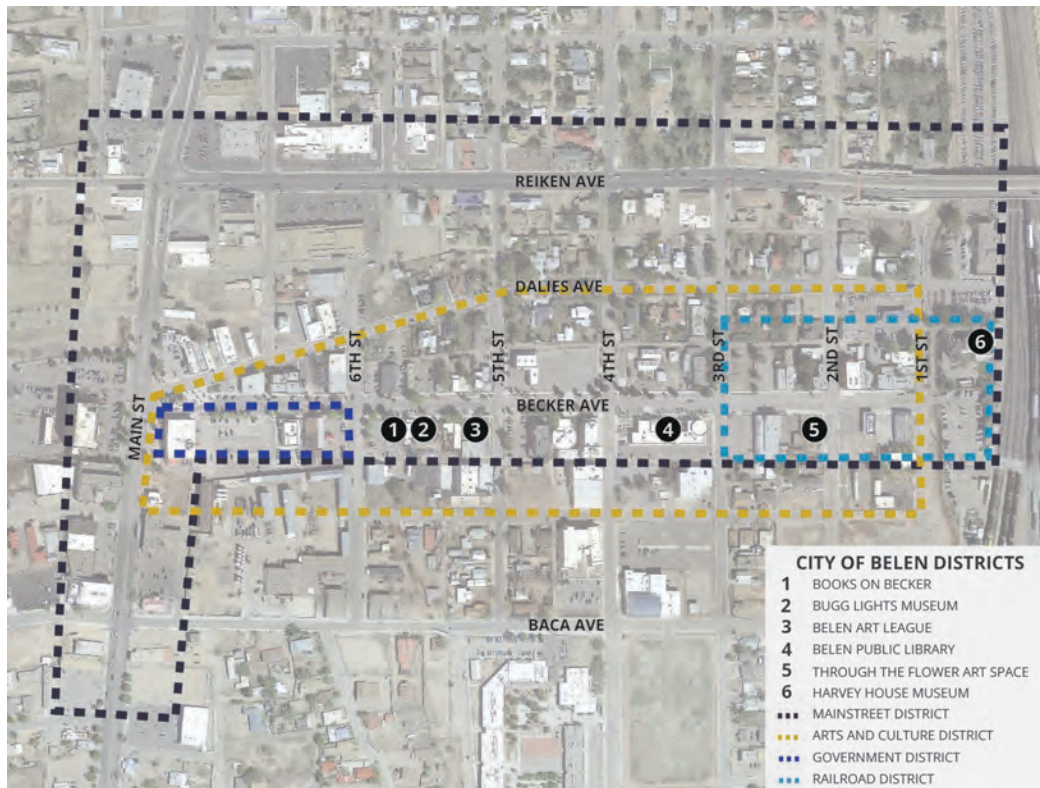
Section 4

CULTURAL RESOURCES



Belen benefits from its rich natural resources and vibrant culture. The City's new Arts and Cultural District will support the City's creative economy, supporting existing businesses and enhancing the successes that have already taken place in Belen's historic downtown.

FIGURE 19: ARTS AND CULTURAL SITES



Historic Arts and Cultural District

The Belen Arts and Cultural District was designated in July 2019 and celebrated with a kickoff and ribbon-cutting ceremony. The Belen MainStreet Partnership has begun a collaborative process with the community to work toward designation as a New Mexico State Authorized Arts and Cultural District as part of the New Mexico MainStreet Program, and was selected by New Mexico MainStreet in 2021 to carry out the first pilot program for the Creative Economy JumpStart Program. The Program focuses on leveraging existing local art and cultural assets with technical support provided by New Mexico MainStreet.

Belen Harvey House Museum

Fred Harvey (1835-1901) immigrated to the United States from England at the age of 15 and began his restaurant career as a dishwasher. In 1876, he began a partnership with the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe Railroad and was granted exclusive rights to operate the lunchrooms, eating houses, and hotels along the railway's routes. The women who staffed these operations (and lived in dorms above the restaurants) were known as Harvey Girls and regarded for their professionalism and attention to detail. The Belen Harvey House was constructed in 1910 and operated as a Fred Harvey Restaurant with a dining room, lunch room, and dormitory from 1910 to 1939. It closed in 1939 due to the

advent of new dining cards on passenger trains and the economic challenges of the Great Depression. It reopened in 1940 to serve World War II troops. After the war, it became the Santa Fe Reading Room for railroad employees, serving as a break room and dormitory until it closed again in 1980.

FIGURE 20: HARVEY HOUSE, BELEN



A campaign by local citizens and the City averted demolition. The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway donated the building to the City of Belen in 1982. With the help of the Valencia County Historical Society and hundreds of volunteers, the building was restored. The land was later gifted with help from Senator Pete Domenici.

The Harvey House reopened in 1985 as a civic center, providing office space for non-profit groups and government offices, as well as a small museum. To protect the building from overuse and ensure its preservation for future generations, the building was completely dedicated as a museum. In 2013, the Valencia County Historical Society turned over management of the museum and ownership of its collection to the City of Belen. The Harvey House Museum, a new branch library, specializes in the history of Harvey Houses, the railroad, and the Southwest. The Harvey House Museum is open to the public, offers guided tours, and displays a large collection of memorabilia and artifacts.

Belen Public Library

Belen's Public Library is one of the centerpiece organizations and facilities in downtown Belen. The library has 7,000 members, with average patronage of 500 people per week. A public computing center and meeting rooms serve the community.

The library provides a variety of programs and activities for youth and families. Examples of these programs include computer classes, children's programs, after school programs, coding classes, a teen creative writing group, and a book club.

FIGURE 21: BELEN PUBLIC LIBRARY



Books on Becker

The Friends of the Belen Public Library is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organized to support and promote the Belen Public Library and community literacy. Books on Becker is a second-hand bookstore that is operated by volunteers as a project of the Friends of the Belen Public Library, which contributes to the retail offerings along Becker Avenue.

Books on Becker generates funds for library programs and books and for the Deborah Graham Memorial Scholarship Fund. Scholarships are awarded to high school seniors attending Belen High Schools who have been accepted at a college of their choice.

Belen Art League

The Belen Art League is an organization of local artists with a mission of promoting and encouraging art in all its forms. The Art League provides space for artists to display their work and the opportunity to teach art classes. A summer children's art program is geared to educating and nurturing future artists, although this program has been on hold because of COVID. The Art League operates the Belen Art League Gallery and Gifts and Studio 508. The Art League also supports the Belen Veterans Memorial and provided the mural at the Veterans Visitors Center.

Bugg Lights Museum

The Bugg Lights Museum houses the Christmas light display first created by Norman and Joyce Bugg, who displayed the lights at their home in Albuquerque during the Christmas season. After 30 years, the display outgrew the traffic capacity of the surrounding neighborhood. The display moved several times, making its way to Belen in 2014. The Bugg Lights Museum on Becker provides a permanent home for the light display.

Volunteers maintain the display and add something new to the display every year. The museum is open throughout the year, with extended hours during December.

Through the Flower Art Space

Through the Flower was founded by the artist Judy Chicago in 1977 as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Since its inception, Through the Flower's activities have focused on education, and the organization continues to engage in numerous initiatives aimed at providing opportunities to learn about women's history through art. In the fall of 2018, Through the Flower began working with the community in Belen on a new proposal that would re-open the

FIGURE 22: THROUGH THE FLOWER ART SPACE



Through the Flower building, this time as the Through the Flower Art Space, and serve again as a creative hub for local residents and visitors. The Through the Flower Art Space is a center for educational resources and creative opportunities that connect visitors to cultural institutions across the United States. Through the Flower Art Space features changing art exhibitions, a video and book library, and a permanent exhibition about Judy Chicago's life and work.

Agricultural Heritage

FIGURE 23: DAHL SHEEP, TERRA PATRE HERITAGE FARM



Historically, the City of Belen was founded as an agricultural community with farming and sheep herding being an essential component of the identity of the community. These practices are alive and well today as evidenced by the number of farmers and growers present at community meetings and workshops. Much of the land surrounding Belen, as well as a large portion of the city south of Camino del Llano, is designated agricultural land.

This history and identity based in the agricultural tradition is something that members of the community want to pass on to future generations through intergenerational knowledge sharing, workshops, and partnerships with organizations that might facilitate these exchanges.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL 3. *Protect and enhance Belen's cultural amenities.*

Policy 3.1. Encourage appropriate and diverse uses of historic buildings and spaces

Action 3.1.A. Explore opportunities to expand the use of and potential revenue from Belen's publicly owned historic buildings for special events.

Action 3.1.B. Work with the Belen MainStreet Partnership, local realtors, and private owners of historic buildings to recruit tenants who would put these buildings to productive use.

Action 3.1.C. Explore opportunities for partnership and event sharing between historic spaces like the Belen Public Library and the Harvey House.

Policy 3.2. Preserve historic infrastructure

Action 3.2.A. Work with the Belen MainStreet Partnership and private owners to identify grant funding or affordable financing for building renovation and code compliance.

Action 3.2.B. Reactivate the Historic Properties Review Board to identify potential historic landmarks throughout the city and implement review of projects within the First Historic District.

GOAL 4. *Create opportunities for all of Belen's residents to engage in cultural and artistic programs.*

Policy 4.1. Support and market local history and arts education

Action 4.1.A. Promote educational opportunities hosted by the Belen Arts League, Books on Becker, and Through the Flower Art Space.

Action 4.1.B. Encourage programs at the Harvey House Museum that highlight local history.

Action 4.1.C. Celebrate the history of Belen through special events and formal recognition of milestones like Founders Day.

Policy 4.2. Uphold and support the agricultural tradition and history of Belen

Action 4.2.A. Collaborate with educational institutions and citizens to develop education programs to learn about the City's agricultural heritage

Action 4.2.B. Develop interpretive signage near significant agricultural and cultural sites in Belen

SECTION 5

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES



Community facilities and services are important assets that serve the community and keep the citizens engaged. This section describes the facilities and services provided by the City of Belen and recommends facility and service improvements.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

- Improve City facilities to meet modern accessibility standards
- Coordinate mental health and behavioral services for residents
- Grow facility partnerships and shared use agreements to make the most of the space the City currently maintains
- Seek opportunities to offer learning and recreational opportunities to residents of all ages
- Maintain police, fire, and emergency facilities so they can adequately serve the community

EXISTING FACILITIES AND SERVICES

One of the primary objectives in any community planning process is to determine the type and extent of public services necessary to provide for residents' needs. This chapter examines those facilities and services currently being provided to Belen residents.

Local Government Operations

The City of Belen is an incorporated municipality in Valencia County and has a Mayor-Council form of government with a City Manager. There are six elected positions: the Mayor, four City Council members, and the Municipal Judge. Elected officials serve four-year, staggered terms.

City officials appointed by the Council are the City Manager, Chief of Police, Fire Chief, and Airport Manager. The City's department heads include the Library Director, Parks Director, Human Resources Director, Wastewater Supervisor, Development Services Director, Retired Senior Volunteer Program Director (RSVP), Utilities Director, Water Supervisor, Community Service Director, Finance Officer, Recreation Director, and Street Supervisor.

The City employs approximately 120 full- and part-time workers in seventeen departments. There are also several appointed committees and advisory bodies: the Planning and Zoning Commission, Library Board, Airport Commission, Belen Dr. Martin Luther King Multicultural Commission, Lodgers Tax Committee, Economic Development Committee, Parks and Recreation Committee, Library Board, and RSVP Board.

City Services

Police Department

The Belen Police Department serves the City of Belen and neighboring communities.

The City's Police Department is located on Becker Avenue, just off Main Street. The Department staff is made up of 23 sworn police officers, including the police chief and deputy chief, one lieutenant, four patrol sergeants, one detective sergeant, one detective, and patrol officers. The Police Department operates 23 patrol cars. The Department also is responsible for animal control and employs one animal control officer. The Department also employs two civilian personnel who provide help in maintaining records and dispatch. The Department has one holding cell; however, all prisoners are transferred to the Valencia County detention facility.

The Department supports a Neighborhood Watch program, and officers are available upon request to speak to the public and community organizations about safety concerns and ways to improve community safety.

Fire Department

The Belen Fire Department has three divisions: Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and Fire Prevention and Code Enforcement. The department operates two main stations and a sub-station at the Belen Regional Airport. The main fire station in downtown Belen, completed in 2019, operates 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

FIGURE 24: BELEN FIRE DEPARTMENT



Twelve full-time firefighters and two volunteers provide fire protection in the City of Belen. The City presently owns three pumper trucks, one ladder truck, and two brush trucks. The Current Fire Protection rating is Class 4 as determined by ISO/CRS.

The City of Belen Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division provides ambulance service for those living within the Belen City limits. EMS has three EMT paramedics, four EMT IV techs, and thirteen EMT basics. The City owns two rescue vehicles that provide emergency services.

Animal Control

Animal Control officers are responsible for providing animal control services in the City of Belen. This includes enforcement of state and local laws and ordinances regarding animal welfare and impounding stray domestic animals (dogs and cats).

Public Works Department

The Public Works Department manages solid waste, water, and wastewater facilities and services. The City contracts with a private firm for weekly curbside pickup of residential solid waste in Belen. The City convenience center, where trash can be hauled and dumped, is available to all County residents. The solid waste contractor also operates a recycling center. Water and wastewater utilities are described in the Infrastructure section.

Street Maintenance

Interstate 25 and State Highways 314, 309, 548, 116, 385, and 109 are maintained by the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT). The City of Belen does basic maintenance on City roads, such as patching potholes, grading, and resurfacing through the Community Services Department. The Community Services Department also responds to weed and litter complaints.

Belen Public Library

The Public Library is an important cultural institution in downtown Belen, providing a wide selection of books, eBooks, audio books, DVDs, online resources, and other resources for its 7,000 members. Library services are further described in the Cultural Resources section. The Harvey House Museum, another important cultural institution in downtown, operates as a branch of the Public Library, with special collections related to the Harvey House, railroad, Southwest, and regional history.

Belen Regional Airport

The City manages the Belen Regional Airport, which has two fully operational runways and handles general aviation. It is also an air operations training site for the Air Force. The airport is home to several aviation-related businesses and is an important asset for the local economy. The airport is further described in the Transportation section.

Fire protection is provided through a City of Belen Fire Department substation. This substation is equipped to deal with hazardous materials incidents.

FIGURE 25: BELEN REGIONAL AIRPORT



Parks and Recreation

The City of Belen Department of Parks and Recreation promotes a healthy quality of life for residents of Belen and Valencia County. The Department maintains public parks and collaborates with other organizations to provide a variety of programs and events for all ages. Park facilities are described further in the Parks, Open Space, and Trails section.

Private Service Providers

Health Care

The City of Belen has a variety of different health care services. Presbyterian Health Care Services, Valencia Health and Wellness, and First Choice Community Healthcare each have several healthcare providers and provide family practice and other services to residents of Belen. Valencia Health and Wellness provides family practice, physical therapy, and acupuncture services. The First Choice Belen Health Center offers primary care. Presbyterian Health Care provides urgent care in addition to family practice and internal medicine and pediatrics.

Belen Public Health provides the following services: immunizations, family planning, STD testing, and Families First, Women's Infants and Children's Program (WIC), and TB testing. Belen Public Health has one nurse practitioner and several nurses to serve the public. Belen also has a First Choice Community Health Care Center, which provides family practice and dental services. Finally, Belen has a physical therapy center, two pharmacies, and dental care available.

In addition to these clinics, individual medical providers have offices in Belen. Belen also has dental and vision service providers in town.

Residents expressed a desire to have more options for mental health and addiction services provided locally as well. This is a need that is not fully served by present offerings in the community.

Finance, Communications, and Energy

Financial services are provided to Belen by branches of the following banks: Wells Fargo, U.S. Bank, United Business Bank, State Employees Credit Union, and Railroad Employees Credit Union.

The Valencia County News-Bulletin has served Belen and Valencia County since 1910 and is published in print and online. Print copies of the Albuquerque Journal and the New York Times are delivered daily in the Belen area.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

Century Link provides telephone and internet service, Comcast / Xfinity provides cable and internet, and a variety of wireless service providers are available in Belen.

Public Service of New Mexico (PNM) supplies electric power to the Belen area by 115 kV and 46 kV transmission lines. New Mexico Gas Company provides natural gas service to Belen area residents.

Community Facilities

The City maintains a number of buildings and public spaces that house the variety of services that the City provides. Other public agencies and private organizations provide facilities that are open to the public for classes and events. Community facilities are shown in Figure 26.

FIGURE 26: COMMUNITY FACILITIES MAP



Source: Sites Southwest

BELEN CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS

The Belen Consolidated School District includes seven elementary schools, two high schools and a middle school. The district serves approximately 3,700 students in grades pre-K through 12. The district covers Belen as well as surrounding rural communities. School locations within the City of

Belen are shown in Figure 26. These include Belen High School, Infinity High School, Belen Middle School, Central Elementary School, Rio Grande Elementary School, and Belen Family School.

FIGURE 27: BELEN CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS



GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL 5. *Manage and maintain sustainable community facilities that improve the quality of life for Belen's residents.*

Policy 5.1. Improve and maintain existing City-owned buildings, making sure that all improvements are made to ADA accessibility standards.

Action 5.1.A. Develop an asset management plan for public buildings that inventories current conditions and identifies priorities for maintenance and upgrades.

Action 5.1.B. Continue to include high priority major building projects in the City's Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan (ICIP).

Policy 5.2. Improve opportunities for shared community facilities among public agencies in Belen.

Action 5.2.A. Create shared-use agreements for City and school district facilities that can be used by all residents at different times.

Policy 5.3. Provide quality services for residents across the life spectrum.

Action 5.3.A. Support the continued development of facilities, services, and businesses for Belen's seniors.

Policy 5.4. Ensure that community facilities are updated and improved to continue to serve shifting community needs.

Action 5.4.A. Collaborate with Belen Consolidated Schools to identify a use for the H. T. Jaramillo Elementary School building – possibly a historical museum - once renovation of Dennis Chavez Elementary School is complete.

GOAL 6. *Sustain programming and educational opportunities for residents of all ages through Belen's facilities.*

Policy 6.1. Encourage cooperation among the City, regional agencies Belen Consolidated Schools, and the Belen Public Library for community events and programming.

Action 6.1.A. Support the Belen Public Library in finding new uses for its facilities.

Action 6.1.B. Partner with UNM and the Department of Chicano Studies to host classes and workshops about local history and current policy that shapes the community.

GOAL 7. *Provide adequate facilities for the safety and welfare of all Belen residents.*

Policy 7.1. Improve the City's ISO rating from 4 to 2 for fire protection.

Action 7.1.A. Create a replacement schedule for obsolete fire-fighting equipment and infrastructure.

Action 7.1.B. Maintain the City water infrastructure to meet fire flow requirements.

Action 7.1.C. Complete a new fire station in North Belen to improve response times.

Policy 7.2. Maintain adequate facilities and equipment for the City's police department.

Action 7.2.A. Identify a location in downtown Belen to address the new or renovated police department headquarters need for new space that can accommodate changes in technology, security needs, operational needs, evidence and records storage requirements, and other current standards.

Action 7.2.B. Support the implementation of a community policing program in Belen.

Action 7.2.C. Provide capital and operational funding for new technology and personnel as part of the new police department headquarters.

Policy 7.3. Coordinate services for mental health, addiction and homelessness with regional partners and service organizations.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

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SECTION 6

LAND USE



Land use shows the patterns of development within a community. This section analyzes the existing patterns of land use and identifies the changes that are needed to realize the community's vision for Belen's future. Changes are intended to create opportunities that can support economic growth, enhance the quality of future development, and improve public services.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

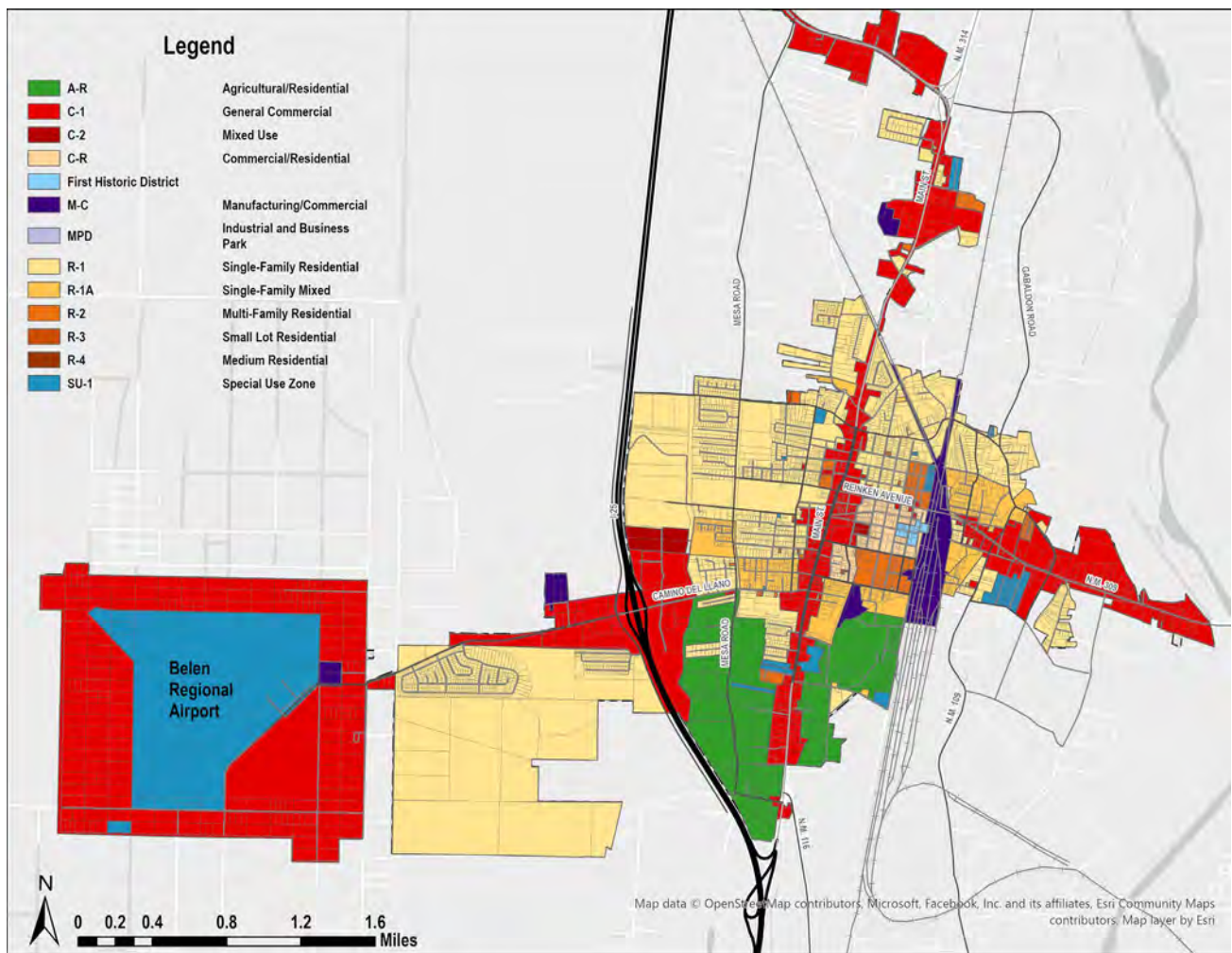
- Support appropriate development in the locations shown on the Future Land Use map.
- Encourage complete neighborhoods where a mix of housing types and neighborhood-serving retail and services are encouraged.
- Support the economic health of the city through appropriately located industrial areas that take advantage of Interstate and rail access.
- Preserve existing open space along the Rio Grande.
- Foster mixed-use development that includes higher-density housing types and commercial and office development along Highway 314, Reinken/River Road, and I-25 frontage roads.
- Foster the development of commercial corridors along major roadways.
- Protect the historic neighborhood area north of downtown.
- Preserve traditional agricultural land along the Rio Grande.

Existing Land Use and Zoning

Existing zoning indicates the allowable land uses on parcels throughout the City and represents the existing land use pattern in Belen. Most of the city is single-family residential, with some areas designated for multi-family residential and smaller lots. The existing pattern for non-residential use is commercial development along major roadways, at highway interchanges, and surrounding the Belen Regional Airport. Industrial use is located primarily around the I-25 corridor, north Belen, and in regions near the Belen Regional Airport.

The Rancho Cielo area north of Belen and west of I-25 is identified as a master planned development intended for an industrial and business park, with a special use zone for a master planned mixed-use community.

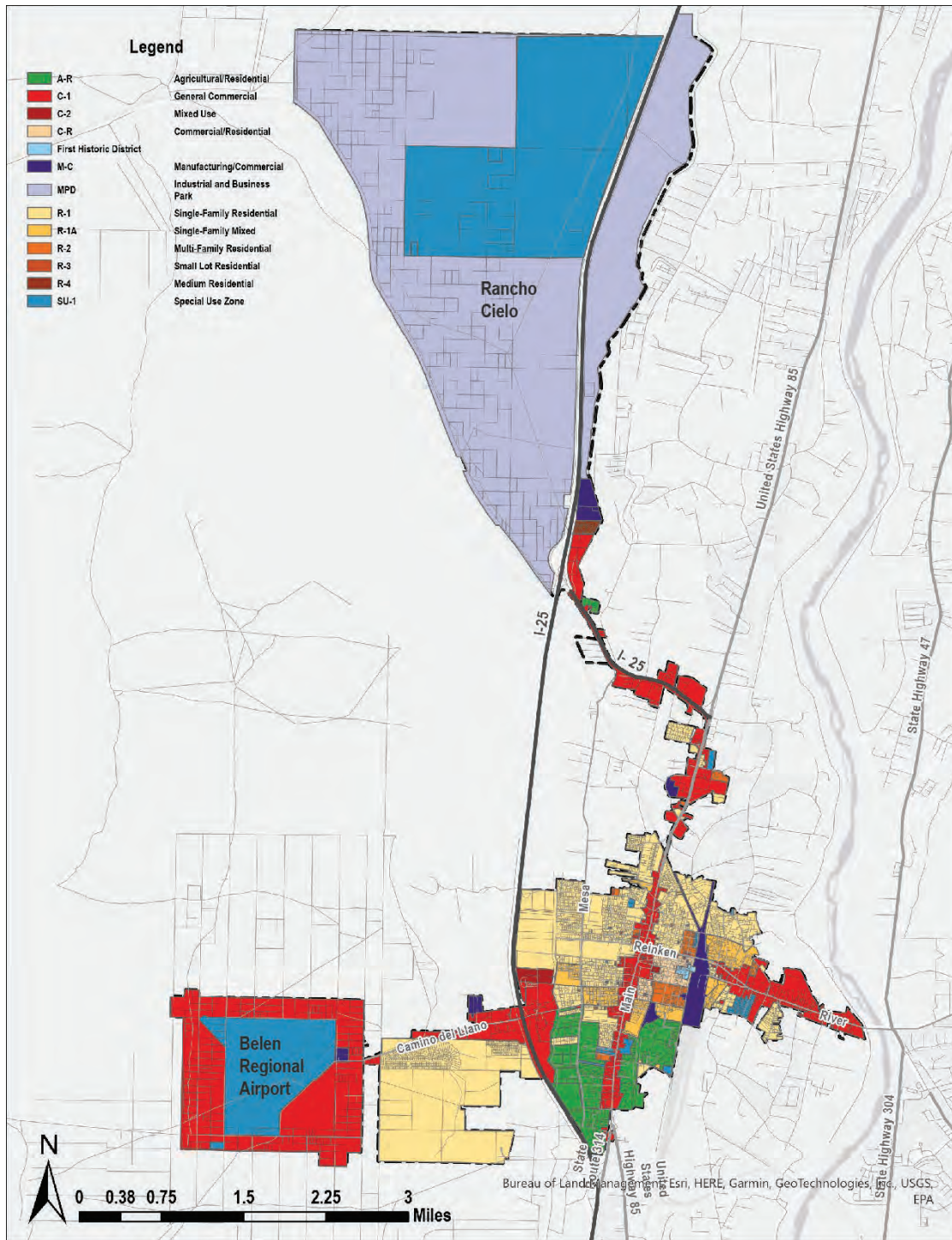
FIGURE 28. ZONING MAP, CENTRAL BELEN



Source: City of Belen

LAND USE

FIGURE 29. ZONING MAP, OVERALL CITY



FUTURE LAND USE

The City has developed a desired future land use pattern, as shown in Figure 30 that protects existing neighborhoods while allowing for future commercial and industrial development along major transportation corridors.

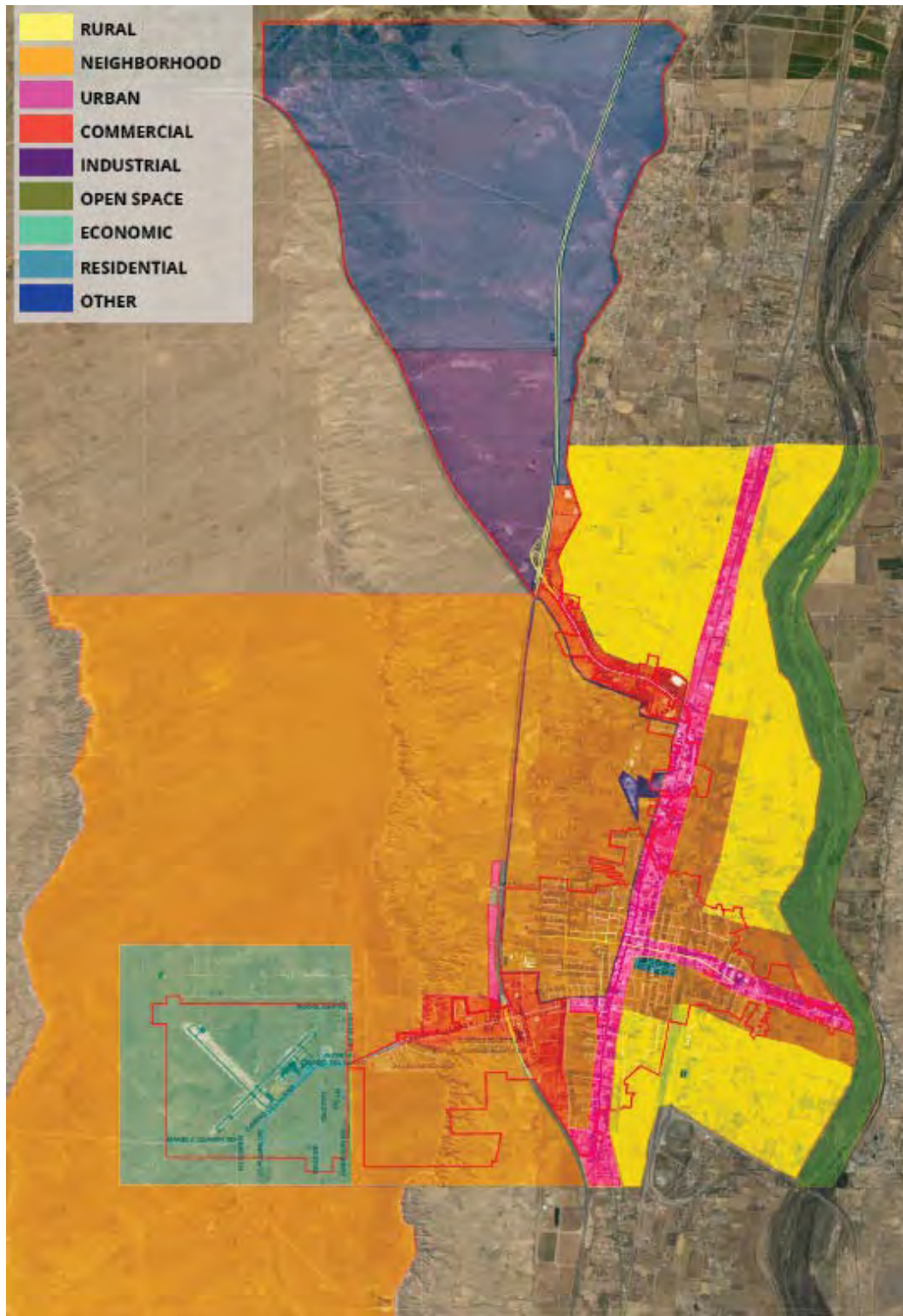
The future land use map designates proposed corridors where commercial development and higher-density residential projects are desirable. This form of development distribution is largely an extension of the current and historical trends in the development of Belen. By attracting the most intensive development to the principal commercial corridors and to special districts where individual uses like the airport are located, the neighborhood and rural areas of the community can be protected from large-scale or incompatible land activities. The objective of this form of development is also to accommodate higher-capacity infrastructure, facilities, and public services to key areas throughout Belen. The future land use plan also shows desired locations for industrial development and future residential growth.

Land Use Types

The Land Use Categories Table describes the types of allowed land uses that are appropriate for the future land use categories shown on the future land use map. The table also shows the land use character and appropriate zoning districts for each of the Land Use Categories

LAND USE

FIGURE 30. FUTURE LAND USE MAP



Source: City of Belen

TABLE 5: LAND USE CATEGORIES

Land Use Type								
	Rural*	Neighborhood*	Urban*	Commercial*	Industrial	Open Space*	Special District	
Types of Allowed Land Uses	Residential: very low-density single family (up to 1 dwelling unit per acre) Commercial: agriculture related (farm stands) Employment: agriculture and recreation-related; home office; garage industry Open Space: trails, trailheads, open space (washes)	Residential: single family, patio homes, multifamily or other forms of residential uses up to 20 dwelling units per acre Commercial: neighborhood retail and services with requirements Employment: home office; limited live/work/play; garage industry Public & Quasi Public: civic/institutional Open Space: buildings neighborhood park, tot lot	Residential: single family (above 6 dwelling units per acre), multifamily, patio homes Commercial: commercial retail, office, and services Employment: office buildings; live/work/play Public & Quasi Public: civic/institutional buildings Open Space: plazas, parks	Commercial: Town-wide commercial center and other auto-oriented commercial centers Employment: office buildings Public & Quasi Public: civic/institutional buildings Open Space: plazas, parks	Employment: warehouse; manufacturing; office Open Space: plazas, parks	Open Space: park shelters; restroom facilities; community and City-wide parks; conservation areas; protected natural features	Economic: Airport Area Residential: Historic Neighborhood area Other: Master Planned Community Renewable Energy production area	
Land Use Character	Predominantly large lot single family residential up to 1 dwelling unit per acre Buildings spaced significantly apart to create a sense of intermittent rather than lined up buildings A variety of deep setbacks from the road, creating an informal pattern	Predominantly residential with range of densities up to 20 dwelling units per acre allowed with requirements Adequate transitions and/or buffering abutting Rural or Urban areas will be required Higher densities should decrease towards edges when abutting single family developments within this Land Use Category	Walkable development pattern with a variety of residential uses above 6 dwelling units per acre, mixed-use, commercial, and civic/cultural within walking distance (1/4 mile) of each other Buildings close together with significant street frontage Building facades at or near sidewalk	Commercial development; accommodates existing conventional suburban shopping centers Flexible configuration of buildings; building facades and entries may be associated with site-internal circulation rather than street frontage Streets with curb and gutter, planters, and sidewalks	Reserved for employment-focused development not appropriate in other categories, including warehouses, manufacturing facilities, and office buildings Building siting accommodates truck access, loading and storage areas	Largely undeveloped land intended to protect and preserve the natural environment and provide recreational opportunities and public parks Development limited to use-specific structures and recreation facilities, including trails, picnic shelters, restroom facilities, and equestrian facilities	Set aside for development not appropriate for any of the other categories and requiring greater flexibility Development governed by Master Plan Land developed for renewable energy production and storage	

LAND USE

	Land Use Type						
	Rural*	Neighborhood*	Urban*	Commercial*	Industrial	Open Space*	Special District
Land Use Character	Roadways without curb, gutter, or sidewalk Informal streetscapes and tree placement Accessory dwellings	Densities above 8 dwelling units per acre require direct access to collector or arterial streets Commercial sites less than 20 acres; all commercial uses require direct access to at least one arterial or collector street Buildings paced to create separation while maintaining cohesive street wall Modest building setbacks, generally aligned with neighboring buildings Streets with curb, gutter, planter strips, and sidewalk Semi-formal streetscape with aligned street trees Diversity provided by a variety of building styles and sizes	Pedestrian-friendly streets with curb and gutter, planters or tree wells, and generous sidewalks; sidewalk with scaled to context, with greater sidewalk widths abutting retail frontages Formalized streetscape with equally spaced street trees May include civic park/plaza/gathering space Buildings with active ground-floor uses and entries, storefronts and windows oriented toward sidewalks On-street parking, especially along streets with retail Drive-thru commercial uses prohibited Off street parking located behind buildings when possible and practical Adequate transition to abutting areas (Neighborhood or Rural) required	Streetscape with street trees and shrubs intended to screen surface parking and service areas from view and buffer sidewalks from vehicle traffic Generally, auto-oriented development with safe and comfortable pedestrian routes and streetscapes Adequate transition to abutting areas (Neighborhood or Rural) required	Roadways are designed to accommodate larger vehicles while maintaining a safe, shaded, and comfortable sidewalk network Where abutting other Land Use Categories, proper transition and/or buffering is required	Temporary use permits for special events may allow for food trucks and temporary businesses and structures	

Land Use Type								
	Rural*	Neighborhood*	Urban*	Commercial*	Industrial	Open Space*	Special District	
Proposed Zoning Districts	Rural Development R1-190	Rural Estate: R1-43	Urban Development: MDR, HDR, R1-4	General Commercial: C-2	Office/Industrial Park: EMP-A	Parks, Recreation, and Conservation: PRC	Agritainment : AT	
	General Rural Development: R1-54	Suburban Residential: R1-35, R1-18	General Commercial: C-2	Regional Commercial Center: C-3	General Industrial: EMP-B	and	Planned Community: PCD	
	Rural Estate: R1-43	Suburban Development: R1-15, R1-12	Public/Quasi Public P/QP	Neighborhood Commercial: NC	EMP-B	Conservation: PRC	Community: PCD	
	Planned Area Development Overlay: PAD	Urban Development-Type A: R1-7, R1-9	Neighborhood Commercial: NC	Office/Industrial Park: EMP-A	Public/Quasi Public: P/QP	Public/Quasi Public: P/QP	Planned Area Development Overlay: PAD	
		Urban Development Type B: MDR, HDR	Town Center	Public/Quasi Public: P/QP	Planned Area Development Overlay: PAD	Planned Area Development Overlay: PAD	Non-Traditional Housing	
		Urban Development R1-4, R1-5	Mixed-use: TC	Planned Area Development Overlay: PAD		*Other types of open space can be included in all other zoning districts including parks, plazas, etc.	Product: N/A	
		Light Commercial: C-1	Mixed-use: MU				Public/Quasi Public: P/QP	
		General Commercial: C-2	Planned Area Development Overlay: PAD					
		Public Quasi Public: P/QP						
		Neighborhood Commercial: NC						
	Planned Area Development Overlay: PAD							

DOWNTOWN BELEN

Downtown Belen consists of four subdistricts. These include the City's government center, the Belen Historic District, the Arts and Cultural District, and the Railroad District. Downtown Belen also includes the City's historic residential areas.

Downtown Government Center

Belen's downtown government center consists of most civic buildings in Belen including City Hall, the Belen Police Department, the Belen Fire Department, and the Belen Public Library. This district is along Becker Avenue between Main Street and 6th Street.

Belen Historic District

Belen established its downtown historic district, known as the First Historic District, in 1983. In 2021, the City established review criteria for building alterations and new construction in the district. The Belen Historic Properties Review Board is responsible for reviewing development plans and making recommendations to the City Council, which is the final decision-making body. This area is a combination of neighborhood, urban, and commercial land use.

Belen Mainstreet Partnership

The Belen MainStreet Partnership was officially designated by the State of New Mexico in 2009, as an Emerging MainStreet community based on the distinct characteristics of the area. In 2022, it was designated as an Accredited Main Street America Program for meeting rigorous performance standards. Belen MainStreet includes Reinken Avenue and Becker Avenue between Main Street and the railroad. Belen MainStreet consists of a board of directors tasked with the revitalization of downtown Belen through organization, design, promotion, and economic positioning. The mission of the Belen MainStreet Partnership is "to improve and enhance the appearance, economic vitality, and social activity of downtown Belen while preserving and enhancing its historic resources through a community-driven effort."

Arts and Cultural District

Established in 2019, the Belen Arts and Culture District features multiple local art studios, museums, and historic buildings along Becker Avenue between Main Street and 1st Street. Special events are held throughout the year, featuring art shows, food trucks, performances, special events, and pop-ups.

FIGURE 31: BELEN ARTS & CULTURAL DISTRICT AND RAILROAD DISTRICT



Source: Sites Southwest

Historic Railroad District

The modern history of Belen is closely tied to the influence of the railroad, which arrived in Belen in 1880. Located between the BNSF railroad tracks and 3rd Street from Reinken Avenue on the north to Becker on the south, the Belen Historic Railroad District is a part of the Belen MainStreet Partnership district and Belen Arts and Culture District close to the railroad. The area includes structures closely associated with the railroad, including the BNSF rail yard, historic railroad station, Harvey House, and historic hotel buildings.

Historic Downtown Neighborhoods

Belen's historic downtown neighborhoods consist of the core residential houses in the city. These extend from 1st to 6th Streets to the east and west, and from Reinken Avenue to Baca Avenue to the north and south. There are several other historic homes and farms outside of the downtown core extents as well.

FIGURE 32: SEARS KIT HOME IN DOWNTOWN BELEN



Source: Sites Southwest

AGRICULTURAL LAND

Preserving the rural character and agricultural land and activities is a high priority for Belen. Rural land use includes low-density residential, commercial agriculture activities, recreation, and open space uses. Today, there are large tracts of land on the south side of the city that are used for agricultural purposes. The Future Land Use Map also indicates that these agricultural uses are appropriate along the Rio Grande on the east side of the city and further to the north, through the valley.

FIGURE 33: BELEN RANCH



Preservation

It will be important for the City to balance the preservation of current agricultural land with future population growth and development. Steps should be taken to support current and future growers to make sure they can continue to provide local food options for the community.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL 8. *Preserve and enhance the unique character and historical culture of Belen.*

Policy 8.1. Protect established residential neighborhoods.

Action 8.1.A. Review the City's zoning ordinance to ensure that zoning requirements support the desired character of downtown's historic neighborhoods.

Policy 8.2. Incentivize revitalization and preservation of historic structures.

Action 8.2.A. Inform property owners of state and federal tax credits available for renovation of contributing structures within the historic district and individual historic structures on the state or national register.

Action 8.2.B. Consider tax abatement and other local financial incentives for development projects within the downtown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA).

Action 8.2.C. Work with New Mexico MainStreet to provide training, professional development, marketing and branding and other services for property owners and businesses within the Belen MainStreet district.

Policy 8.3. Continue to develop and improve buildings in the Arts & Cultural District to accommodate the local arts community.

Policy 8.4. Use zoning and other regulations to maintain historical and cultural elements.

Action 8.4.A. Review and update the zoning code to ensure protection of the district's historic character.

Action 8.4.B. Support the Belen Historic Properties Review Board's (BHPRB) implementation of review criteria to uphold design standards for the downtown historic district.

Policy 8.5. Protect traditional agricultural lands to continue supporting local food sovereignty.

GOAL 9. *Use long-range planning and land use management techniques to promote a desirable mix of land uses and densities in future development.*

Policy 9.1. Allow flexibility for mixed-use zoning and encourage mixed-use development areas in the commercial corridors identified in the Future Land Use Plan.

Action 9.1.A. Conduct annual reviews of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure the Plan's relevance with current policy, with comprehensive updates every five years.

Action 9.1.B. Regularly review zoning regulations and city development ordinances to ensure that mixed-use and appropriate development is allowed and encouraged.

Action 9.1.C. Continue to coordinate with Valencia County on City review and approval of subdivision development within the City's platting and planning jurisdiction to ensure compatibility with City infrastructure and land use patterns.

Policy 9.2. Promote growth and development patterns that are balanced, resource-efficient, and economically resilient.

Action 9.2.A. Allow for cluster development in new planned unit developments to preserve open space.

Action 9.2.B. Follow existing federal, state, and local guidelines for evaluating water and air quality impacts of commercial, agricultural, and industrial growth.

Action 9.2.C. Adopt an annexation policy to guide future annexations and consolidate annexations so that annexed areas can be served efficiently.

Action 9.2.D. Use the land use plan and zoning code to provide for higher densities and mixed-use development in key locations to meet future housing needs.

Action 9.2.E. Preserve existing farmland where possible by encouraging new development in infill locations and adjacent to existing infrastructure.

Action 9.2.F. Encourage a mix of commercial and industrial development near the Belen Regional Airport.

GOAL 10. *Maintain a clean and scenic community.*

Policy 10.1. Maintain the appearance, comfort, and safety of visible and visited areas.

Action 10.1.A. Encourage scheduled neighborhood cleanup days.

Action 10.1.B. Strengthen, expand, and enforce nuisance abatement programs and ordinances.

Action 10.1.C. Strictly enforce animal control ordinance, Ordinance 2021-11, City Code Title 6-Animals.

Action 10.1.D. Screen commercial outdoor storage yards and keep residential areas free of junk.

Action 10.1.E. Improve streetscapes within historical neighborhoods and downtown districts, specifically along highly visible corridors such as Main Street, Reinken Avenue, and Camino Del Llano.

Action 10.1.F. Partner with MainStreet to identify and implement streetscape improvements.

Policy 10.2. Encourage the restoration or rebuilding of abandoned buildings.

Action 10.2.A. Enforce the vacant building registration ordinance, City Code, Chapter 15.14.

GOAL 11. *Concentrate commercial development in specified corridors and centers.*

Policy 11.1. Encourage commercial and/or industrial activities in centers and corridors as shown on the Future Land Use Map.

Action 11.1.A. Adopt the Future Land Use Plan as a guide for future zoning changes and development in Belen.

Action 11.1.B. Encourage commercial development and higher densities along primary commercial corridors shown in the Future Land Use Plan.

Action 11.1.C. Identify suitable locations for neighborhood-scale commercial businesses that are walking and biking distance from residential areas.

Policy 11.2. Encourage infill development.

Action 11.2.A. Develop an inventory of vacant parcels within the current City limits that are served by existing roads and utilities. Encourage owners of these properties to make them available for new development, consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.

Action 11.2.B. Maintain updated utility and transportation master plans to ensure that the City upgrades infrastructure consistent with infill growth potential.

Action 11.2.C. Through the City's zoning code and development process, ensure that infill development complements the existing character of surrounding properties.

Action 11.2.D. Continue to follow development standards and the Historic Properties Review Board process for new development and renovation/rehabilitation in the First Historic District.

Policy 11.3. Encourage businesses in focused areas to prevent over-building.

Action 11.3.A. Increase mixed-use opportunities in commercial corridors to increase housing near businesses and increase the vibrancy of these corridors.

SECTION 7

HOUSING



Housing is, perhaps, the most fundamental land use of a community and has an important impact on Belen's physical character. Even more importantly, it has the most direct effect on the personal lives of residents, providing the place for family life and for socializing with friends.

Belen offers a variety of housing choices, ranging from rural/agricultural neighborhoods to historic downtown homes to new subdivisions.

The Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan addresses several aspects of Belen's housing supply: the number, type, and age of existing housing units; the occupancy rate; and the cost of housing for both owners and renters. It also identifies opportunities for new housing units that will be required in the future to meet the needs of population growth.

INTRODUCTION

Housing is fundamental to any community and has an important impact on Belen's physical character. Even more importantly, it has the most direct effect on the personal lives of residents, providing essential safety and shelter while creating a place for family life and for socializing with friends. While Belen's housing stock is primarily single-family detached housing, a feature that has been historically consistent, multifamily and mixed-use housing development will play a part in ensuring that Belen offers sufficient housing and vibrant neighborhoods in the decades to come.

The Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan addresses several aspects of Belen's housing supply: the number, type, and age of existing housing units, and their occupancy and vacancy rates. This chapter will also recommend strategies and actions to address deficiencies in Belen's housing supply.

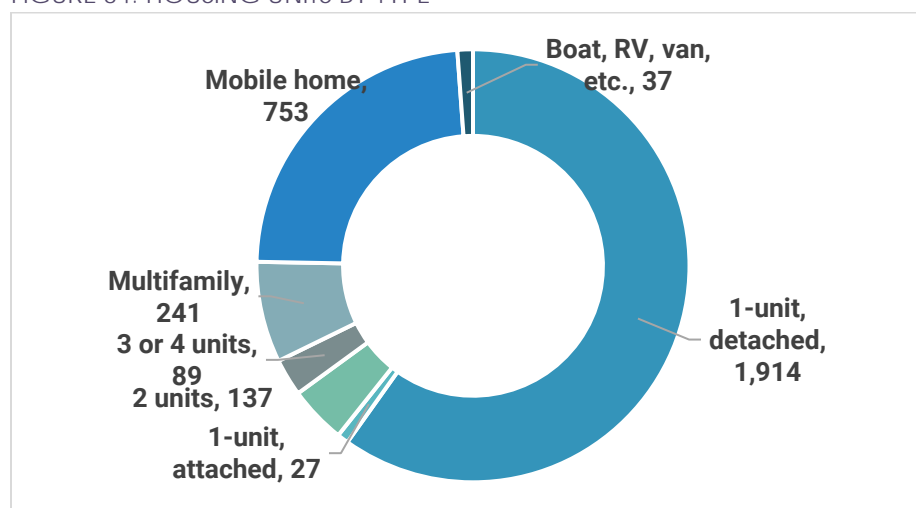
COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

- More diverse housing choices
- Infill housing on vacant lots
- Rehabilitation of existing homes to improve community quality and preserve existing housing stock
- More attainable housing for first-time buyers

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Most of the housing in Belen is single family detached housing. The second most common housing type is mobile homes. The predominance of single-family housing options and the relatively few units of other housing types have led to a desire for more diverse housing choices.

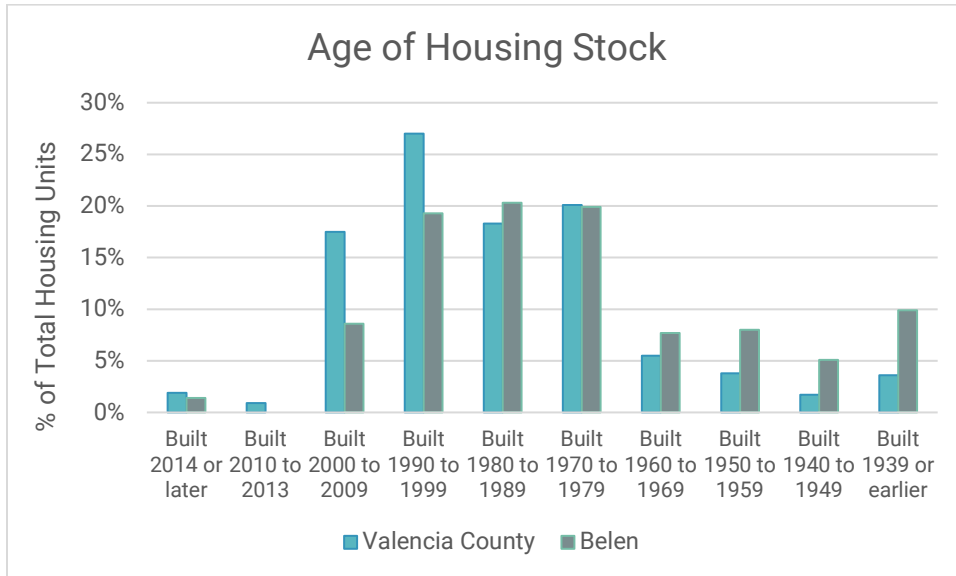
FIGURE 34. HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Compared with Valencia County, the housing stock in Belen is relatively older, with the majority of homes built between 1970 and 2000. There was a decline in building between 2000 and 2018, but several new developments in 2020 and after have added new housing, which is described below.

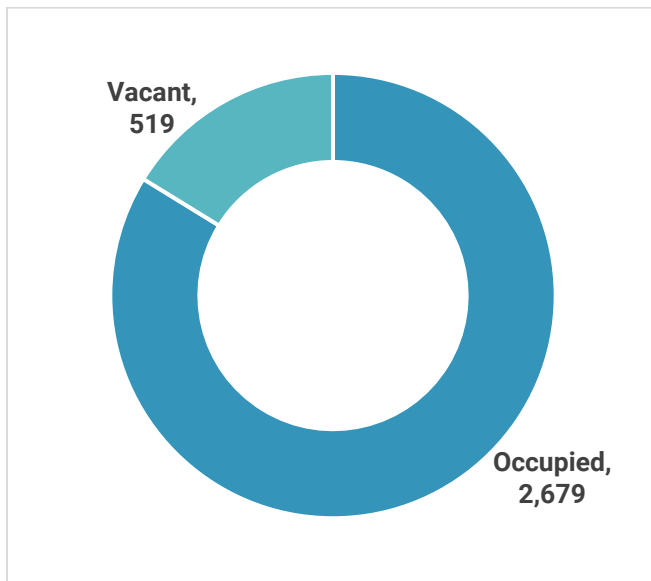
FIGURE 35. AGE OF HOUSING STOCK



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The vacancy rate for housing in Belen is 16.2 percent comparable to Valencia County, which is around 15.7 percent.

FIGURE 36. OCCUPANCY STATUS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

NEW AND PLANNED HOUSING

Demand for housing in Belen has increased as Belen's population has grown, as Valencia County residents move into Belen from elsewhere in the County, and as job growth spurs a residential boom.

Types of homes change over the years, but single-family detached homes have remained the predominant housing type in Belen. Prior to 2020, an increase in purchases of existing homes dramatically reduced the supply of available housing. Since 2020, new subdivision activity and housing construction have increased the supply, adding 780 new units to Belen's housing stock. These homes have sold quickly, generating interest in continuing to provide housing that meets the City's growing needs.

During 2020 and 2021 there were 96 new residential homes constructed in the De La Reina subdivision on Don Luis Trujillo Boulevard north of the Belen I-25 interchange, and numerous vacant lots in the downtown area have been repurposed for infill residential construction. In 2021 a new 214-lot subdivision (Jardin de Belen) began construction and over 70 pre-sales were achieved before utilities and streets were in place.



Source: LGI Homes

Plans for future development in the area include over 400 lots on 110 acres south of Jardin de Belen.

New single-family subdivisions have added nearly 300 homes to the inventory of homes in Belen. These subdivisions have provided new homes where very few homes have been built since 2000. New homes represent a population increase of approximately 1,000 new residents.

While these homes are priced above the median listing price for existing homes in Belen, they are more affordable than homes in nearby communities. Median home prices in Albuquerque and Los Lunas in November 2022 were over \$300,000.

Homes in De La Reina, which is located in north Belen, began at \$299,900. This subdivision sold out during summer 2022.

Prices for new homes in Jardin de Belen, located in the southwest part of Belen, start at \$257,000.

A planned new apartment building will diversify the types of housing available in Belen, providing housing for new residents who prefer to rent for a while prior to purchasing a home.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL 12. *Ensure that Belen's housing meets the needs of the community now and in the future.*

Policy 12.1. Remove barriers to desired housing options.

Action 12.1.A. Enable mixed-use development in appropriate areas and corridors, as identified in the Future Land Use Plan.

Action 12.1.B. Reduce or eliminate the minimum building footprint requirement in residential zones to encourage more small housing development.

Action 12.1.C. Promote affordable housing for first-time home buyers

Action 12.1.D. Promote more transitional housing with hotels and short-term rentals

Action 12.1.E. Continue reviewing and revising city ordinances to support diverse housing options with the city council subcommittee

Action 12.1.F. Revise the City's zoning ordinance to allow accessory dwellings and tiny houses to increase density in existing neighborhoods.

Action 12.1.G. Encourage higher density development that will provide more affordable housing choices and rental housing.

Policy 12.2. Promote future housing growth in Belen.

Action 12.2.A. Work with potential developers of new subdivisions to create high-quality housing in areas already supported by or able to access existing transit infrastructure, utility infrastructure, and water rights.

Action 12.2.B. Encourage development of new housing geared toward lower- and middle-income earners.

GOAL 13. *Support residents in maintaining and upgrading their homes to be resilient, cost-effective, and resource efficient.*

Policy 13.1. Help residents rehabilitate and improve their properties.

Action 13.1.A. Educate residents about grants and loans available through the USDA and MFA to rehabilitate residential properties by hosting application workshops. For example, the town may assist residents in procuring USDA Section 504 Home Repair loans of up to \$20,000 and grants of up to \$7,500 to address health and safety hazards on their properties.

Action 13.1.B. Consider providing ongoing assistance for residents seeking USDA home repair loans. This could include partnering with USDA lenders and representatives to consult with interested property owners.

Action 13.1.C. Promote weatherization assistance programs for qualified households through the New Mexico Weatherization Assistance program.

Policy 13.2. Support renovation and energy efficiency upgrades to existing homes.

Action 13.2.A. Identify and partner with local non-profits and utility providers who can assist property owners in energy efficiency upgrades.

Action 13.2.B. Leverage existing incentives and financial support mechanisms to support household upgrades to more efficient heating and cooling systems, such as electric heat pumps.

Action 13.2.C. Leverage existing incentives and financial support mechanisms to support household solar panel installation.

SECTION 8

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



The local economy helps determine the rate of growth in a community, the prosperity of its residents, and the resources available to the City government to carry out capital improvement projects, desired programs and services, and other public improvements.

Belen's economy is built on manufacturing, retail businesses, tourism, transportation, and agriculture. Its transportation infrastructure and diverse employment base are strengths that can support future economic growth.

INTRODUCTION

The economic characteristics of Belen provide insight into the basic conditions of the community. A major, re-emerging local economy provides both employment opportunities for residents and a strong tax base, now at historically high levels for the city. The city is also strategically positioned as a bedroom community of Albuquerque and the many employment opportunities that exist there.

Community members have noted the importance of well-paid jobs to the quality of life for Belen residents. By attracting new businesses with higher-than-average wages and supporting the success of existing businesses, the city can contribute to greater economic opportunities in Belen.

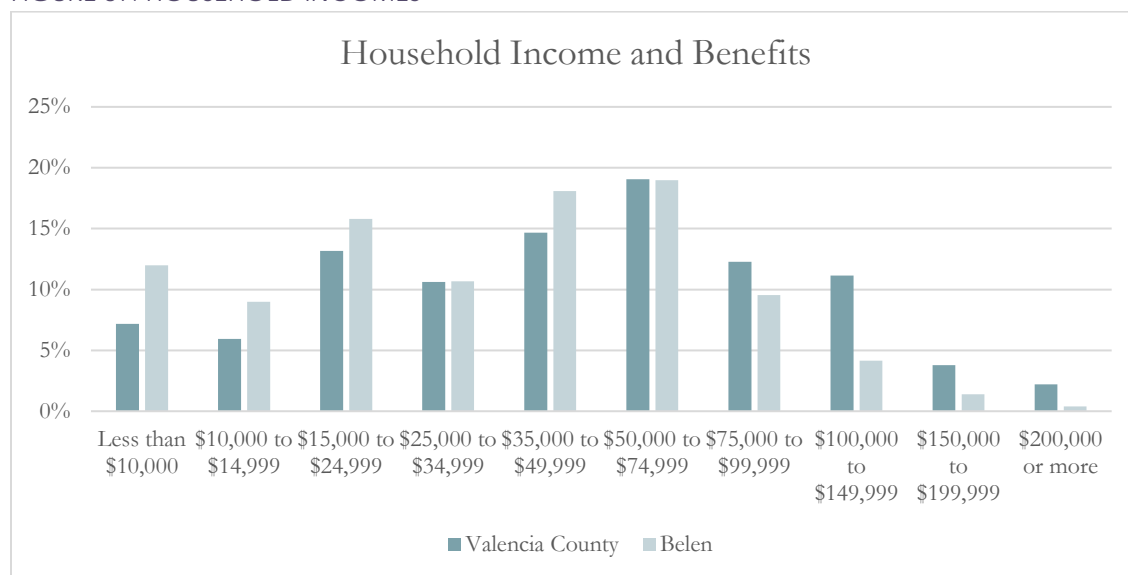
The City's economic development focus can be two-pronged: recruitment, retention, and expansion of economic base businesses that export their products out of the region, thus increasing wealth in the Belen area; and support for local retail and service businesses that keep discretionary spending in Belen.

EMPLOYMENT

Forty-eight percent of Belen's residents participate in the workforce, with an unemployment rate of 10.5 percent. This is 3 percent higher than Valencia County.

Household incomes for Belen residents are also lower than the county as a whole, with about 50 percent of households earning less than \$35,000 annually, as shown in Figure 40 below.

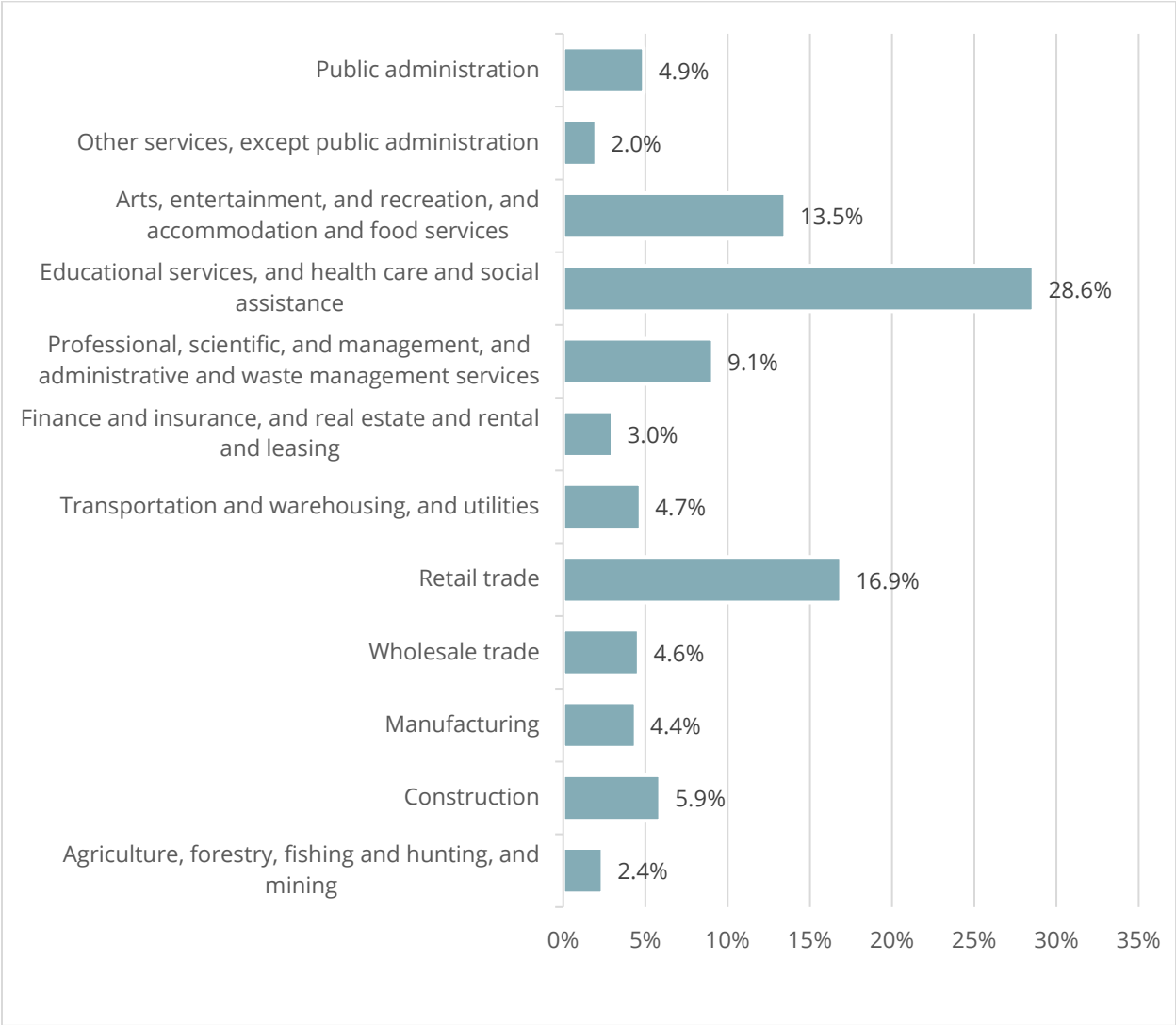
FIGURE 37: HOUSEHOLD INCOMES



Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 2016-2020 Five-Year Estimates

Workers in Belen are overwhelmingly employed in the educational, health care and social services sectors (29 percent), followed by retail trade (17 percent) and arts, entertainment, recreation, and food services (13.5 percent).

FIGURE 38: OCCUPATIONS BY INDUSTRY (PERCENT OF WORKERS)



Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 2016-2020 Five-Year Estimates

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Belen has a solid industrial base. BNSF is one of the City’s largest industrial employers, providing jobs at its train refueling and maintenance yard near downtown. Other manufacturing employers are Clariant, Aristech, Cemco, Sisneros Brothers, and New Mexico Travertine. As noted below, retention and expansion of these employers are goals of the City.

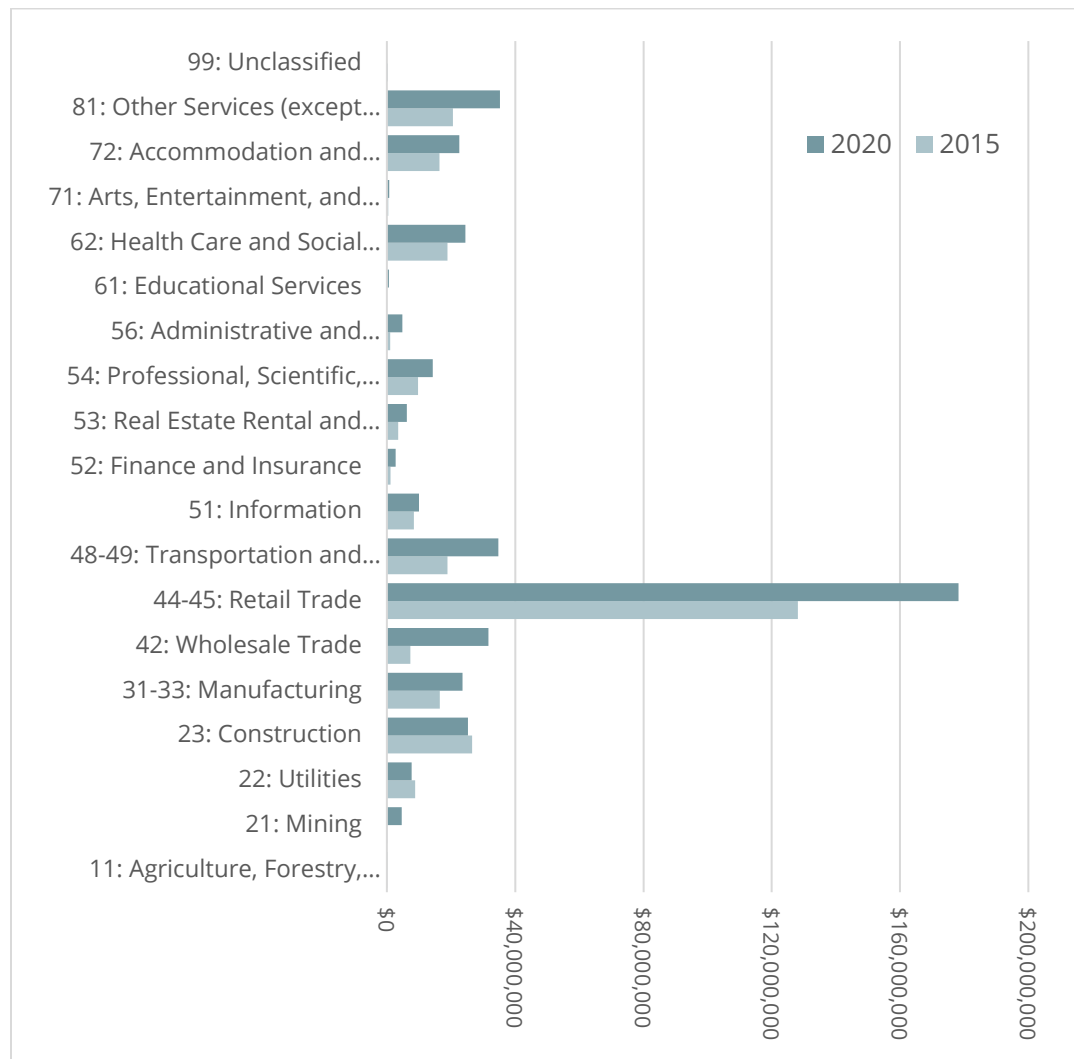
GROSS RECEIPTS

The State of New Mexico taxes the gross receipts of many types of businesses. Gross receipts are an indicator of economic activity by industrial classification in Belen. Gross receipts of businesses in Belen increased by 50 percent from 2015 to 2020, from \$287 million to \$429 million. Retail trade accounted for 35 percent of the growth.

Data for FY 2015 and 2020 show that retail trade is by far the largest business category in the City. Gross receipts increased in all categories except construction and utilities from 2015 to 2020,

Certain gross receipts are exempt from gross receipts tax and do not have to be reported. Therefore, the total sales of Belen companies will be underreported by these exemptions.

FIGURE 39. GROSS RECEIPTS OF BUSINESSES IN BELEN BY INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION



Source: New Mexico Department of Taxation and Revenue, 2022

TARGET INDUSTRIES

The City has identified key industries that match well with Belen's resources and their ability to increase community vitality and the prosperity of Belen residents.

Retail

Expanding its retail base to reduce leakage of local spending to other nearby communities is a goal for Belen. Even though retail is Belen's largest industry category in terms of gross receipts, there are gaps in what is available to Belen residents. Grocery stores, pharmacies, and gas stations are the largest retail categories, with groceries accounting for nearly 60 percent of total retail sales.

Online sales have had an impact nationally on local businesses, especially in the past few years. However, Belen's local small businesses could fill gaps in what is available locally.

Manufacturing

Belen and the surrounding area have an established manufacturing sector, with industrial sites along I-25, adjacent to the Belen Regional Airport, and at Rio Grande Industrial Park on NM 304 south of Rio Communities. Manufacturing businesses include Cemco, Aristech Surfaces, New Mexico Travertine, Clariant Corporation, and others. The industrial areas have some available buildings and space for new businesses to locate.

Energy/Sustainability

With its abundant sunshine and the available land for industrial development, Belen is ideally positioned for commercial-scale solar facilities. Benefits of these projects include local construction jobs and ongoing maintenance jobs and tax revenues, including gross receipts taxes on construction and ongoing operations.

A 1,600-acre solar farm is in process on a portion of Rancho Cielo in north Belen. The Sky Ranch Solar Project, a project of NextEra Energy Resources, is projected to generate up to 190 MW of renewable energy and 100 MW of battery storage. The City approved industrial revenue bonds to help fund the project. Construction is projected to begin as early as December 2022.

Tourism

Belen is host to many events throughout the year. Some of these events attract primarily locals, but others draw from the region. Activities with a regional draw have the potential to support local retail and service businesses.

Participants in the first comprehensive plan town hall indicated a strong desire for additional lodging to support these events and encourage visitors to stay in Belen.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In addition to events, state initiatives like the Rio Grande Trail have the potential to bring visitors to communities along the trail, including Belen. As trail segments are being formalized and added to the system, Belen has the opportunity to strengthen its supporting infrastructure, including trail links to the historic downtown and additional food and lodging businesses.

In FY 2020, accommodation and food services accounted for \$22.6 million in gross receipts, and \$1.6 million in local and state taxes.

Arts and Culture

The Belen MainStreet Partnership and the Belen Arts and Cultural District are working hard to develop downtown as a destination and a center for the arts. In addition to arts-related businesses and organizations, the Arts and Cultural District can promote events and activities that bring visitors to Belen.

The Arts and Cultural District is a pilot program of the New Mexico MainStreet Creative Economy JumpStart Program. The goal of the program is to develop local projects that support creative economy work. Existing local assets are the springboard for additional projects and programs—an estimated 60 local businesses will benefit from the program.

Arts, entertainment, and recreation generate \$725,000 in local business receipts annually. This sector has the potential to grow and play a more dominant role in the local economy.

Film

Belen, and particularly the City's historic downtown, has been the location of dozens of films and television series for over 50 years. The downtown has been adapted to look like many places and eras, and Belen's proximity to Albuquerque film studios is an asset. Sixteen movies, television miniseries and television series have been filmed in Belen since 2008.

The City offers assistance securing locations, logistics support, quick permitting, and no filming fees.

Motion picture and video industries generated \$574,000 in business receipts in FY 2020, contributing \$47,000 to gross receipts taxes. This does not include support services such as local actors and writers, accommodations, and food.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Belen is located within the Albuquerque Metropolitan Area and participates in economic development initiatives in the region. The State of New Mexico also offers support in business recruiting, retention, and expansion through state-funded programs.

Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)

The mission of AREA is to lead and execute strategies designed to grow and diversify the economic base of the greater Albuquerque region. The desired result is a prosperous, diverse, and inclusive economy, and a better standard of living for everyone in the region.

Belen shares many of the challenges of the region as a whole: competition for businesses, jobs, and investment; a need to increase the supply and skills of its workforce, and a need to upgrade its infrastructure and business environment for the future.

Belen is well-positioned to capitalize on the regional focus on manufacturing with its available land and multimodal transportation advantages. The City's industrial sites, available industrial buildings, and the Rancho Cielo intermodal facility are listed on the AREA website, but the City can do more. By participating in regional initiatives and creating an identity for Belen within the region, the City can benefit from the resources available through AREA.

New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD)

The mission of the NMEDD is to increase economic opportunities statewide. The agency sets the agenda for business support at the state level. Divisions include general economic development and regional experts to work with local communities, the state MainStreet Program, the Outdoor Recreation Division, the Office of Science and Technology, and the New Mexico Partnership. The divisions provide technical assistance and funding for projects within their scope.

Many of the state's target industries are aligned with Belen's industry targets: film and television, intelligent manufacturing, outdoor recreation, sustainable and green energy, and sustainable and value-added agriculture are initiatives that Belen can participate in and partner with the state to attract business to Belen. The Belen Regional Airport is a resource for aviation-related businesses, consistent with state targets for attracting aviation businesses close to Kirtland Airforce Base and Sandia National Laboratory.

A complete list of resources for communities and businesses is available through these organizations and is not repeated here.

Belen Downtown Metropolitan Redevelopment Area

Downtown Belen has been designated as a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area. The New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Act (NMSA 3-60A.1-41, 1978) empowers local governments with authority to revitalize and redevelop areas that are designated as blighted or underutilized to stimulate economic development through public private partnerships and a set of creative funding and financing tools.

Local Economic Development Act (LEDA)

The Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) is a law that established New Mexico's Job Creation Fund (or deal-closing fund). Approximately 40 states use Job Creation Funds, in conjunction with other incentives, to develop a competitive package to help existing employers expand and to attract new employers to the state. The City of Belen has a LEDA ordinance in place and can receive State LEDA funds to support projects that create new jobs and capital investment.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE TRAINING

There are several institutional partners in the area that offer higher education and workforce development opportunities to residents in the region. The City, school district and Chamber should maintain open communication and collaboration with these institutions to make sure that offerings and curriculum are aligned with present and anticipated workforce opportunities. These partners include: UNM, UNM Valencia Campus, and Central New Mexico Community College.

The State Economic Development Department offers incentives for job training through the Job Incentive Training Program (JTIP). JTIP funds classroom and on-the-job training for newly-created jobs in eligible expanding or relocating businesses for up to 6 months. The program reimburses 50-75% of employee wages. Custom training at a New Mexico public educational institution may also be reimbursed.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

GOAL 14. *Attract new economic base businesses that offer wages higher than the County average wage.*

Policy 14.1. Promote Belen as a prime location for new manufacturing businesses in existing industrial parks.

Action 14.1.A. Develop an information package promoting Belen to prospective businesses to supplement site information on the AREA website.

Action 14.1.B. Continue to coordinate with the NMEDD, AREA, and other state and regional economic development entities to promote Belen as a desirable business-friendly community.

Action 14.1.C. Promote Belen's commitment to renewable energy and sustainability, including future access to NextEra solar power, if feasible.

Policy 14.2. Create easy-to-navigate physical signs and digital tools to encourage outside investment and development potential.

Action 14.2.A. Modernize the City’s website to serve as both a resource for residents and a marketing tool for potential businesses, investors, and developers. Create easy navigation to the Comprehensive Plan as well as infrastructure plans and maps.

Action 14.2.B. Invest in strategic signage (wayfinding, interpretive, and gateway) to mark Belen’s attractions and community destinations.

Policy 14.3. Promote commercial corridors along I-25 interchanges to retail

Action 14.3.A. As vacant properties near I-25 interchanges are developed, ensure that roadways and zoning allow for commercial opportunities along frontage roads and within ½ mile of the interchanges.

GOAL 15. *Support Belen’s existing retail and service businesses.*

Policy 15.1. Continue to promote local purchasing through the Chamber of Commerce.

Action 15.1.A. Support City procurement from local businesses when equivalent goods and services are available in Belen.

Action 15.1.B. Promote “buy local” initiatives to make Belen residents aware of the goods and services that are available from local businesses.

Action 15.1.C. Support local growers and create spaces to access their wares and encourage growth. Assess the feasibility of a community kitchen and a climate-controlled vendor hall for growers and makers.

GOAL 16. *Support a thriving downtown in the Heart of Belen.*

Policy 16.1. Continue to support the Belen MainStreet Partnership and the Belen Arts and Cultural District.

Action 16.1.A. Support the Belen MainStreet partnership’s work to complete the Creative Economy JumpStart Program through New Mexico MainStreet and become a state-authorized Arts and Cultural District.

Action 16.1.B. Maintain a strong local government presence in downtown by retaining City functions in the downtown area.

Action 16.1.C. Create references between the City website and the Belen MainStreet website.

SECTION 9

PARKS, TRAILS & OPEN SPACE

Belen's current and future networks of parks, open space, and trails are a major asset to quality of life in Belen. The National Recreation and Parks Association has established three pillars of parks and recreation:

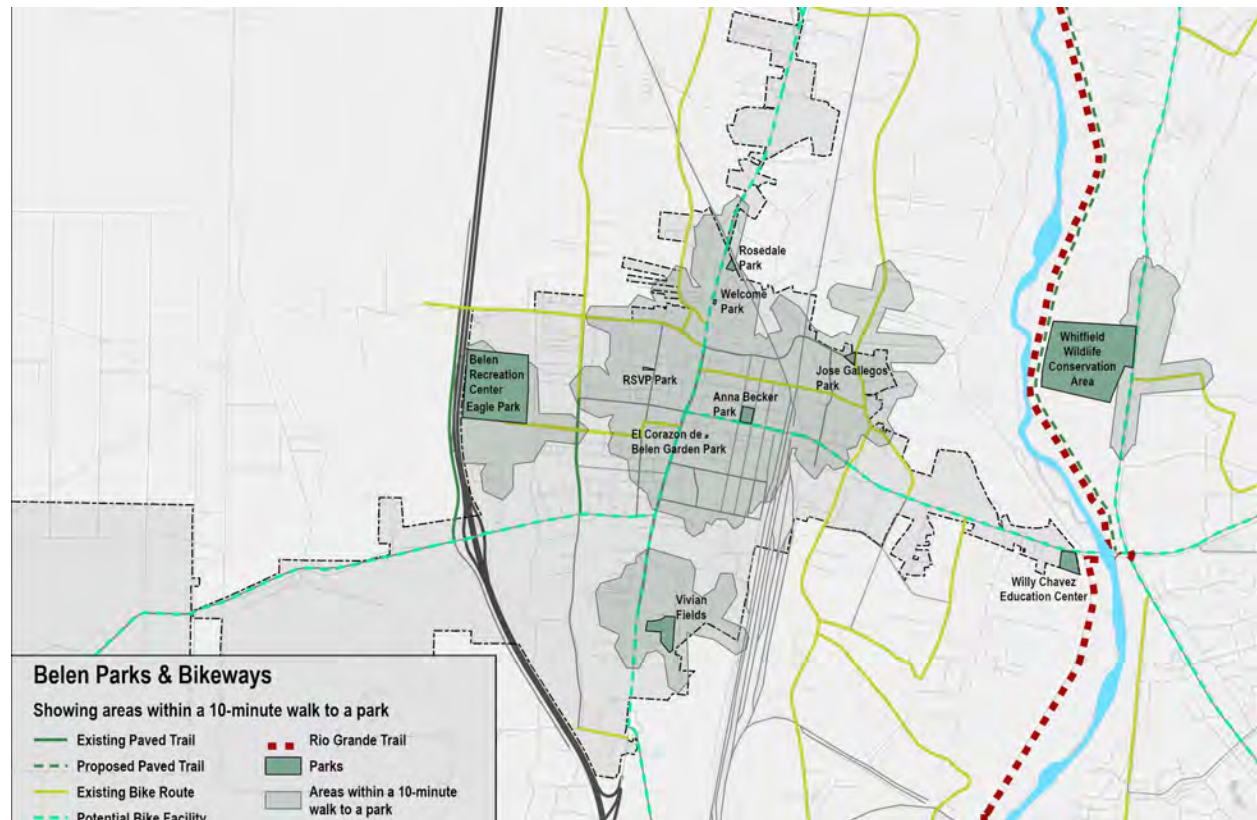
- Health and Wellness: Advancing community health and well-being through parks and recreation
- Equity: Everyone has access to quality parks and recreation
- Conservation: Resilient and climate-ready communities through parks and recreation

Belen's parks, open space, and trails system is poised to realize these benefits for Belen residents.

EXISTING PARKS

The City maintains nearly 86 acres of park land. There is a combination of pocket parks that serve the local neighborhood, neighborhood parks that serve a larger area, and community parks that serve the entire community. The national average is 10.4 acres of parkland per resident. Belen has a bit more than the national average in total, but equally important is the distribution of parks to equitably serve all residents. The Trust for Public Land has identified a goal that a park should be located within a 10-minute walk of every home. In Belen, the center of the City is well served, as shown in Figure 40. As new neighborhoods are built at the edges of the City, new parks will be needed to serve these families.

FIGURE 40. PARK LOCATIONS AND 10-MINUTE WALK AREA



Source: Sites Southwest

In addition to public parks, homeowner associations provide and maintain parks within their boundaries to serve immediate residents. These parks are typically open to the public as long as park visitors are respectful of the space. As new subdivisions are built, such as the large subdivisions being built on the west mesa, the smaller local parks can serve immediate neighborhoods, with a new community park to be built in the future as the population nearby approaches 7,500 residents.

Park service standards vary by community. Generally, a community has a combination of mini parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, open space, and special use parks. Belen has these categories of parks.

Mini parks generally serve the immediate population within a quarter mile, and the park size is 1.5 acres or less. These parks have a limited set of amenities. In Belen, some of these small parks are designed for toddlers and their parents. Others have only landscaping and seating or perhaps a small sports court.

Neighborhood parks serve a larger neighborhood within a ¼ to ½ mile radius. They can be as small as 2 acres in size, which is typical of Belen. These parks serve all age groups with a variety of recreational amenities. Anna Becker and Rosedale parks best meet this description in Belen.

Community parks typically range from 10 to 50 acres and have the most intense recreational facilities, such as lighted sports fields, large play structures, swimming pools, community centers, and other facilities that serve large groups and large events. Vivian Fields and Eagle Park fall into this category, although Vivian Fields is designed for Little League use. Belen's parks are described below.

Anna Becker Park

Anna Becker Park is located north of Reinken Ave, south of Chavez Ave, and between 3rd and 4th Street near the core of Belen. This two-acre park provides multiple amenities including a basketball court, picnic tables, benches, a gazebo, and playground equipment. This park hosts multiple events throughout the year, including Art in the Park, the Belen Growers' Market, food truck events, and other events throughout the year.

FIGURE 41: ANNA BECKER PARK



Eagle Park

Eagle Park is the largest regional park in Belen and includes multiple recreational facilities. Located north of Belen High School and east of I-25, the park encompasses approximately

70.82 acres. Eagle Park offers multiple recreational facilities, such as softball fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, soccer fields, a skate park, playground equipment, and walking trails. This park also has a Veterans Memorial and community center. The community has its largest events of the year at this park including the World's Largest Matanza, St. Patrick's Day Balloon Rallye, and 4th of July celebration. The park also hosts multiple sporting leagues throughout the year, including baseball, softball, and flag football.

El Corazon de Belen Garden Park

Also known as Corazon Park, this park and community garden is located at the corner of Dalies Ave and N 6th St. just north of downtown Belen. This park was established by the Chamber of Commerce and Belen MainStreet for the community to plant gardens and provide fresh produce to the Belen Food Pantry.

FIGURE 42: EL CORAZON DE BELEN GARDEN PARK



Jose Gallegos Park

Jose Gallegos Park is located in northeast Belen at the intersection of Aragon Rd. and Gabaldon Rd., Jose Gallegos Park is a small community park on 0.6 acres of land. Park facilities include benches, picnic tables, a basketball court, a pavilion, barbeque pits, and a swing set.

Rosedale Park

Located at the terminus of Rosedale Circle between Main Street and the railroad, Rosedale Park is a two-acre community park with playground equipment, a basketball court, benches, and picnic tables.

Jardin de Belen Park

This 0.2-acre park is located within the Jardin de Belen subdivision on Belen's west mesa.

Vivian Fields

Vivian Fields located off Vivian Road and Anaya Road near Main Street, provides facilities for the Belen Little League. The 8.7-acre park provides a majors/minors field, rookies field, a softball field, and two tee ball fields. Community members expressed an interest in off-road vehicle (ORV) trails in this location. If this space cannot accommodate that use, the City should consider identifying a location for ORV use.

Welcome Park

Welcome Park is a small park located at the intersection of Main Street and Rosedale Circle. The 1.5-acre park has one bench and functions as a welcoming element into Belen along Main Street heading south. The park has a small crusher fine trail, landscaping, and signage to welcome visitors to Belen.

10th & Ross Park

Also known as RSVP Park, the 10th & Ross mini park is a pocket park. This park is approximately 0.31 acres and provides two picnic tables and a basketball court. This park is intended as a small community park for the surrounding residential housing.

A summary of park facilities is shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6: BELEN PARKS SUMMARY

Name	Type	Acres	Facilities/Equipment
Anna Becker Park	Neighborhood Park	2.0	1 basketball court, 6 picnic tables, 4 benches, gazebo, water fountain, 1 playground, 1 set swings
Vivian Fields	Community Park	9.97	3 Little League baseball fields, 1 storage unit, bathroom facility, 8 sets bleachers
Rosedale Park	Neighborhood Park	1.80	4 picnic tables, 4 benches, 1 playground, 1 basketball court
Jose Gallegos Park	Pocket Park	0.60	3 benches, 2 picnic tables, 1 basketball court, 1 pavilion, 2 barbecue pits, 1 set swings
Jardin De Belen Park	Pocket Park	0.20	1 small playground, 1 picnic table, 1 bench
10 th & Ross Mini Park	Pocket Park	0.31	2 picnic tables, 1 basketball court
Eagle Park	Community Park	70.82	2 softball fields, skate park, 2 soccer fields, special event venue, shade structures, outdoor basketball courts, tennis and pickleball courts, playground, restrooms, Belen Veteran's Memorial, and Belen Community Center
El Corazon Park	Pocket Park		Community garden, picnic shelter, bench
Coronado Mini Park	Pocket Park	0.04	1 bench
Total Park Acreage		85.74	

Source: Belen Parks and Recreation Department

OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS

Rio Grande Bosque

The Rio Grande bosque between the riverside drains is managed by the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District. Informal trails extend along the levees that bound the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy and throughout the riparian forest along the river.

These trails could be formalized and improved with signage, and artistic or cultural artifacts that are unique to the Belen community,

Rio Grande Trail

In 2015 House Bill 563 called for a master plan for a 500-mile cross-state recreational trail along the Rio Grande that would extend from New Mexico's southern border with Texas to its northern border with Colorado. The Bill established the Rio Grande Trail Commission to oversee development of the trail. The Rio Grande Trail Master Plan, adopted in 2018, identifies a preferred alignment along the entire corridor. Most of the segment through Valencia County is proposed to be a shared-use path that parallels the levees from a connection to an on-levee trail just south of Bosque Farms south through Valencia County. The proposed alignment is along the east side of the river north of East River Road, crossing to the west side of the river at East River Road, and extending along the west side of the river to the south. The proposed alignment will touch the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area Complex on the east side trail and the Senator Willie M. Chavez Educational Center property at the intersection of East River Road and the riverside drain.

Mesa Road Multi-Use Bike Trail

A section of Mesa Road between Joan Street and Camino del Llano has an asphalt bike trail running adjacent to the roadway. This is the only bike facility in Belen and runs alongside one of Belen's major roadways. Future bike trail extensions are planned to connect this trail to downtown Belen using Delgado Avenue, 10th Street, and Church Street.

Former Senator Willie M. Chavez Educational Center

The former Senator Willie M. Chavez State Park was sold to the Belen Consolidated Schools to use as an environmental education center. The site is now owned by the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District and is closed now. The City has indicated a desire to reopen the facility. The site is well located to be integrated into the Rio Grande Trail and is accessible to west side trail opportunities.

Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area

The Whitfield Wildlife Conservation area was established on a 97-acre tract in Belen in April of 2003 by the Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District, and additional tracts have been added to the Whitfield Conservation Area Complex in years since. The Conservation Area Complex is comprised of moist meadow units and new wetlands maintained by the Conservation District, as well as existing wetlands and restored native vegetation in riparian buffer zones for food and shelter for wildlife. Native plants that provide food for resident and migrating birds and other wildlife have been planted and are protected within the Conservation Area Complex.

FIGURE 43. WHITEFIELD WILDLIFE CONSERVATION



The conservation area complex is located on the east side of the Rio Grande, between State Highway 47 and the east riverside drain.

Bluffs Trails

The community indicated interest in exploring the creation of a recreational vehicle park on the bluffs west of town. This area's terrain is optimal for this use, with its dunes, steep hills, and informal trails, and could be an attraction for visitors in the region and around the state.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL 17. *Provide open spaces for recreation, public appreciation, and natural resource protection.*

Policy 17.1. Adopt and implement a recreation and open space plan for the City aligned with the Comprehensive Plan and the needs of Belen residents.

Action 17.1.A. Implement an on- and off-street bicycle plan integrated with the Los Lunas 2015 Bicycle Master Plan.

Action 17.1.B. Work with developers of new subdivisions to include mini parks and/or neighborhood parks in new residential neighborhoods. These would be maintained by homeowner associations.

Action 17.1.C. Plan for larger neighborhood or community parks as new subdivisions expand. These parks would be two to five acres in size and serve approximately 1,000 people, or 300 to 400 homes.

Action 17.1.D. Provide for maintenance and management capacity within the City's Parks and Recreation Department as the City population grows.

Action 17.1.E. Continue to collaborate with local programs to provide a variety of recreational opportunities for Belen residents.

Action 17.1.F. Seek funding to connect the Mesa Avenue Bike Trail to downtown Belen by exploring grants and funding sources through the FHWA and NMDOT.

Action 17.1.G. Coordinate with MRGCD to determine the feasibility of creating trails along their facilities. Connect these facilities to the Rio Grande.

Policy 17.2. Develop a regional open space initiative in coordination with other regional initiatives, such as the Rio Grande Trail and El Camino Real Trail, and the Future Land Use Plan.

Action 17.2.A. Connect with regional open space trails and facilitate designation of trail segments near Belen.

Action 17.2.B. Encourage cluster development in new planned unit developments and enable this development type in the City zoning code. The purpose of this development type in rural parts of Belen is to preserve open space and rural character.

Action 17.2.C. Explore methods to finance open space purchases and compensate landowners for open space preservation.

Action 17.2.D. Seek voluntary conservation of agricultural and other open space through conservation easements.

Action 17.2.E. Design open spaces to be functional, appropriate, maintainable, and flexible to serve more than one purpose. More details regarding design and function would be identified in a parks, recreation, open space, and trails master plan as noted above.

SECTION 10

INFRASTRUCTURE



This chapter addresses infrastructure conditions and necessary improvements. Infrastructure is grouped into two categories: 1) wet utilities, which includes water distribution, stormwater, wastewater, and solid waste; and 2) dry utilities, which includes electricity, gas, and communications.

Maintaining good quality and reliable infrastructure is essential to a community's quality of life and well-being.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

- Develop a city Asset Management Plan to inventory and strategically maintain city infrastructure

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal

The City of Belen provides municipal water and wastewater treatment systems for its residents. The average water usage is approximately 600,000 gallons per day. The peak demand is 1,200,000 gallons per day, while the storage capacity is 5,500,000 gallons. The system currently has 21,736 connections. The City's water is tested regularly and treated with chlorine.

Belen has six wells. Most of the wells meet the current Environmental Protection Agency's arsenic regulations and will also meet the new federal standards. One of the City's lift stations needs to be upgraded to keep up with projected growth. An arsenic treatment facility is being constructed at Well 8 to bring that facility into compliance. The City of Belen also has a contract with the San Juan Chama Project for 500 acre-feet a year. An acre-foot contains about 326,000 gallons of water. The City operates an activated-sludge wastewater treatment plant. The wastewater disposal system feeds into a local drainage ditch, which then feeds into the Rio Grande after treatment. The current system maintains 3,031 connections, which serves all of the City's residents. The average flow is 800,000 gallons per day, with a capacity of 1,200,000 per day. The wastewater system is over 40 years old. The system will need updating in the future and a new plant constructed to accommodate projected growth. Sewer rates are \$100.86 for the first 3,000 gallons, and \$4.23 per 1,000 gallons over 3,000 gallons.

Stormwater Management

A significant portion of the City of Belen is located in the 100-year flood plain. The 100-year flood plain generally covers the area from Reinken to Vivian and from 1st Street to Main Street.

This area has received significant flooding in the past and is prone to future flooding. The 100-year flood zone also covers all of Belen between the rail yard and the Rio Grande on the far east side of the City. Other areas subject to flooding include those locations that are close to irrigation/drainage ditches and areas where natural drainage occurs (such as the arroyos west of 1-25). The Belen Highline Canal and the New Belen Ditch on the west side are prone to flooding, as are the Sausal Drain and Lower Belen Riverside Drain on the east side of the City. The west mesa has several arroyos where natural drainage could cause flooding.

The City of Belen—with representatives from the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD), Los Lunas, Rio Communities, and Valencia County—has started planning the process of developing a flood authority within the area. The flood authority will have taxing ability and will plan and establish supporting infrastructure.

UTILITIES

Natural Gas

New Mexico Gas Company provides natural gas services to Belen. There were no comments on natural gas service from the community.

Electric

The Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) provides electricity to Belen via 115 kV and 46 kV transmission lines. There were no comments on electrical service from the community.

Solid Waste

The City contracts with a private company to provide weekly curbside pick-up services for residential solid waste. The contractor also operates the City's transfer station and recycling drop-off.

Residents mentioned the need for more trash pick-up days throughout the City to help with beautification and a desire for curbside recycling to reduce .

Internet and Telephone

Qwest provides telephone services to the City of Belen. Internet is provided by Xfinity, CenturyLink, HughesNet, and Viasat to residential homes. Free Wi-Fi is also available at select City of Belen facilities, including the City Hall Council Chambers, Belen Public Library, Municipal Court Room, Eagle Park Community Center, Harvey House Museum, and RSVP Park.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL 18. *Upgrade and maintain infrastructure to meet current demand and future development needs.*

Policy 18.1. Increase water storage and water system capacity to accommodate growth.

Action 18.1.A. Construct Well 8 to increase capacity to 1 million gallons.

Action 18.1.B. Extend a sewer line to the Belen Regional Airport.

Policy 18.2. Maintain and expand the City's wastewater system to keep up with demand

Action 18.2.A. Seek funding to plan, design, and construct a new wastewater treatment plant

Action 18.2.B. Develop a master plan for the City's wastewater system to identify capacity and growth needs and guide future investments.

Policy 18.3. Maintain affordable utility services for all residents

Action 18.3.A. Partner with private utility providers to determine the best ways to maintain utility facilities to keep cost low for users.

Action 18.3.B. Promote the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program to help residents needing assistance

Action 18.3.C. Promote the Affordable Connectivity Program to qualifying residents needing assistance acquiring internet access.

Policy 18.4. Maintain affordable solid waste services for all residents.

Action 18.4.A. Consider additional curbside service days for residential trash pickup when the current contract with the City's service provider expires.

Action 18.4.B. Provide curbside recycling service in Belen to reduce the quantity of trash going to the regional landfill as soon as this service is available in Valencia County. Single-stream, or zero sort, recycling is preferred.

GOAL 19. *Ensure adequate water supply to meet current and future demand.*

Policy 19.1. Acquire and secure water rights as needed to meet future demand.

Action 19.1.A. Track availability of water rights in the middle Rio Grande Valley to take advantage of rights as they become available.

Policy 19.2. Master plan the City's water system with water conservation in mind.

Action 19.2.A. Develop a Water System Master Plan to identify capacity and expansion needs and guide future capital investments.

Policy 19.3. Adopt and maintain a water conservation program.

Action 19.3.A. Implement a water conservation program consistent with the City's 2022 Water Conservation Plan to track residential and business water consumption, offer conservation incentives, and establish a drought contingency plan.

Action 19.3.B. Educate water system consumers regarding water conservation best practices and fixture and appliance upgrades that can help reduce indoor and outdoor water use, such as promoting the EPA WaterSense program.

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SECTION 11

TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan describes the City's roads, pathways, and other means for people to get from place to place.

The purpose of this Transportation chapter is to assess how Belen's transportation network is functioning, address where development that impact the transportation system might occur and determine the improvements that are needed. Belen's transportation system includes roadways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transit, rail, and air.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

- Improvements to Belen Regional Airport to accommodate a wider variety of aircraft.
- Extend and expand select roadways to support projected growth

ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

The major roads that intersect Belen are I-25, Camino del Llano, NM 314 (Main Street), Reinken/NM 309 (River Road), and NM 109 (Jarales Road). Two other major roads in Valencia County, NM 47, and NM 304, are located just outside of the Belen city boundaries, on the eastern side of the Rio Grande. Traffic volume on these roads is expected to increase as population and employment intensify in Belen and in neighboring communities over the next 20 years. The City should plan for the improvement and increased capacity of the local street network, and a more efficient transportation system in general.

Three interchanges at the I-25 Bypass, Camino del Llano and NM 314 provide access to Belen from I-25. The Camino del Llano interchange is the location of several highway-oriented businesses, including motels and a truck stop. The north interchange provides access only to the east, and the City is pursuing a full interchange that would open access to north Belen west of the interstate.

City staff has identified desired roadway improvements that will serve Belen into the future. In addition to the north interchange improvements, desired improvements to the local road network include:

- Build a direct roadway connection between Highway 6, the intermodal facility, and the Belen Regional Airport.
- Roadway connection between Highway 6 and south Belen exit
- Improve North Mesa Road from I25 to Camino del Llano as a north south roadway that parallels I-25 and provides access to future businesses along the I-25 frontage. Camino del Llano and Aragon Road link to the interstate frontage.
- Provide a second roadway from the west mesa to downtown south of Camino del Llano.
- Expand Camino del Llano to four lanes east of I-25.
- When the intersection of the I-25 bypass and NM 314 is improved, reconfigure the intersection to encourage development of adjoining land. A three-way T-intersection is preferred to the existing flyover.

BELEN REGIONAL AIRPORT

The Belen Regional Airport is located on the mesa a mile west of I-25. The airport is home to over 50 aircraft, a skydiving club, a propeller maintenance facility, aerial photography,

and other aviation-related businesses. Land is available at the airport for development of aviation businesses.

The airport has two runways capable of accommodating charter and cargo planes weighing 16,000 lbs. or lighter. The airport has a fueling station and airport lounge. The airport is a location for Air Force military training. The City has goals to strengthen the runways to accommodate heavier aircraft, lengthen the runways, and improve the terminal. The Air Force has not expressed a need for a longer runway to accommodate aircraft larger than a C130. However, to attract a commercial cargo carrier, Runway 13/31 could be extended to 6,760 x 75 feet or 7,200 x 100 feet depending on the need, as shown in the Belen Regional Airport Layout Plan.

RIO METRO TRANSIT

Rio Metro regional transit provides intercity and intracity transit service to Belen residents. The regional transit agency serves Bernalillo, Sandoval, and Valencia counties and the Pueblo of Isleta, with connection to Santa Fe. With commuter rail and local bus transit services, commuters and leisure travelers can access a variety of destinations in central New Mexico from Belen.

FIGURE 44: RIO METRO TRANSIT OPTIONS



- The New Mexico Rail Runner Express provides daily commuter rail service from Belen to Santa Fe, with multiple stations serving the communities along the route.
- Rio Metro buses provide local service in Belen as well as service from Rail Runner Express stops to locations in other communities in the region.
- Dial-a-Ride/Paratransit service provides accessible curb-to-curb service to connect communities in Valencia County.

For commuters or leisure travelers who arrive at a transit or Rail Runner stop by bike, Rio Metro provides some space for bicycles on board a train or bus. Rio Metro also provides bike racks and lockers for riders who don't need their bike at the other end of a journey.

Bike racks can be used any time, and bicycle lockers are available for rent by reservation for a six-month period. Ten lockers are available at the Belen Rail Runner station.

RAIL

BNSF operates one of the largest freight railroad networks in North America, with rails across the western two-thirds of the United States. Belen is home to BNSF's largest inspection yard on the southern transcontinental corridor, linking Chicago to southern California. The railroad is the second largest private sector employer in Belen.

The Belen facility, like others in the BNSF system, primarily serves as a maintenance and fueling yard. Trains are inspected every 1,000 miles. Workers refuel locomotives and service equipment, and the railroad uses these stops to switch crews.

To the north of Belen is the Central New Mexico Rail Park, a 1,420-acre rail-served industrial park, which is part of BNSF's Certification Site Program. The Rail Park is designated to accommodate warehousing, distribution, and manufacturing operations with direct access to BNSF. Belen's proximity to the rail park is an advantage for businesses requiring intermodal transportation, with future potential for rail and interstate access.

EV CHARGERS

Electric Vehicles (EVs) have become a popular transportation option for motorists, create fewer emissions, and cost less to operate than gasoline powered vehicles. Battery-powered cars now make up the fastest-growing segment of the auto market, with sales jumping 70 percent in the first nine months of 2022 from the same period in 2021, Sales of conventional cars and trucks fell 15 percent in the same period.^{2,3} The third quarter of 2022 was the first time that EV sales in the U.S. nearly equaled hybrid sales.

While Tesla dominates EV sales today, more vehicles are entering the market. The Ford 150 Lightning, the Chevrolet Bolt, and the Ford Mustang Mach-E are among the most popular. Major auto manufacturers are ramping up production of EVs over the next few years. Ford will produce more than 2 million EVs annually by 2026 and projects that EVs will be half of its global sales volume by 2030. General Motors plans more EV models in

² "Electric Vehicles Start to Enter the Car-Buying Mainstream". New York Times, November 13, 2022.

³ "Interest in Electrified Vehicles Holds Steady in Q3, as EV Sales Soar", Cox Automotive, November 11, 2022.

the U.S. by 2025. Other manufacturers have similar projections as they seek to electrify large portions of their fleets over the next decade.

As the popularity of EVs has increased, the challenge for EV users is accessing charging stations. Cities in New Mexico have installed EV chargers near public facilities and businesses. The New Mexico Tourism Department promotes EV charging station locations as part of its focus on growing the state's tourism economy.

The Edison Electric Institute (EEI), which forecasts trends in the EV market, projects 26.4 million EVs to be on U.S. roads by 2030. The forecast is based on a consensus forecast of four independent forecasts by EV sales by Guidehouse, Boston Consulting Group, Deloitte, and Wood Mackenzie. The EEI forecasts a need for 12.9 million charging stations and 140,000 DC fast charging stations to support this increase.⁴

The New Mexico Department of Transportation expects to receive \$38 million over five years from the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program, funded through the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. New Mexico's EV Infrastructure Deployment Plan will focus on a network of stations up to 50 miles apart along interstate corridors and within one mile of the interstates.

Belen is ideally located to fill the gap in public charging stations between Albuquerque and Socorro. NEVI funding creates an immediate opportunity for the City to provide public charging stations that serve Belen residents and attract visitors from I-25.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL 20. *Maintain and improve surface transportation networks to meet the needs of the City now and into the future.*

Policy 20.1. **Maintain existing roadways to meet desired pavement standards.**

Action 20.1.A. Establish a paving priority system to address small patches and repairs.

Policy 20.2. **Plan for roadway improvements to meet projected traffic needs.**

⁴ Satterfield, Charles and Kellen Schefter, Electric Vehicle Sales and the Charging Infrastructure Required Through 2030, prepared for the Edison Electric Institute, June 2022.

Action 20.2.A. Improve North Mesa Road from I-25 to Camino del Llano as a north-south roadway that parallels I-25 and provides access to future businesses along the I-25 frontage.

Action 20.2.B. Extend the northern Belen I-25 interchange to the west to enable future development in the Rancho Cielo area.

Action 20.2.C. Expand Camino de Llano to four lanes.

Action 20.2.D. Coordinate with adjacent businesses to minimize the impact of expansion.

Action 20.2.E. Consider reconfiguring the I-25 Bypass/NM 314 interchange to maximize the development potential of land at this key intersection.

Policy 20.3. Maintain excellent regional transit and rail service for Belen residents and businesses.

Action 20.3.A. Advocate for Rail Runner schedule changes that better serve commuters into Belen through active participation on the Rio Metro Regional Transit District Board of Directors.

Action 20.3.B. Collaborate with Socorro Transit to maintain Rail Runner Express Shuttle service from Socorro to Belen.

Policy 20.4. Provide EV charging stations to support new technologies

Action 20.4.A. Identify key areas along the I-25 corridor to install EV chargers.

Action 20.4.B. Support landowners to work with vendors and PNM to install EV chargers.

Action 20.4.C. Seek funding for a public station from NMDOT through the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program.

GOAL 21. Establish the Belen Regional Airport as the premier airport in Valencia County.

Policy 21.1. Improve facilities to accommodate larger aircraft at Belen Regional Airport.

Action 21.1.A. Lengthen and reinforce runways to accommodate larger cargo aircraft.

Action 21.1.B. Expand the terminal to accommodate pilot and passenger needs.

Action 21.1.C. Complete a taxiway to serve the new runway.

SECTION 12

HAZARD MITIGATION

Mitigation of known hazards and preparation for emergency response are coordinated among jurisdictions in Valencia County. This section identifies the most likely hazards affecting Belen and the emergency response strategies that are in place to address these hazards.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

- Prepare for, prevent, plan, respond to, and recover from all-hazard events through effective partnerships between local government, emergency services, the private sector, and volunteer agencies and citizens of the City of Belen.
- Increase capacity for the Belen Police Department by providing more space through a new police station
- Maintain or improve response times throughout the community

EXISTING FACILITIES

Hazard mitigation efforts for the City of Belen are managed by the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). The OEM prepares and coordinates responses to recovery from disasters and emergencies for the City. OEM coordinates, maintains, and implements emergency operations with local, state, and federal government agencies, and private sector entities.

Fire Department

The City of Belen Fire Department has two main stations and one sub-station serving approximately 8 square miles and protecting approximately 7,500 residents. The department has three divisions: Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and Fire Prevention & Code Enforcement.



FIGURE 45: BELEN FIRE DEPARTMENT STATION

Law Enforcement

The City of Belen has a police department that serves the City of Belen and 22,000 residents from neighboring communities. The current police station is located on Becker Avenue and has one holding cell for prisoners. However, all prisoners are transferred to the Valencia County Detention Center in Los Lunas. The City is seeking a location for a new police station.

Emergency Medical Services

Emergency medical services (EMS) are provided by the City of Belen to those living within city limits. The City employs three EMT paramedics, four EMT IV techs, and fifteen EMT basics, and operates two rescue vehicles.

Emergency Response

The City of Belen, alongside Los Lunas, Rio Communities, Bosque Farms, Peralta, and Valencia County, has adopted the National Incident Management System as the jurisdictions' All-Hazard Incident Management System.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANS

Valencia County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, 2022

To better facilitate a fast and effective response to emergencies, agencies throughout Valencia County developed the Valencia County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. This plan intends to help local governments prevent avoidable disasters, establish capabilities to protect citizens from disasters, respond effectively to disasters, and provide recovery in the aftermath of a disaster. This document assists in delegating tasks among the multiple governing bodies in Valencia County.

Community Wildfire Protection Plan, 2018

Agencies in Valencia County coordinated to develop the Community Wildfire Protection Plan to identify hazards and risks for wildfires and provide recommendations to prevent large wildfires in the county. Recommendations include fuel reduction, public outreach and education, structural ignitability reduction, and fire response capabilities. A mix of light fuels and brush fuels, urban developed land, generally flat terrain, fire hydrants, and fire stations all provide a benefit to the City. However, narrow dead-end roads, poor access to the bosque, high fire occurrence, and mobile home parks close to the bosque increase wildfire risk.

IDENTIFIED HAZARDS AND DEGREE OF RISK

Hazards were identified during the preparation of the Emergency Management Plan for the City of Belen. Drought, severe storms, and wildlife are the most probable hazards for with extreme heat, winter storm, and flood also being likely (see Table 7). As for wildfire, Belen had a hazard/risk severity risk rating of "Moderate" based on several risks (see Table 8).

TABLE 7: PRIORITY RISK INDEX RESULTS FOR BELEN

Hazard	Probability	Impact	Spatial Extent
Drought	Highly likely	Minor	Large
Extreme Heat	Likely	Minor	Large
Severe Storms	Highly likely	Critical	Large
Tornado	Unlikely	Critical	Small
Winter Storm	Likely	Limited	Moderate
Earthquake	Unlikely	Critical	Large
Dam Failure	Unlikely	Critical	Small
Flood	Likely	Critical	Moderate
Wildfire	Highly likely	Limited	Small

TABLE 8: COMMUNITY HAZARD/RISK SEVERITY RATING

Community	Community Assessment Rating	Factors Summarized	Composite Risk Rating
Belen	Moderate (63/112)	(+/-) Mix of light fuels and brush fuels (+) Urban developed land (+) Generally flat terrain (+) Fire hydrants and fire station present (-) Narrow, dead-end roads are prevalent (-) Poor access to bosque (-) High fire occurrence (-) Mobile home park close to bosque	Moderate

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL 22. *Maintain public safety and emergency management response capabilities within the City of Belen.*

Policy 22.1. Maintain and replace facilities for emergency response teams where needed.

Action 22.1.A. Expand policing capabilities by replacing the City of Belen Police Station. A possible location is the current City Hall.

Policy 22.2. Coordinate with agencies within Valencia County to establish a flood control authority.

Action 22.2.A. Coordinate with elected officials across Valencia County to develop a plan to create a flood authority and corresponding regional plan for flood control.

Action 22.2.B. Identify needed flood-control infrastructure within the City of Belen.

Policy 22.3. Implement recommendations identified in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Action 22.3.A. Continue county-led home hazard assessments to allow fire departments to conduct pre-planning and improve public outreach.

Action 22.3.B. Revise the City weed ordinance to mitigate brushfire risk.

Action 22.3.C. Increase education and enforcement of County and City burn ordinances.

Action 22.3.D. Establish a green waste collection site to encourage brush removal.

Action 22.3.E. Focus safe recreational use in the bosque by establishing formal entrances.

GOAL 23. *Improve response times for emergency services.*

Policy 23.1. Improve multi-agency coordination for emergency response.

Action 23.1.A. Create and regularly update a multi-agency agreement for weather and hazardous material spill emergency response.

HAZARD MITIGATION

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SECTION 13

IMPLEMENTATION



The actions outlined in the Comprehensive Plan create a framework so that City leaders can make decisions that are consistent with the community vision expressed in the plan. This chapter describes how to implement these goals, actions, and policies.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan is an overall policy guide for the physical development of Belen. NMSA § 3-19-1 grants municipalities the power to engage in planning. The municipality may delegate authority to a planning commission, including the authority to adopt, amend, extend, and carry out a municipal master plan. The municipality may specify what authority is retained by the governing body. In Chapter 2.44 of the Belen Code of Ordinances, the City created the Planning and Zoning Board. The Planning and Zoning Board has the responsibility to “promote a comprehensive planning process with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, aesthetically appealing and harmonious development of the city” and prepare it for adoption by the governing body.

Ideally, future planning and policy decisions by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the government body will be consistent with this document. As conditions change, portions of the Comprehensive Plan may be amended based on current conditions, and the plan should be reviewed in its entirety periodically to ensure that it remains relevant. Relationships to other plans and policies and suggestions for monitoring the Plan are summarized below.

Policy Guidance for the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy guide for the Planning and Zoning Commission, the City Council, and department staff. Decisions made by these entities should be consistent with Comprehensive Plan policies. When decisions that consistently vary from the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan indicate that policy preferences have changed, these discrepancies should be noted and considered when the Comprehensive Plan is updated.

Relationship to Other Plans and Policies

Other plans adopted by the City Council should be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Examples of other plans and policies include land use regulations, utility master plans, parks and recreation plans, and the like. When plans developed after adoption of the Comprehensive Plan vary from this document, these discrepancies should be reviewed and considered when the Comprehensive Plan is updated.

Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan

This Comprehensive Plan may be amended by the City Council, with review and recommendations from the Planning and Zoning Commission. Each amendment shall

include the sections of the Comprehensive Plan that are affected by the change. Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan are typically initiated by staff based on changed conditions that warrant the amendments, although the City may choose to establish a process for private individuals to submit applications for amendments. The City's Land Use Ordinance may specify the process to be followed. A typical process would be staff presentation of an amendment to the Planning and Zoning Commission, which would make a recommendation to the City Council.

Comprehensive Plan Review/Update

The Comprehensive Plan should be considered a “living document,” meaning that the plan should be reviewed and amended as actions and projects are completed, new needs arise, and conditions in the community change. Review of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan should occur annually to note changed conditions and new priorities. Significant changes can be introduced as amendments to the plan, as described above. Minor changes can be noted for inclusion in the next plan update.

The plan should be reviewed in its entirety approximately every five years and updated as needed to remain relevant to the vision and goals of the citizens of Belen.

FUNDING RESOURCES

Typical funding for capital improvements come from local sources, such as bond financing, tax revenues, and fees; state and federal grants, and legislative appropriations. The New Mexico Finance Authority finances infrastructure projects through several loan and grant funds that have been tapped by the City of Belen for infrastructure projects.

Special federal appropriations, such as the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, are funded periodically, offering opportunities to fund projects identified in the Comprehensive Plan and in infrastructure master plans. Federal funds are distributed through the state.

Non-local fund sources that can help the City finance planning, design, and construction of capital improvements are listed in Appendix B. Funding sources undergo frequent changes as funding availability and priorities change. These are examples of funding that has been consistent over the past few years.

RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Timeline
SUSTAINABILITY		
GOAL 1. Establish the city of Belen as a leader in the region's transition to renewable energy resources.		
Policy 1.1. Expand opportunities for development of industrial, commercial and community scale solar projects in appropriate locations.		
Action 1.1.A. Ensure that updates to the future land use plan identify locations for solar facilities that serve regional industries and neighborhoods. Priority areas for solar energy development should minimize impacts on other in the Belen area, such as agricultural land.	Planning & Zoning	0-5 years
Action 1.1.B. Update the City zoning ordinance to enable community and utility scale zoning facilities in appropriate locations.	Planning & Zoning	0-5 years
Action 1.1.C. Review the City permitting process to remove barriers to approval of solar facilities on residential and commercial buildings.	Planning & Zoning	0-5 years
Policy 1.2. Support the implementation of renewable technologies in the City of Belen.		
Action 1.2.A. When updating the City Zoning Ordinance, review requirements in residential and commercial zones to remove barriers to installation of individual systems on residences and businesses.	Planning & Zoning	0-5 years
Action 1.2.B. Take advantage of opportunities to install solar facilities on City buildings.	Administration	Ongoing
Action 1.2.C. Provide EV charging stations in public parking lots, such as at City Hall.	Administration	0-5 years
Action 1.2.D. Consider conversion of a portion of the City's fleet to electric vehicles as current vehicles are replaced.	Administration	Ongoing
Action 1.2.E. Incentivize home builders and developers to add solar power and water conservation technology to new homes by allowing density bonuses in their developments	Administration, Planning & Zoning	0-5 years
GOAL 2. Balance protection and conservation of Belen's natural resources with growth opportunities for future generations.		
Policy 2.1. Encourage conservation of water by businesses and residents.		
Action 2.1.A. Continue to build public awareness of and adherence to the City's 2022 Water Conservation Plan.	Public Works	0-5 years
Action 2.1.B. Follow the guidance of the City's Water Conservation Plan to improve metering accuracy, increase operational efficiency, and reduce residential and non-residential water use.	Public Works	0-5 years
Action 2.1.C. Establish metrics and monitor progress toward achieving the goals of the Water Conservation Plan.	Planning & Zoning	0-5 years
Policy 2.2. Protect the Rio Grande and bosque in the Belen area.		

Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Action 2.2.A. Collaborate with regional agencies, including the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) and the Valencia SWCD, on initiatives to maintain the bosque and conservation areas near Belen and provide ongoing environmental education to Belen residents.	Administration	0-5 years
CULTURAL RESOURCES		
GOAL 3. Protect and enhance Belen's cultural amenities.		
Policy 3.1. Encourage appropriate and diverse uses of historic buildings and spaces.		
Action 3.1.A. Explore opportunities to expand use of and potential revenue from Belen's publicly owned historic buildings for special events.	Administration, Belen Public Library	Ongoing
Action 3.1.B. Work with the Belen MainStreet Partnership, local realtors, and private owners of historic buildings to recruit tenants who would put these buildings to productive use.	Belen MainStreet	0-5 years
Action 3.1.C. Explore opportunities for partnership and event sharing between historic spaces like the Belen Public Library and the Harvey House.	Belen MainStreet	Ongoing
Policy 3.2. Preserve historic infrastructure.		
Action 3.2.A. Work with the Belen MainStreet Partnership and private owners to identify grant funding or affordable financing for building renovation and code compliance.	Belen MainStreet	Ongoing
Action 3.2.B. Reactivate the Historic Properties Review Board to identify potential historic landmarks throughout the city and implement review of projects within the First Historic District.	Belen MainStreet	0-5 years
GOAL 4. Create opportunities for all Belen's residents to engage in cultural and artistic programming.		
Policy 4.1. Support and market local history and arts education.		
Action 4.1.A. Promote educational opportunities hosted by the Belen Arts League, Books on Becker, and Through the Flower Art Space.	Community Preservation	Ongoing
Action 4.1.B. Encourage programming at the Harvey House Museum that highlights local history.	Community Preservation	Ongoing
Action 4.1.C. Celebrate the history of Belen through special events and formal recognition of milestones like Founders Day.	Community Preservation	Ongoing
Policy 4.2. Uphold and support the agricultural tradition and history of Belen		
Action 4.2.A. Collaborate with educational institutions and citizens to develop education programs to learn about agricultural heritage	Belen Public Library	Ongoing
Action 4.2.B Develop interpretive signage near significant agricultural and cultural sites in Belen	Parks & Recreation	0-5 years
COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES		
GOAL 5. Manage and maintain sustainable community facilities that improve the quality of life for Belen's residents.		

Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Policy 5.1. Improve and maintain existing City-owned buildings, making sure that all improvements are made to ADA accessibility standards.		
Action 5.1.A. Develop an asset management plan for public buildings that inventories current conditions and identifies priorities for maintenance and upgrades.	Administration	0-5 years
Action 5.1.B. Continue to include high priority major building projects in the City's ICIP.	Administration	Ongoing
Policy 5.2. Improve opportunities for shared community facilities among public agencies in Belen.		
Action 5.2.A. Create shared-use agreements for City and school district facilities that can be used by all residents at different times.	Belen Consolidated Schools; Administration	Ongoing
Policy 5.3. Provide quality services for residents across the life spectrum.		
Action 5.3.A. Support the continued development of facilities, services, and businesses for Belen's seniors.	Planning & Zoning	10+ years
Policy 5.4. Ensure that community facilities are updated and improved to continue to serve shifting community needs.		
Action 5.4.A. Collaborate with Belen Consolidated Schools to identify a use for the H. T. Jaramillo Elementary school building – possibly a historical museum - once renovation of Dennis Chaves Elementary school is complete.	Belen Consolidated Schools; Administration	5-10 years
GOAL 6. Sustain programming and educational opportunities for residents of all ages through Belen's facilities.		
Policy 6.1. Encourage cooperation between the City, regional agencies, Belen Consolidated Schools, and Belen Public Library for community events and programming.		
Action 6.1.A. Support Belen Public Library in finding new uses for its facilities.	Belen Public Library	Ongoing
Action 6.1.B. Partner with UNM and the Department of Chicano Studies to host classes and workshops about local history and current policy that shapes the community.	UNM; Belen Public Library	0-5 years
GOAL 7. Provide adequate facilities for the safety and welfare of all Belen residents.		
Policy 7.1. Improve the City's ISO rating from 4 to 2 for fire protection.		
Action 7.1.B. Create a replacement schedule for obsolete fire-fighting equipment and infrastructure.	Belen Fire Department; Administration	0-5 years
Action 7.1.C. Maintain the City water infrastructure to meet fire flow requirements.	Public Works;	Ongoing
Action 7.1.D. Complete a new fire station in North Belen to improve response times.	Belen Fire Department; Administration	10+ years

Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Policy 7.2. Maintain adequate facilities and equipment for the City's police department.		
Action 7.2.A. Identify a location in downtown Belen to accommodate the new or renovated police department headquarter's need for new space that can accommodate changes in technology, security needs, operational needs, evidence and records storage requirements, and other current standards.	Belen Police Department	0-5 years
Action 7.2.B. Support the implantation of a community policing program in Belen	Belen Police Department	0-5 years
Action 7.2.C. Provide capital and operational funding for new technology and personnel as part of the new Police Department headquarters.	Belen Police Department	0-5 years
Policy 7.3. Coordinate services for mental health, addiction and homelessness with regional partners and service organizations.		
LAND USE		
GOAL 8. Preserve and enhance the unique character and historical culture of Belen.		
Policy 8.1. Protect established residential neighborhoods.		
Action 8.1.A. Review the City's zoning ordinance to ensure that zoning requirements support the desired character of downtown's historic neighborhoods.	Planning & Zoning	0-5 years
Policy 8.2. Incentivize revitalization and preservation of historic structures.		
Action 8.2.A. Inform property owners of state and federal tax credits available for renovation of contributing structures within the historic district and individual historic structures on the state or national register.	Administration	Ongoing
Action 8.2.B. Consider tax abatement and other local financial incentives for development projects within the downtown MRA.	Economic Development	Ongoing
Action 8.2.C. Work with New Mexico MainStreet to provide training, professional development, marketing and branding and other services for property owners and businesses within the Belen MainStreet district.	New Mexico MainStreet	Ongoing
Policy 8.3. Continue to develop and improve buildings in the Arts & Cultural District to accommodate the local arts community.		
Policy 8.4. Use zoning and other regulations to maintain historical and cultural elements.		
Action 8.4.A. Review and update the zoning code to ensure protection of the district's historic character.	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Action 8.4.B. Support the BHPRB's implementation of review criteria to uphold design standards for the downtown historic district.	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Policy 8.5. Protect traditional agricultural lands to continue supporting local food sovereignty.		
GOAL 9. Use long-range planning and land use management techniques to promote a desirable mix of land uses and densities in future development.		

Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Policy 9.1. Allow flexibility for mixed-use zoning and encourage mixed-use development areas in the commercial corridors identified in the future land use plan.		
Action 9.1.A. Conduct annual reviews of the comprehensive plan to ensure the plan's relevance with current policy, with comprehensive updates every five years.	Planning & Zoning	Ongoing
Action 9.1.B. Regularly review zoning regulations and city development ordinances to ensure that mixed-use and appropriate development is allowed and encouraged.	Planning & Zoning	Ongoing
Action 9.1.C. Continue to coordinate with Valencia County on City review and approval of subdivision development within the City's platting and planning jurisdiction to ensure compatibility with City infrastructure and land use patterns.	Planning & Zoning; Valencia County	Ongoing
Policy 9.2. Promote growth and development patterns that are balanced, resource-efficient, and economically resilient.		
Action 9.2.A. Allow for cluster development in new planned unit developments to preserve open space.	Planning & Zoning	10+ years
Action 9.2.B. Follow existing federal, state, and local guidelines for evaluating water and air quality impacts of commercial, agricultural, and industrial growth.	Public Works	Ongoing
Action 9.2.C. Adopt an annexation policy to guide future annexations and consolidate them so that annexed areas can be served efficiently.	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Action 9.2.D. Use the land use plan and zoning code to provide for higher densities and mixed-use development in key locations to meet future housing needs.	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Action 9.2.E. Preserve existing farmland where possible by encouraging new development in infill locations and adjacent to existing infrastructure.	Planning & Zoning	Ongoing
Action 9.2.F. Encourage a mix of commercial and industrial entities near the Belen Regional Airport.	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
GOAL 10. Maintain a clean and scenic community.		
Policy 10.1. Maintain appearance, comfort, and safety of visible and visited areas.		
Action 10.1.A. Encourage scheduled neighborhood cleanup days.	Community Preservation	Ongoing
Action 10.1.B. Strengthen, expand, and enforce nuisance abatement programs and ordinances.	Planning & Zoning	Ongoing
Action 10.1.C. Strictly enforce animal control ordinance, Ordinance 2021-11, City Code Title 6-Animals.	Animal Control	Ongoing
Action 10.1.D. Screen commercial outdoor storage yards and keep residential areas free of junk.	Community Preservation	0-5 years

Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Action 10.1.E. Improve streetscapes within historical neighborhoods and downtown districts, specifically along highly visible corridors, including Main Street, Reinken Avenue, and Camino Del Llano	Planning & Zoning; Community Preservation	10+ years
Action 10.1.F. Partner with MainStreet to identify and implement streetscape improvements.	Belen MainStreet; Planning & Zoning	Ongoing
Policy 10.2. Encourage the restoration or rebuilding of abandoned buildings.		
Action 10.2.A. Enforce the vacant building registration ordinance, City Code, Chapter 15.14.	Planning & Zoning	Ongoing
GOAL 11. Concentrate commercial development in specified corridors and centers.		
Policy 11.1. Encourage commercial and/or industrial activities in Centers and Corridors as shown on the Future Land Use Map.		
Action 11.1.A. Adopt the Future Land Use Plan as a guide for future zoning changes and development in Belen.	Planning & Zoning	0-5 years
Action 11.1.B. Encourage commercial development and higher densities along primary commercial corridors shown in the Future Land Use Plan.	Planning & Zoning	10+ years
Action 11.1.C. Identify suitable locations for neighborhood scale commercial businesses that are walking and biking distance from residential areas.	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Policy 11.2. Encourage infill development.		
Action 11.2.A. Develop an inventory of vacant parcels within the current City limits that are served by existing roads and utilities. Encourage owners of these properties to make them available for new development, consistent with the future land use plan.	Planning & Zoning	0-5 years
Action 11.2.B. Maintain updated utility and transportation master plans to ensure that the City upgrades infrastructure consistent with infill growth potential.	Planning & Zoning; Public Works	Ongoing
Action 11.2.C. Through the City's zoning code and development process, ensure that infill development complements the existing character of surrounding properties.	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Action 11.2.D. Continue to follow development standards and the historic properties review board process for new development and renovation/rehabilitation in the First Historic District.	Planning & Zoning	Ongoing
Policy 11.3. Encourage businesses in focused areas to prevent overbuilding.		
Action 11.3.A. Increase mixed-use opportunities in commercial corridors to increase housing near businesses and increase the vibrancy of these corridors.	Planning & Zoning	10+ years

Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Timeline
HOUSING		
GOAL 12. Ensure that Belen's housing meets the needs of the community now and in the future.		
Policy 12.1. Remove barriers to desired housing options.		
Action 12.1.A. Enable mixed-use development in appropriate areas and corridors, as identified in the Future Land Use Plan.	Planning & Zoning	10+ years
Action 12.1.B. Reduce or eliminate the minimum building footprint requirement in residential zones to encourage more small housing development.	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Action 12.1.C. Promote affordable housing for first-time home buyers.	Planning & Zoning	Ongoing
Action 12.1.D. Promote more transitional housing with hotels and short-term rentals.	Planning & Zoning	Ongoing
Action 12.1.E. Continue reviewing and revising city ordinances to support diverse housing options with the city council subcommittee.	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Action 12.1.F. Revise the City's zoning ordinance to allow accessory dwellings and tiny houses to increase density in existing neighborhoods.	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Action 12.1.G. Encourage higher density development that will provide more affordable housing choices and rental housing.	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Policy 12.2. Promote future housing growth in Belen.		
Action 12.2.A. Work with potential developers of new subdivisions to create high-quality housing in areas already supported by or able to access existing transit infrastructure, utility infrastructure, and water rights.	Planning & Zoning	10+ years
Action 12.2.B. Encourage development of new housing geared toward lower- and middle-income earners.	Planning & Zoning	10+ years
GOAL 13. Support residents in maintaining and upgrading their homes to be resilient, cost-effective, and resource efficient.		
Policy 13.1. Help residents rehabilitate and improve their properties.		
Action 13.1.A. Educate residents about grants and loans available through USDA and MFA to rehabilitate residential properties by hosting application workshops. For example, the town may assist residents in procuring USDA Section 504 Home Repair loans of up to \$20,000 and grants of up to \$7,500 to address health and safety hazards on their properties.	Community Services	0-5 years
Action 13.1.B. Consider providing ongoing assistance for residents seeking USDA home repair loans. This could include partnering with USDA lenders and representatives to consult with interested property owners.	Community Services	0-5 years

Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Action 13.1.C. Promote weatherization assistance programs for qualified households through the New Mexico Weatherization Assistance program.	Community Services	Ongoing
Policy 13.2. Support renovation and energy efficiency upgrades to existing homes.		
Action 13.2.A. Identify and partner with local non-profits and utility providers who can assist property owners in energy efficiency upgrades.	Public Works	Ongoing
Action 13.2.B. Leverage existing incentives and financial support mechanisms to support household upgrades to more efficient heating and cooling systems, such as electric heat pumps.	Public Works	Ongoing
Action 13.2.C. Leverage existing incentives and financial support mechanisms to support household solar panel installation.	Public Works	Ongoing
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		
GOAL 14. Attract new economic base businesses that offer wages higher than the County average wage.		
Policy 14.1. Promote Belen as a prime location for new manufacturing businesses in existing industrial parks.		
Action 14.1.A. Develop an information package promoting Belen to prospective businesses to supplement site information on the AREA website.	Economic Development	0-5 years
Action 14.1.B. Continue to coordinate with the New Mexico Economic Development Department, AREA, and other state and regional economic development entities to promote Belen as a desirable business-friendly community.	Economic Development	0-5 years
Action 14.1.C. Promote Belen's commitment to renewable energy and sustainability, including future access to NextEra solar power, if feasible.	Economic Development	10+ years
Policy 14.2. Create easy-to-navigate physical signs and digital tools to encourage outside investment and development potential.		
Action 14.2.A. Modernize the City's website to serve as both a resource for residents and a marketing tool for potential businesses, investors, and developers. Create easy navigation to the comprehensive plan as well as infrastructure plans and maps.	Administration	0-5 years
Action 14.2.B. Invest in strategic signage (wayfinding, interpretive, gateway) to mark Belen's attractions and community destinations.	Public Works	0-5 years
Policy 14.3. Promote commercial corridors along I-25 interchanges to diversify retail opportunities		
Action 14.3.A. As vacant properties near I-25 interchanges are developed, ensure that roadways and zoning allow for commercial opportunities along frontage roads and within ½ mile of the interchanges.	Economic Development, Planning & Zoning	0-5 years
GOAL 15. Support Belen's existing retail and service businesses.		

Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Policy 15.1. Continue to promote local purchasing through the Chamber of Commerce.		
Action 15.1.A. Support City procurement from local businesses when equivalent goods and services are available in Belen.	Economic Development	0-5 years
Action 15.1.B. Promote buy-local initiatives to make Belen residents aware of the goods and services that are available from local businesses.	Economic Development	Ongoing
Action 15.1.C. Support local growers and create spaces to access their wares and encourage growth. Assess feasibility of a community kitchen and climate-controlled vendor hall for growers and makers.	Community Services	10+ years
GOAL 16. Support a thriving downtown in the Heart of Belen.		
Policy 16.1. Continue to support the Belen MainStreet Partnership and the Belen Arts and Cultural District.		
Action 16.1.A. Support the Belen MainStreet partnership's work to complete the Creative Economy JumpStart Program through New Mexico MainStreet and become a state authorized Arts and Cultural District.	Belen MainStreet	5-10 years
Action 16.1.B. Maintain a strong local government presence in downtown by retaining City functions in the downtown area.	Belen MainStreet	5-10 years
Action 16.1.C. Create references between City website and Belen MainStreet website.	Administration; Belen MainStreet	0-5 years
PARKS & TRAILS		
GOAL 17. Provide open spaces for recreation, public appreciation, and natural resource protection.		
Policy 17.1. Adopt and implement a recreation and open space plan for the City aligned with the Comprehensive Plan and the needs of Belen residents.		
Action 17.1.A. Implement an on- and off-street bicycle plan integrated with Los Lunas 2015 Bicycle Master Plan.	Planning & Zoning	10+ years
Action 17.1.B. Work with developers of new subdivisions to include mini parks and/or neighborhood parks in new residential neighborhoods. These would be maintained by homeowner associations.	Planning & Zoning	10+ years
Action 17.1.C. Plan for larger neighborhood or community parks as new subdivisions expand. These parks would be two to five acres in size and serve approximately 1,000 people, or 300 to 400 homes.	Planning & Zoning	10+ years
Action 17.1.D. Provide for maintenance and management capacity within the City's Parks and Recreation Department as the City population grows.	Parks & Recreation	Ongoing
Action 17.1.E. Continue to collaborate with local programs to provide a variety of recreational opportunities for Belen residents.	Parks & Recreation	Ongoing

Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Action 17.1.F. Seek funding to connect the Mesa Avenue Bike Trail to downtown Belen by exploring grants and funding sources through the FHWA and NMDOT.	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Action 17.1.G. Coordinate with MRGCD to determine the feasibility of creating trails along their facilities. Connect these facilities to the Rio Grande.	Parks & Recreation; Planning & Zoning	10+ years
Policy 17.2. Develop a regional open space initiative in coordination with other regional initiatives, such as the Rio Grande Trail and El Camino Real Trail, and the Future Land Use Plan.		
Action 17.2.A. Connect with regional open space trails and facilitate designation of trail segments near Belen.	Planning & Zoning	10+ years
Action 17.2.B. Encourage cluster development in new planned unit developments and enable this development type in the City zoning code. The purpose of this development type in rural parts of Belen is to preserve open space and rural character.	Planning & Zoning	10+ years
Action 17.2.C. Explore methods to finance open space purchases and compensate landowners for open space preservation.	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Action 17.2.D. Seek voluntary conservation of agricultural and other open space through conservation easements	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Action 17.2.E. Design open spaces to be functional, appropriate, maintainable, and flexible to serve more than one purpose. More details regarding design and function would be identified in a parks, recreation, open space, and trails master plan as noted above.	Planning & Zoning	10+ years
INFRASTRUCTURE		
GOAL 18. Upgrade and maintain infrastructure to meet current demand and future development needs.		
Policy 18.1. Increase water storage and water system capacity to accommodate growth.		
Action 18.1.A. Construct Well 8 to increase capacity to 1 million gallons.	Public Works	0-5 years
Action 18.1.B. Extend a sewer line to the Belen Regional Airport.	Public Works	5-10 years
Policy 18.2. Maintain and expand the City's wastewater system to keep up with demand		
Action 18.2.A. Seek funding to plan, design, and construct a new wastewater treatment plant	Public Works	5-10 years
Action 18.2.B. Develop a master plan for the City's wastewater system to identify capacity and growth needs and guide future investments.	Public Works; Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Policy 18.3. Maintain affordable utility services for all residents		
Action 18.3.A. Partner with private utility providers to determine best ways to maintain utility facilities to keep cost low for users.	Administration	0-5 years
Action 18.3.B. Promote the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program to help residents needing assistance	Administration	0-5 years

Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Action 18.3.C. Promote the Affordable Connectivity Program to qualifying residents who need assistance in acquiring internet access.	Administration	0-5 years
Policy 18.4. Maintain affordable solid waste services for all residents		
Action 18.4.A. Consider additional curbside service days for residential trash pickup when the current contract with the City's service provider expires.	Administration, Public Works	0-5 years
Action 18.4.B. Provide curbside recycling service in Belen to reduce the quantity of trash going to the regional landfill as soon as this service is available in Valencia County. Single-stream, or zero sort, recycling is preferred.	Administration, Public Works	0-5 years
GOAL 19. Ensure adequate water supply to meet current and future demand.		
Policy 19.1. Acquire and secure water rights as needed to meet future demand.		
Action 19.1.A. Track availability of water rights in the middle Rio Grande Valley to take advantage of rights as they become available.	Public Works	Ongoing
Policy 19.2. Master plan the City's water system with water conservation in mind.		
Action 19.2.A. Develop a Water System Master Plan to identify capacity and expansion needs and guide future capital investments.	Public Works	5-10 years
Policy 19.3. Adopt and maintain a water conservation program.		
Action 19.3.A. Implement a water conservation program consistent with the City's 2022 Water Conservation Plan to track residential and business water consumption, offer conservation incentives, and establish a drought contingency plan.	Public Works; Planning & Zoning	Ongoing
Action 19.3.B. Educate water system consumers regarding water conservation best practices and fixture and appliance upgrades that can help reduce indoor and outdoor water use, such as promoting the EPA WaterSense program.	Administration	5-10 years
TRANSPORTATION		
GOAL 20. Maintain and improve surface transportation networks to meet the needs of the City now and into the future.		
Policy 20.1. Maintain existing roadways to meet desired pavement standards.		
Action 20.1.A. Establish a paving priority system to address small patches and repairs.	Public Works	0-5 years
Policy 20.2. Plan for roadway improvements to meet projected traffic needs		
Action 20.2.A. Improve North Mesa Road from I-25 to Camino del Llano as a north-south roadway that parallels I-25 and provides access to future businesses along the I-25 frontage.	Public Works	10+ years
Action 20.2.B. Extend the northern Belen I-25 interchange to the west to enable future development in the Rancho Cielo area.	Public Works	10+ years
Action 20.2.C. Expand Camino de Llano to four lanes.	Planning & Zoning	10+ years

Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Action 20.2.D. Coordinate with adjacent businesses to minimize impact of expansion.	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Action 20.2.E. Consider reconfiguring the I-25 Bypass/NM 314 interchange to maximize the development potential of land at this key intersection.	Public Works, NMDOT	10+ years
Policy 20.3. Maintain excellent regional transit and rail service for Belen residents and businesses.		
Action 20.3.A. Advocate for Rail Runner schedule changes that better serve commuters into Belen through active participation on the Rio Metro Regional Transit District Board of Directors.	Planning & Zoning	0-5 years
Action 20.3.B. Collaborate with Socorro Transit to maintain Rail Runner Express Shuttle service from Socorro to Belen.	Planning & Zoning	0-5 years
Policy 20.4. Provide EV charging stations to support new technologies		
Action 20.4.A. Identify key areas along the I-25 corridor to install EV chargers.	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Action 20.4.B. Support landowners to work with vendors and PNM to install EV chargers.	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Action 20.4.C. Seek funding for a public station from NMDOT through the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Formula Program.	Planning & Zoning	0-5 years
GOAL 21. Establish the Belen Regional Airport as the premier airport in Valencia County.		
Policy 21.1. Improve facilities to accommodate larger aircraft at Belen Regional Airport.		
Action 21.1.A. Lengthen and reinforce runways to accommodate larger cargo aircraft.	Belen Regional Airport	5-10 years
Action 21.1.B. Expand the terminal to accommodate pilot and passenger needs.	Belen Regional Airport	5-10 years
Action 21.1.C. Complete a taxiway to serve the new runway.	Belen Regional Airport	5-10 years
HAZARD MITIGATION		
GOAL 22. Maintain public safety and emergency management response capabilities within the City of Belen.		
Policy 22.1. Maintain and replace facilities for emergency response teams where needed.		
Action 22.1.A. Expand policing capabilities by replacing the City of Belen Police Station. A possible location is the current City Hall.	Belen Police Department	5-10 years
Policy 22.2. Coordinate with agencies within Valencia County to establish a flood control authority.		
Action 22.2.A. Coordinate with elected officials across Valencia County to develop a plan to create a flood authority and corresponding regional plan for flood control.	Planning & Zoning; Office of Emergency Management	5-10 years
Action 22.2.B. Identify needed flood-control infrastructure within the City of Belen.	Planning & Zoning	5-10 years
Policy 22.3. Implement recommendations identified in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.		

Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Action 22.3.A. Continue county-led home hazard assessments to allow fire departments to conduct pre-planning and improve public outreach.	Office of Emergency Management	Ongoing
Action 22.3.B. Revise the City weed ordinance to mitigate brushfire risk.	Planning & Zoning	0-5 years
Action 22.3.C. Increase education and enforcement of County and City burn ordinances.	Office of Emergency Management	0-5 years
Action 22.3.D. Establish a green waste collection site to encourage brush removal.	Community Services	0-5 years
Action 22.3.E. Focus safe recreational use in the bosque by establishing formal entrances.	Parks & Recreation	5-10 years
GOAL 23. Improve response times for emergency services.		
Policy 23.1. Improve multi-agency coordination for emergency response.		
Action 23.1.A. Create and regularly update a multi-agency agreement for weather and hazardous material spill emergency response.	Office of Emergency Management	0-5 years; Ongoing

Appendix A: Public Engagement

Two public meetings were held in addition to public hearings with the Planning and Zoning Commission and Belen City Council. These meetings were as follows:

August 23, 2022 Visioning workshop to identify what people love about Belen and what are its challenges. This meeting was advertised through flyers placed at public locations, email blasts through the Greater Belen Chamber of Commerce and the City of Belen.

Participants identified the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; aspirations for each of the plan elements; and areas of the City that are special or need attention.

The results of the general comments, SWOT analysis, and comments on each topic area are summarized on the following pages.

September 22, 2022 Workshop to review and comment on potential goals and policies. The meeting was advertised through flyers, emails to attendees of the first meeting, an email blast from the Greater Belen Chamber of Commerce, a news article about the first meeting in the *Valencia County News Bulletin*, and a display ad that ran for two weeks in the *News-Bulletin*.

Participants rotated among tables to identify specific things to be included in the plan. Topics covered include:

- Sustainability
- Parks, Open Space and Trails
- Cultural Resources
- Community Facilities
- Land Use
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Hazard Mitigation

Participants weighed in on the topics most important to them by using dot voting on the final comment posters.

A summary of the draft goals and policies, participant comments, and the results of the dot voting are shown in the meeting summary.

PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY, AUGUST 23, 2022

AGENDA



City of Belén Comprehensive Plan Town Hall

August 23, 2022

6:00-7:30 pm

1. Introductions (5 minutes)
2. Presentation-Background (10 minutes)
3. General Discussion (15 minutes)
 - What do you like best about living/working in Belén
 - What do you see as Belén's biggest challenges
4. Small Groups (45 minutes)

Fill in SWOT and Vision Boards to complete the lists for each section of the plan

 - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
 - What are the City's strengths? What are its weaknesses?
 - Where are opportunities for improvement? What might prevent the City from realizing these opportunities?
 - Community Vision Board
 - What should Belén be like in 20 years?
 - City Map
 - What should be protected
 - Where are the areas that need improvement
5. Regroup (10 minutes)

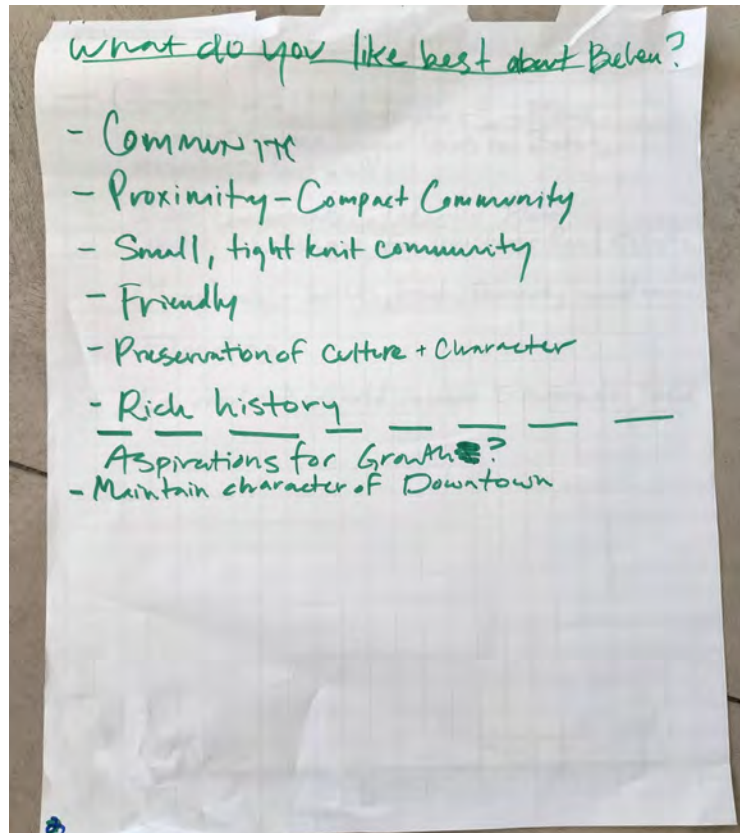
Summary of small group discussions and the top three most important ideas to include in the Comprehensive Plan.
6. Next Steps and Adjourn (5 minutes)

Thank you for participating!

GENERAL DISCUSSION

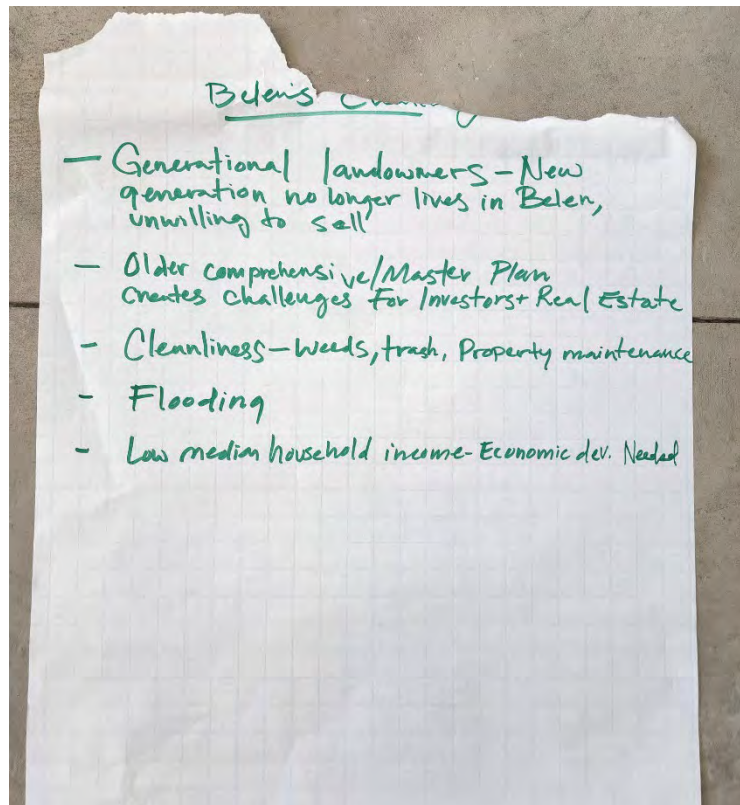
WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT BELEN?

- Community
- Proximity-compact community Small, tight knit community Friendly
- Preservation of culture & character Rich history
- Aspirations for growth
- Maintain character of downtown



BELEN'S CHALLENGES

- Generational landowners--New generation no longer lives in Belen, unwilling to sell
- Older comprehensive master plan creates challenges for investors & real estate
- Cleanliness—weeds, trash, property maintenance
- Flooding
- Low median household income—economic development needed



Strengths

City Council	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3
Downtown Belen	Locally owned businesses -CEMCO -Sanchez Fam. Biz's -Wineries-Jaramillo, Chavez -Rancheros -Sisneros	Library	Many community events with a lot of community involvement
History	Solar opportunity	History	private schools with good ratings
Family oriented, vocational, hospitable community	Strong traditions	Investment in schools	Agricultural land both in town & surrounding
Intermodal transportation-interstate, rail, and air	Soup community (soup sites)		Geographical proximity to ABQ, centrally located
Alternate transportation-commuter rail, trails, transit			Better high school grad. Rate & school ratings
			Good home school community
			Harvey House
			Good weather
			The only used book store in the county
			People willing to help each other

Weaknesses

City Council	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3
Homelessness, need for social services	Crime	Homelessness, need for social services	Infrastructure-flood control, wastewater treatment plant—very expensive needs
Lack of a Flood Control Board	Lack of cleanliness	Lack of shuttle 0 Rio Metro accessibility and visibility	Difficult to start and maintain business
Vacant property	Work force	Lack of bike trails	Lack of pride & commitment to our city to support local-attitude change
Lack of adequate hotel accommodations		Lack of landscaped medians and street trees-native/attractive vegetation	Lack of diversification in revenue streams, Walmart, school, government are main income
Lack of senior services		Need for beautification of major thoroughfares	Fear of change
		Outdoor art installations	

Opportunities

City Council	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3
Hospital	Attract high paying jobs	State police collaboration	Ability to work from home for other companies
Retail	Trade schools & certificate training	City police training/ special needs task force	Trade-based businesses would do well here
Expansion of water and energy efficient industry		Homeless/domestic violence shelters	Proximity to ABQ, freeway access
Tourism		Rio Grande Rec/Willie Chavez park	People from outside NM wanting to find other places to live--retirees
		Recreational vehicles arena/park	

Threats

City Council	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3
Flooding	Economic conditions	Economy	Recession?
	Illegal immigration	Environmental destruction	War-proximity to Kirtland
			Drought-water needs

Community Vision

- * Indicates that statement is one of top three priorities for that table.
- ** Indicates that the statement was made at multiple tables.
- Bold indicates that the idea is stated in multiple topics.

Community Character

City Council	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3
Make Belen a desirable place to live, work and play	Promote community events		Update ordinances to reflect modern planning standards**
Preserve historic properties			Facilitate a greater sense of community
Maintain a clean and beautiful city			Active volunteering
Diversify the types of development in the city			

Land Use

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4
Balanced residential and commercial growth	Allow tiny homes**	Make use of vacant land inside of town; re-hab what we have	Need a hotel
	Dynamic zoning plan	Partner with property owners to maintain prior to complete	Diversify housing (tiny homes)**
		Target historic residential homes	Better use w/infill development
		Small community gardens in neighborhoods	
		Self-sustaining—everything you need here	
		Make use of abandoned schools	

Housing

City Council	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4
	Apartments in historic Main Street District	Trailer park/ affordable housing*	Rentals that are affordable and maintained	Better housing*
	Housing in original Belen area (away from airport)	Tiny home community**	Instilling downtown with tiny homes where lots are very thin**	Affordable housing - Tiny homes** - Mobile homes* - Low-income apartments*
	Housing*	City offer financial assistance for mobile homes	Mixed-use housing**	
		Low-income apartments*		

Local Economy

City Council	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4
Create an Economic Development Plan	Hotels	Indoor vendor hall/ farmers market	Expand manufacturing/ trade – work with schools*	Attract high paying jobs
Develop a city brand/identity	B&Bs	Interactive children’s museum	Rehab existing facilities	Expand manufacturing & trades, trade jobs*
Expand retail businesses	Mixed-use buildings (residential over retail)**	Theater/performing arts space	Encourage entire partnership	
			Shared office space – co-working space	

Community Facilities

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4
	Public gathering spaces/special event	Maintained	
	Arcade	Rec center in town	

Parks, Open Space and Trails

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4
	Tree-lines streets	Better playground equipment	Family recreation—ATV, ORV
	ORV arena (4-wheeler/ATV, etc.)	Hiking trails	Bike trails*
	South Belen park/open space	Bike trails*	Vivian Fields Regional Park
	Bike trails/network*	Look at private partnerships	
	Environmental education opportunities	Safe parks—usable parks	
		Dog parks—10 th and Ross	
		Develop green space/park by river on west side	
		Shade at parks—over plan areas/parents	

Infrastructure

City Council	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4
Maintain adequate infrastructure		Plants as flood control*	Wastewater treatment plant*	"Green" Belen/Sustainable infrastructure
Address flooding*		Native landscaping throughout city instead of xeriscaping	Future planning and maintenance schedule	Wastewater treatment plant*
		Renewable energy solar/wind/charging ports	Data-infrastructure-fiber	Greater sustainability - Energy - Native planting - Public transport*
		New building sustainably made		

Transportation

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4
Public transportation*	Bikeways**	Upgrade roads	Public transportation*
Buses (on-call)	Trolley	Sidewalks	
Designated bike lanes	A walkable city	Charging stations for electric vehicles	

Public Safety/Hazard Mitigation

City Council	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4
Provide adequate public safety	Increase police force*	Officers on bicycles/ horses	More police officers*	
Improve social services		Reinken/Main pedestrian crossing	Higher pay adequate equipment	
		Traffic circles	Substations for police	
			Better code enforcement	

Community Vision Boards

Community Vision What should Belén be like in 20 years?	
Community Character <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make Belén a desirable place to live, work and play Preserve historic properties Maintain a clean and beautiful city Diversify the types of development in the City 	Community Facilities (community buildings) Public gathering spaces / special event Arcade
Land Use (Zoning, Future growth, Where?) Allow tiny homes Dynamic zoning plan	Parks, Open Space and Trails Tree-lined streets Art areas (walkways etc...) Small open green/open space Bike ways/paths Environmental education opportunities
Housing (What housing types are needed? Where?) Trailer park / affordable housing Tiny home community City offer financial assistance for mobile homes Low-income apartments	Infrastructure (Utilities, Drainage, Solid Waste) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain adequate infrastructure Address flooding - plants as flood control Native landscaping throughout city instead of xeriscaping Renewable energy solar/wind/charging ports New building sustainability mabe
Local Economy (What types of businesses are needed?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an Economic Development Plan Develop a city brand/identity Expand retail businesses Indoor vendor hall / farmers market Interactive children's museum Theater / Performing arts space 	Transportation (Roads, Bikeways, Sidewalks, Train, Airport) Trolley A walkable city
	Public Safety/ Hazard Mitigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide adequate public safety Improve social services Officers on bicycles/horses Greenhouse/Main pedestrian crossing Traffic circles

Community Vision What should Belén be like in 20 years?	
Community Character <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make Belén a desirable place to live, work and play Preserve historic properties Maintain a clean and beautiful city Diversify the types of development in the City Promote community events 	Community Facilities (community buildings)
Land Use (Zoning, Future growth, Where?) BALANCED RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL GROWTH	Parks, Open Space and Trails
Housing (What housing types are needed? Where?) APTS IN HISTORIC MAIN STREET DISTRICT (ADJACENT TO RIVER) HOUSING IN ORIGINAL BELÉN AREA (AWAY FROM AVENUE) HOUSING	Infrastructure (Utilities, Drainage, Solid Waste) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain adequate infrastructure Address flooding
Local Economy (What types of businesses are needed?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an Economic Development Plan Develop a city brand/identity Expand retail businesses HOSTELS B&B'S MIXED USE BLUES (RESID, COMM, RETAIL) 	Transportation (Roads, Bikeways, Sidewalks, Train, Airport) BUSES Bikes (on call) DESIGNATED BIKE LANE
	Public Safety/ Hazard Mitigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide adequate public safety Improve social services INCREASE POLICE PRESENCE

Community Vision

What should Belén be like in 20 years?

Community Character

- Make Belén a desirable place to live, work and play
- Preserve historic properties
- Maintain a clean and beautiful city
- Diversify the types of development in the City

1. Higher density, to create vibrant places to live
** No industrial zone, only if essential*
** No big industrial zone*

Land Use (Zoning, Future growth, Where?)

What type of growth would you like to see? What type of zoning?
• Making sure zoning is not too restrictive to encourage growth
• Encourage higher density, especially in the center
• Some commercial zones, especially in the center
• Encourage for residential (medium density)
• Some industrial, if you have to
• Make use of abandoned schools

Housing (What housing types are needed? Where?)

• Higher density, especially in the center
• More affordable housing
• Encourage for higher density, especially in the center

Local Economy (What types of businesses are needed?)

- Create an Economic Development Plan
- Develop a city brand/identity
- Expand retail businesses

** Encourage for higher density, especially in the center*
** Encourage for higher density, especially in the center*
** Encourage for higher density, especially in the center*

Community Facilities (community buildings)

• Higher density, especially in the center
• Encourage for higher density, especially in the center

Parks, Open Space and Trails

• Higher density, especially in the center
• Encourage for higher density, especially in the center

Infrastructure (Utilities, Drainage, Solid Waste)

- Maintain adequate infrastructure
- Address flooding

• Higher density, especially in the center
• Encourage for higher density, especially in the center

Transportation (Roads, Bikeways, Sidewalks, Train, Airport)

• Higher density, especially in the center
• Encourage for higher density, especially in the center

Public Safety/ Hazard Mitigation

- Provide adequate public safety
- Improve social services

• Higher density, especially in the center
• Encourage for higher density, especially in the center

Community Vision

What should Belén be like in 20 years?

Community Character

- Make Belén a desirable place to live, work and play
- Preserve historic properties
- Maintain a clean and beautiful city
- Diversify the types of development in the City

Land Use (Zoning, Future growth, Where?)

- Need a hotel
- Diversity housing (tiny houses)
- Better use of industrial development

Housing (What housing types are needed? Where?)

Better housing

• Higher density, especially in the center
• Encourage for higher density, especially in the center

Local Economy (What types of businesses are needed?)

- Create an Economic Development Plan
- Develop a city brand/identity
- Expand retail businesses

- Expand manufacturing + trades, trade jobs

Community Facilities (community buildings)

Parks, Open Space and Trails

Family recreation - ART, ONI
- Bike trails

Infrastructure (Utilities, Drainage, Solid Waste)

- Maintain adequate infrastructure
- Address flooding

- Green Belén - Sustainable infrastructure
- Wastewater treatment plant

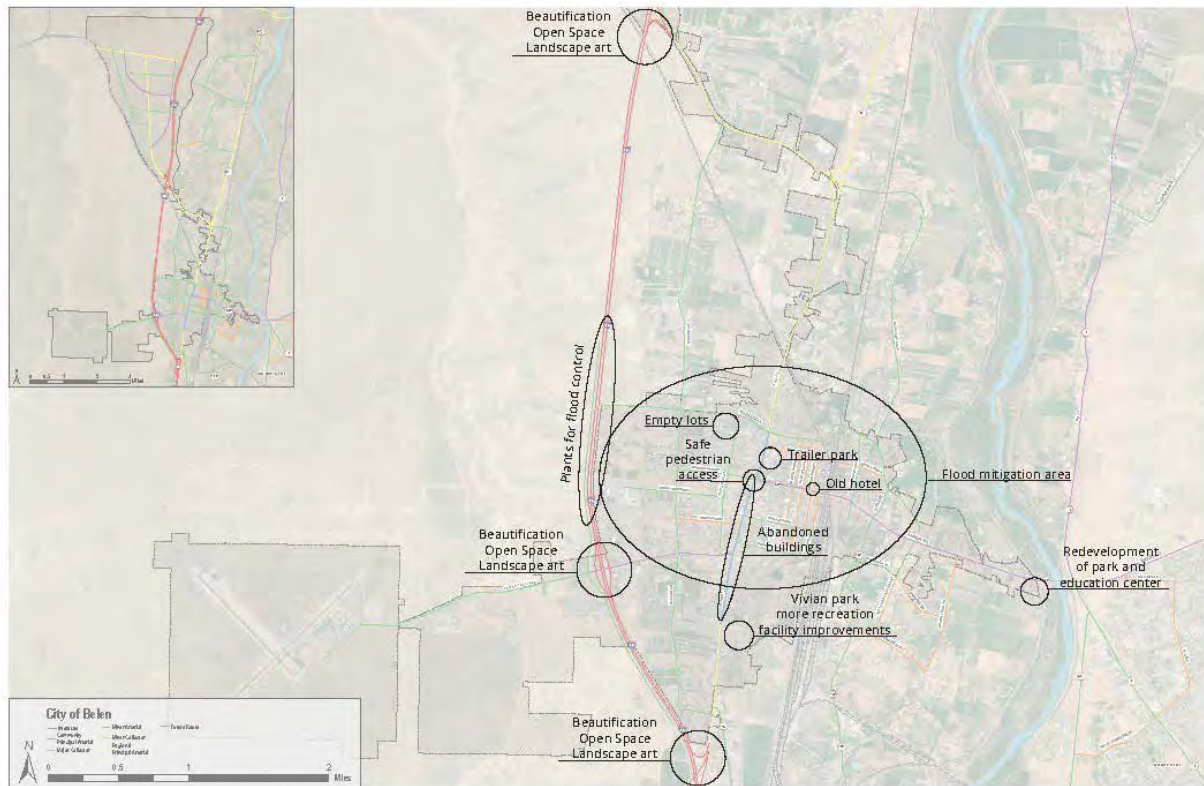
Transportation (Roads, Bikeways, Sidewalks, Train, Airport)

- Public Transportation

Public Safety/ Hazard Mitigation

- Provide adequate public safety
- Improve social services

Areas Needing Protection of Improvement



Public Meeting Summary, September 22, 2022

Agenda



City of Belén Comprehensive Plan Workshop

September 22, 2022

6:00-7:30 pm

Agenda

1. Introductions (5 minutes)
2. Presentation - Recommendations Overview, Meeting Format and Next Steps (15 minutes)
3. Review Goals and Policies Boards (5 minutes)
4. Small Groups by Topic Area (Three opportunities, 15 minutes each, 45 minutes total)
 - Discuss Goals, Policies and Actions—write on or add post-it note to the board, write on comment sheets, and leave comments on the table
 - What is missing that should be added?
 - What should be deleted and why?
 - What should be modified or clarified?
5. Review Results and Final Comments (15 minutes)
 - Which of the goals and policies on the boards are most important to you? Use stickers to vote.
6. Adjourn (5 minutes)

If you need more time to review information packets and provide comments, please submit via email to dwilson@sites-sw.com or in person to City Hall by September 30.

Thank you for participating!

Goals and Policy Boards Results

Sustainability

Goal 1. Establish the City of Belen as a leader in the region's transition to renewable energy resources.

Policy 1.1. Expand opportunities for development of industrial, commercial and community scale solar projects in appropriate locations.

Policy 1.2. Support the implementation of renewable technologies in the City of Belen.

- * Wind farms only on West Mesa. Very little wind in Valley Bosque.
- WIND
- New gas stations/hotels /restaurants should have EV stations
- Incentivize “backward development of EV stations” and connect facilities i.e. Loves, Circle K, Wal Mart, etc.
- Need solar knowledge outreach and simple install like for a single water pump (well)

Goal 2. Balance protection and conservation of Belen's natural resources with growth opportunities for future generations.

Policy 2.1. Encourage *conservation of water by businesses and residents.

- Follow water conservation plan

Policy 2.2. Protect the Rio Grande and bosque through the Belen area.

COMMENTS:

- Conservation of water → planting rain gardens for flood control, installing rain barrels and cisterns, landscaping with native and ecologically-important plants, grey water recycling

Parks, Open Space and Trails

Goal 17. Provide open spaces for recreation, public appreciation, and natural resource protection.

Policy 17.1. Adopt and implement a recreation and open space plan for the City aligned with the Comprehensive Plan and the needs of Belen residents.

- Revitalize 10th & Ross Park, dog park

Policy 17.2. Develop a regional open space initiative in coordination with other regional initiatives, such as the Rio Grande Trail and El Camino Real Trail, and the Future Land Use Plan.

- ATC trails and park on Bluff Foothills 00Excellent terrain
- ** Riverwalk—along river
- * Develop bike trails on ditch banks in coordination with MRGCD

Cultural Resources

Goal 3. Protect and enhance Belen's cultural amenities.

Policy 3.1. ~~Encourage appropriate and diverse uses of~~ **[preserve]** historic buildings and spaces.

- ****** Pay more attention to surrounding agricultural communities and agricultural history of Belen
- ***** Restore Belen land grant status
- ***** Signage/plaques that inform the public about Belen's history, heritage, and culture

Goal 4. Create opportunities for all Belen's residents to engage in cultural and artistic programming.

Policy 4.1. **Support and market local history and arts education.**

- Support arts and cultural district—designate
- Connect tourism with history and culture of Belen
- Something/encourage youth programs

COMMENTS:

- Offer youth programs: sports, arts, computer tech, science, literature
- Preserve agricultural heritage and present skill → Intergenerational knowledge-sharing/traditional skills
- Don't want these skills to die with the older generation
- Wildlife conservation areas host some learning sessions similar to this; could be an opportunity to collaborate or expand offerings

Community Facilities

Goal 5. Manage and maintain sustainable community facilities that improve the quality of life for Belen's residents.

Policy 6.1. ~~Continue to~~ **[Improve and]** maintain existing City-owned buildings.

Policy 5.2. ****** ~~Take advantage of~~ **[Improve]** opportunities for shared community facilities among public agencies in Belen.

Policy 5.3. ~~Expand facilities and~~ **[Quality]** services for residents across the life spectrum.

Policy 5.4. ~~Ensure~~ **[Encourage]** community facilities are updated and improved to continue to serve shifting community needs.

Good

- Jaramillo school to be historical/museum
- Archery park from Dept. of Forestry
- Pursue grants for community facilities

Goal 6. Sustain programming and educational opportunities for residents of all ages through Belen's facilities.

Policy 6.1. ****** Encourage cooperation between City, regional agencies and Belen Consolidated Schools for ***community events and programming.**

Good

- Central location archives on Belen culture and history—Harvey House—support library and fund new uses for library facilities
- ** Support library and find new uses for library facilities
- Parents to bring back disciplining their children
- Electronic billboard for current and upcoming events!!
- UNM will provide Chicano studies and Land Management and Treaty classes—contact Irene Vasquez

Goal 7. Provide adequate facilities for the safety and welfare of all Belen residents.

Policy 7.1. Improve the City's ISO rating for fire protection.

- What's the target ISO—Target is 2

Policy 7.2. Maintain adequate facilities and equipment for the City's police department.

- Most standards set by State police
- * ADA compliant rehab of current facilities
- No homeless or addiction services
- Mental health resources

COMMENTS:

- Mental health resources

Land Use

Goal 8. Preserve and enhance the unique character and historical culture of Belen.

Policy 8.1. ** Protect established residential neighborhoods.

Policy 8.2. ** Incentivize revitalization and preservation of historic structures.

Policy 8.3. * Continue to develop and improve buildings in the Arts & Cultural District to accommodate the local arts community.

Policy 8.4. ** Use zoning and other regulations to maintain historical and cultural elements.

- Establish a “motif” or “motifs” Spanish colonial or territorial for Becker St, Reinken, also Main St
- *** Restore surrounding rural area to land grant status
- Encourage a self-sustainable community by encouraging and supporting local agriculture and farmers markets
- Where? Throughout Belen and surrounding ag. land

Goal 9. Use long-range planning and land use management techniques to promote a desirable mix of land uses and densities in future development.

Policy 9.1. * Allow flexibility for mixed-use zoning and encourage mixed-use development areas in the commercial corridors identified in the future land use plan.**

Policy 9.2. ** Promote growth and development patterns that are balanced, resource-efficient, and economically resilient.

- Require approved signatures by informed residents
- Preserve our agricultural small farming start a paid student/youth internships for farming and implementing repairs
- City make a resolution against any/all fracking

Goal 10. Maintain a clean and scenic community.

Policy 10.1. ** Maintain appearance, comfort, and safety of visible and visited areas.**

Policy 10.2. * Encourage the restoration or rebuilding of abandoned buildings.**

- Plant trees for appearance, comfort, and safety!!
- Have an adobe specialist on call—encourage youth internships

Goal 11. Concentrate commercial development in specified corridors and centers.

Policy 11.1. * Encourage commercial and/or industrial activities in Centers and Corridors as shown on the Future Land Use Map.**

Policy 11.2. ** Encourage infill development.

Policy 11.3. * Encourage businesses in focused areas to prevent overbuilding.

- ** Zone for warehousing around airport “Air Hub City”
- Use warehousing facilities like ALW building???

COMMENTS:

- Focus on areas other than Becker Ave!
- Protect all historic neighborhoods
- Educate the public about where the Belen Main Street district actually is; not just Becker Ave.
- Plant trees everywhere to cool the city

Housing

Goal 12. Ensure that Belen’s housing meets the needs of the community now and in the future.

Policy 12.1. ~~Remove barriers to desired housing options.~~ [change to “Remove barriers to housing”]

- ** City Council subcommittee to investigate “barriers” in city ordinances

Policy 12.2. ~~Promote~~ future housing growth in Belen. [Change “promote” to “Ensure”]

- ***** Diverse housing types—small housing subdivisions for 1st time home buyers (\$50,000-\$100,000)
- Affordable housing
- More motels/hotels (kind of housing?)

Goal 13. Support residents in maintaining and upgrading their homes to be resilient, cost-effective, and resource efficient.

Policy 13.1. **Help** residents rehabilitate and improve their properties.

- ******By reducing harmful regulations
- Offer tax credits for improvements

Policy 13.2 *** Support renovation and energy efficiency upgrades to existing homes.**

- We need an information outreach program to inform and help us with programs like solar agri grants etc. available

COMMENTS:

- Subsidize energy efficiency upgrades to existing homes; offer tax incentives for new homes with energy efficient construction

Economic Development

Goal 14. **Attract new economic base businesses that offer wages higher than the County average wage.**

Policy 14.1. *** Promote** Belen as a prime location for new manufacturing businesses in existing industrial parks.

- ***** Designate industrial “zone” as “economic develop zone” that have flexible rules/taxes that support development
- ***** Must have vacant land
- Infrastructure
- ***** Must have locations near I-25 interchanges

Goal 15. **Support Belen’s existing retail and service businesses.**

Policy 15.1. **Continue to promote local purchasing through the Chamber of Commerce.**

- Streetscapes that promote neighborhoods and commercial environments
- ***** Street landscaped medians that encourage people
- People who are affordable in an environment will want to shop and stay

Goal 16. **Support a thriving downtown in the Heart of Belen.**

Policy 17.1. *** Continue to support the Belen MainStreet Partnership and the Belen Arts and Cultural District.**

COMMENTS:

- Indoor climate-controlled vendor hall for famers’ market and makers’ market
- Community kitchen for safe preservation of locally grown food

Infrastructure

Goal 18. **Upgrade and maintain infrastructure to meet current demand and future development needs.**

Policy 18.1. *** Increase water storage and water system capacity to accommodate growth.**

Policy 18.2. *** Maintain and expand the City's wastewater system to keep up with demand**

- * Annexation plan (currently a patchwork city)
- ADA compliance throughout current infrastructure (sidewalks and crosswalks)

Goal 19. Ensure adequate water supply to meet current and future demand.

Policy 19.1 ** Acquire and secure water rights as needed to meet future demand.

Policy 19.2 *** Master plan the City's water system with water conservation in mind.**

Policy 19.3 ** Adopt and maintain a water conservation program.**

- Water rights remain with Belen municipality
- Make sure citizens won't run out of water
- Water use + preservation of aquifers for citizens
- Make a plan for Belen's water to avoid a situation like Las Vegas, NM is currently facing. How do we ensure we will have water in the face of disaster?

Transportation

Goal 20. Maintain and improve surface transportation networks to meet the needs of the City now and into the future.

Policy 20.1. * Maintain existing roadways to meet desired pavement standards.

Policy 20.2. * Plan for roadway improvements to meet projected traffic needs.

- Frontage Road along I-25 south exit to north exit
- ** Plan for parallel road to I-25 linking Hwy 6 to I-25 S. Belen exit

Policy 20.3. Maintain excellent regional transit and rail service for Belen residents and businesses.

- Agree with transportation plan
- EV Plan Goal 1.2 needs to be tied in to transportation plan

Goal 21. * Establish the Belen Regional Airport as the premier airport in Valencia County.

Policy 21.1. ** Improve facilities to accommodate larger aircraft at Belen Regional Airport.

COMMENTS:

- For Camino de Llano expansion, consider the needs of the businesses in the area that would be affected

Hazard Mitigation

Goal 22. Maintain public safety and emergency management response capabilities within the City of Belen.

Policy 22.1. *** Maintain and replace facilities for emergency response teams where needed.**

- (is this a repeat question)

Policy 22.2. *** Coordinate with agencies within Valencia County to establish a flood control authority.**

- Who will pay
- Who will administer
- Is it needed
- Prevent Bosque fire destruction by allowing livestock grazing to clean ground fuel (leaves, branches, fallen trees). This idea has been produced repeatedly but too many people are making Big Money fighting fires!
- * Can we divert flood water at the north end of town?

Goal 23. Improve response times for emergency services

Policy 23.1. ** Improve multi-agency coordination for emergency response.

- Establish time limits for quality service if time limits are not met then police, fire, emergency services will receive a lot rating which should affect discretionary funding
- Several homes are having sinking—possibly related to sewer work—maybe other stuff

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Appendix B: Funding Sources

State Capital Outlay

Capital Outlay are general funds allocated through state legislature to be used for acquisition, improvement, alteration, or reconstruction of long-term assets in New Mexico. Typically, projects funded through capital outlay are planning, design, construction, furnishing, and purchasing equipment. Funding request size varies from small to large projects. Acquired funds must be spent within the fiscal year and can apply to be reactivated through the state legislature.

In years when there is surplus funding available, supplemental appropriations (junior bill funding) may be available for projects not otherwise funded through capital outlay.

New Mexico Finance Authority

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Community Development Block Grants support development of community facilities through infrastructure improvements, economic development projects, public facilities, community centers, housing rehabilitation, public services, and more. Projects must benefit at least 51% of low- to moderate-income residents. Maximum awards for funding are \$50,000 planning grants and \$750,000 infrastructure grants.

Public Project Revolving Fund (PPRF)

New Mexico Finance Authority (NMFA) provides local entities access to at-market or below-market interest rates. PPRF funds infrastructure improvements, road projects, water system upgrades, fire and law enforcement equipment, public buildings, hospitals and healthcare facilities, electric and broadband utilities, quality of life projects, and more. Loans are for up to 30 years based on the project's useful life.

Local Government Planning Fund

NMFA administers up-front capital necessary for the property planning of water and wastewater projects. Eligible projects include master plans, conservation plans, economic development plans, infrastructure plans and energy efficiency audits.

New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority

Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)

Low-income housing tax credits provide tax credits through the New Mexico Finance Authority for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of rental housing units for low-income households. Projects are typically a collaboration of a national or regional developer with experience in this type of financing and a local entity, often a local non-profit housing provider. Several firms in this region build and manage tax credit projects. Municipalities play a role in bringing these entities together to develop a project and can provide incentives such as land, infrastructure improvements and fee waivers.

New Mexico Department of Transportation

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

TAP is a Federal reimbursable program that funds pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements. Funds are allocated to NMDOT through the FHWA. Projects must be included in the City's ICIP and regional transportation plans to solicit TAP funding. Projects must have a 14.95% non-federal match.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program are flexible funds allocated through NMDOT to transportation projects and programs that help meet requirements for the Clean Air Act. Projects which help mitigate congestion and improve air quality like public transportation improvements, public EV charging stations, bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, and more. Funding is available every two years and applications are accepted through MRCOG.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

RTP is a Federal reimbursable program that funds recreational infrastructure including trails, bike paths, and trail supporting infrastructure. Funds are allocated to NMDOT through the FHWA.

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New Mexico Economic Development Department

New Mexico MainStreet (NMMS)

NMMS provides services to network members, including the Belen MainStreet Partnership, through technical assistance relevant to the Main Street Four-Point Approach® and other commercial district economic growth, revitalization, and management topics. In addition to technical assistance and training, NMMS has funded capital improvements through its Great Blocks on MainStreet program and Historic Theaters Initiative. A portion of Becker Avenue was improved through the Great Blocks program in a partnership between Belen MainStreet and the City of Belen.

Local Economic Development Act

Under the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) (5-10-1 to 5-10-13 NMSA 1978) the New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD) is granted authority to administer grants to Local Governments (Municipality and/or County); to assist expanding or relocating businesses that are Qualified Entities that will stimulate economic development and produce public benefits pursuant to LEDA. All grants are funded on a strictly reimbursement basis.

NMEDD targets economic development projects that comply with all legal facets of LEDA. Additional consideration is given to project that demonstrate:

- Significant Community Impact and Support;
- Rural and Underserved Areas of New Mexico;
- Increased Wages and Job Creation;
- Significant New Capital Investment; and
- Environmentally Sustainable Outcomes.

Outdoor Recreation Division (ORD)

ORD champions sustainable outdoor recreation and increasing access to it for all New Mexicans, especially those who have been excluded from traditional outdoor recreation. The Outdoor Recreation Division funds projects that achieve positive, measurable impacts within economic development, conservation, education, and public health.

Outdoor Equity Fund

Outdoor Equity Fund grants support transformative outdoor experiences that foster stewardship and respect for New Mexico's lands, waters, and cultural heritage. Grants are targeted to organizations that create equitable access to the outdoors for youth who have not had the chance to experience New Mexico's Outdoors. Past grant recipients have included nonprofit organizations, schools, tribes, and local governments.

Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grants

This grant invests in conservation-minded shovel-ready projects that are open to the public, increase access to outdoor opportunities, and demonstrate a clear economic benefit to the community through improved quality of life, better public health outcomes, and/or increased tourism. Funds are awarded in full at the beginning of the project. Projects must be completed within 24 months, with progress reports halfway through and at project completion. A 50% match is required of rural applicants.

New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1965 established a federal reimbursement program for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas. In New Mexico, the program is administered by the EMNRD State Parks Division on behalf of the National Park Service (NPS). State Parks Division holds an open grant round for local assistance grants annually as funding is received by the state.

Priority projects for the LWCF grant program include:

- Assistance for projects that increase access for minority, elderly, disabled and other disadvantaged or underserved populations.
- Outdoor recreation projects of Federally recognized Tribes and other Indigenous communities.
- Conservation projects that benefit fish and wildlife.
- Projects that enhance habitat connectivity to improve climate change resilience as well as outdoor recreation.
- Recreational trails, supporting existing national historic trails, national scenic trails, and national wild and scenic rivers projects.