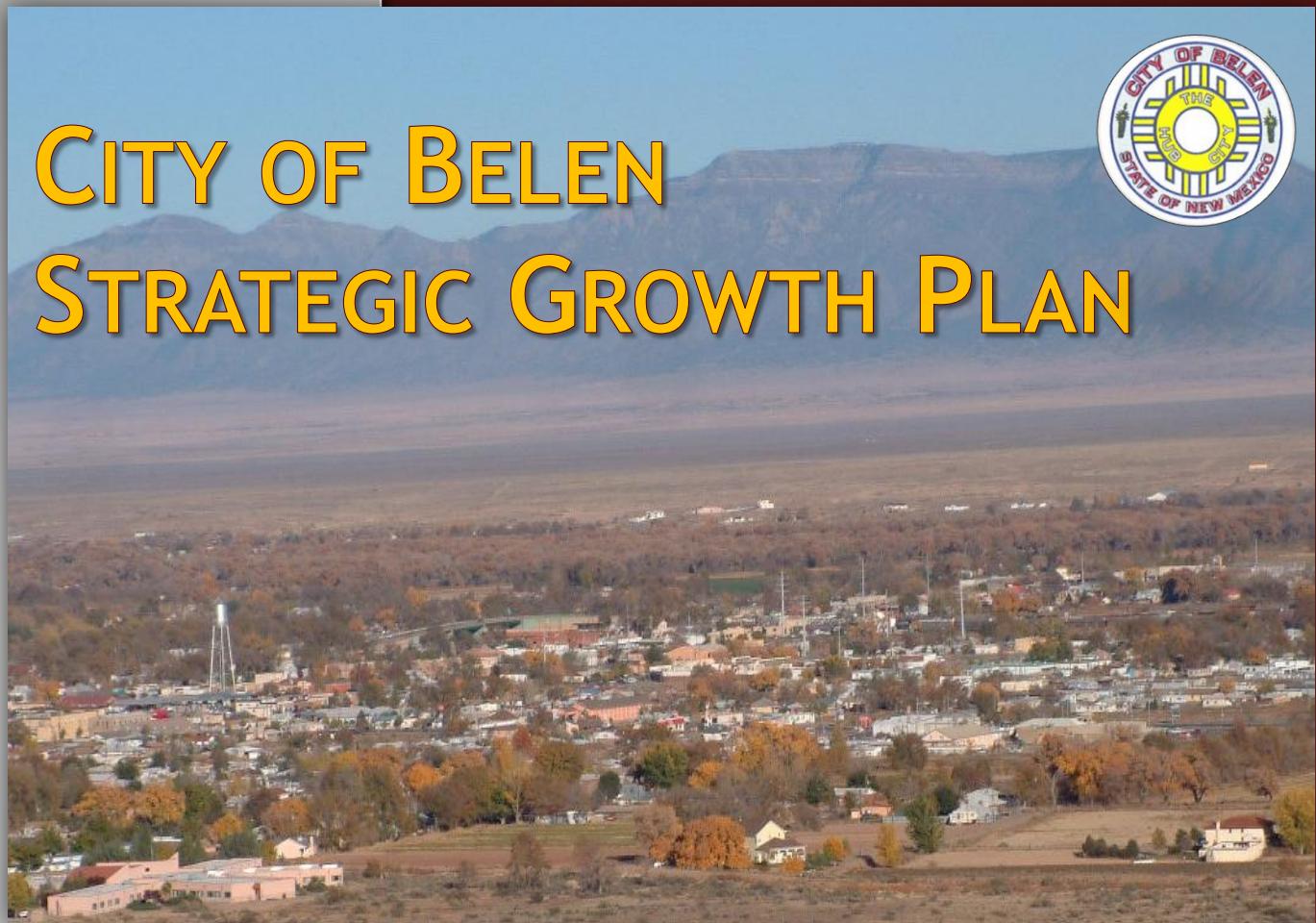




# CITY OF BELEN STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN



Adopted  
February 8, 2010  
*Resolution 2010-01*



*Prepared by the Mid-Region Council of Governments*

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**STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN**  
for the  
**CITY OF BELEN, NEW MEXICO**

**Adopted by the City Council**  
**February 8, 2010**  
*Resolution 2010-01*

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## PART I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Overview of Strategic Growth Plan

This Strategic Growth Plan activates key recommendations from the Belen Comprehensive Land Use Plan intended to stimulate development in targeted community growth areas. The Comprehensive Plan advocates a more distinctive pattern of development consisting of linked activity centers with special characteristics that attract new enterprise and revitalize existing development.

A strategic planning process was used to characterize specific activity centers and to determine relevant goals and objectives that are short-range and action oriented. Goal-based strategies are recommended in this Strategic Growth Plan to carry out various actions over the next decade.

While the Belen Comprehensive Plan addresses future development on a long-term basis (20 years or more), the Strategic Growth Plan focuses on specific actions that can be completed in ten years or less. The strategies that are presented in this Strategic Growth Plan are the product of a long process of meetings, workshops and hearings where ideas were exchanged and consensus was developed about the unique "character" and functions of activity centers in Belen.

#### Public Involvement Process

A Belen Planning Steering Committee was created to oversee the strategic planning process and to perform as the advisory group for the Strategic Growth Plan. This Committee served a dual purpose in that it also provided local input to the planning study for the Belen Rail Runner Station Area, which was done concurrently and in coordination with the development of the Strategic Growth Plan. In fact, the findings and recommendations of the Station Area Study have been incorporated into the Strategic Growth Plan.

*The City of Belen Strategic Growth Plan looks at development on a short-term basis, typically ten years or less.*

The public input process involved open hearings and workshops. These public hearings and workshops were advertised through the local newspaper; and in some cases, information was placed on the City's website. Copies of the presentations, working drafts, and maps pertaining to the Strategic Growth Plan as well as the Rail Runner Station Area Study were also made available to the public for comment.

The initial start-up meeting of the Steering Committee was conducted on September 11, 2008, at the Belen Public Library to present an overview of the upcoming planning process for the Strategic Growth Plan and the Station

Area Study. At a follow-up meeting, the Steering Committee met on September 29, 2008, to validate the focus of the Strategic Growth Plan to the five activity centers and network of travel and business corridors that were initially recommended in the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Belen.

In coordination with the consultant working on the Station Area Plan, the staff of the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) facilitated a workshop with the Steering Committee at a public workshop on November 19, 2008, at the Belen Public Library. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss planning concepts for the area within a one-half mile radius of the Rail Runner Station, which included a significant portion of the Belen Downtown core area located west of the railroad tracks.

The Belen Planning Steering Committee held a public workshop on April 1, 2009, to present and discuss possible Goals and Objectives pertaining to the five Belen Activity Centers. Eleven proposed goal statements with 36 objectives were drafted for further review and comment. The workshop also included a review of the draft findings and conclusions of the Station Area Study. Development and design concepts for the area around the Rail Runner station were discussed by the workshop participants.

A public Open House was conducted on April 22, 2009, at the Belen Public Library. Written goals and objectives specific to the five Belen activity centers were presented at the Open House. The preliminary draft of the Rail Runner Station Area Study was also presented for public comment.

*Public meetings and workshops were conducted at the Belen Public Library and at the City Hall.*

Following the public Open House, proposed Goals and Objectives were presented to the Belen Planning and Zoning Commission on April 27, 2009, for their review and comment. MRCOG staff held two special meetings with Belen City staff on April 30 and May 4, 2009, to discuss the Rail Runner Station Area Study and the Strategic Growth Plan Activity Center goals and objectives. A final version of the Goals and Objectives was considered and adopted by the City Council on May 4, 2009. A separate resolution to accept the Station Area Study was also adopted by the City Council at that meeting.

A second workshop for participation by the Belen Planning Steering Committee was conducted by the MRCOG staff on May 28, 2009, to review draft strategy recommendations for the Belen Activity Centers. Strategies were based on the approved Goals and Objectives adopted by the City Council. The MRCOG staff also met with the Airport Commission on that date to discuss strategies for the Belen Airport Activity Center.

On September 15, 2009, a third workshop was held with the Belen Steering Committee to discuss population and employment projections. The Steering Committee developed assumptions for each activity center on probable growth to the year 2020. The methodology that was used by the MRCOG staff to calculate the growth

*The Belen Strategic Plan and the Rail Runner Station Area Plan emphasizes the importance of incorporating historical and cultural elements in new development near the Rail Runner Station.*

forecasts for each activity center is explained in detail in Appendix B.

A design workshop on September 23, 2009, was led by a team of MRCOG staff and design professionals who worked with invited stakeholders and members of the Steering Committee to evaluate alternatives for public spaces and projects located in the area around the Rail Runner Station. This workshop provided relevant information for the Belen Center (downtown) strategies. A public hearing was also held later that evening (September 23) to present and solicit comments on the final draft of action strategies for development of the Belen Activity Centers.



*Design Workshop*

At the same time that the meetings, workshops and hearings were taking place concerning the Belen Activity Centers, the newly appointed Belen Historic Properties Review Board

(HPRB) was meeting on a regular basis beginning on November 18, 2008. The HPRB generally meets on a monthly schedule and conducts advertised public meetings at the Belen City Hall.



*Becker Avenue*

The primary role of the HPRB is to develop and carry out a local process for designating historic landmarks and establishing one or more historic districts within the City of Belen. The HPRB is a five-member Board comprised of Belen residents who are knowledgeable about the history of Belen. The work of the HPRB is discussed in more detail in Part IV of this Strategic Growth Plan.



*Historic Harvey House in Belen*

The Strategic Growth Plan was adopted by resolution on February 8, 2010, by the Belen City Council. A copy of the resolution is provided in Appendix I.

## PART II

### BELEN ACTIVITY CENTERS

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan adopted by the Belen City Council in 2003 recommends an urban growth concept based on key travel corridors linking major activity centers for future citywide growth. This form of land use distribution promotes multiple centers of more concentrated development or special-purpose areas with a high level of access and connectivity. This Strategic Growth Plan presents a variety of recommendations for managing and promoting development within the five activity centers originally proposed in the Comprehensive Plan. The Belen Activity Centers are shown on Figure 1 superimposed on an aerial photo of the Belen area. Aerial photos used to delineate each Activity Center are also provided in Appendix A.

*The five activity centers are unique in terms of location, function, and potential for attracting future growth.*

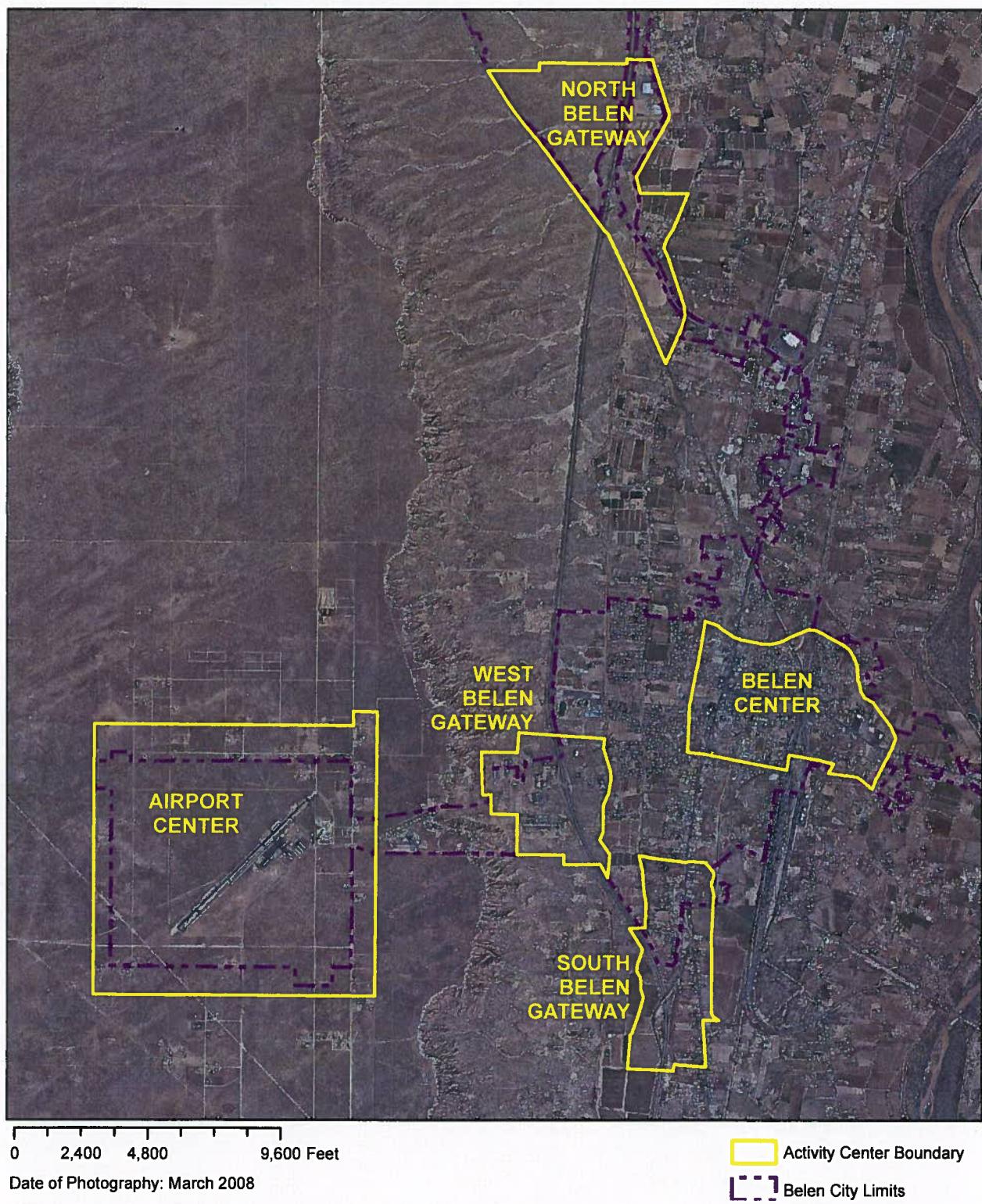
By promoting a distinctive character of development within each activity center, the City can plan for concentrated or specialized types of future growth in areas where transportation and utility systems operate with greater efficiency. Additionally, activity center development should be designed to accommodate more pedestrian-friendly spaces; and should ultimately reduce vehicle miles of travel within the City. The traditional neighborhoods adjacent to activity centers can be maintained and protected by applying land use controls in transitional areas at the fringes of activity centers. New development can be attracted to activity centers by using tax incentives, regulatory relief, and public works projects.

Some of the characteristics of activity centers include visual diversity and mixed land uses, special density and size allowances for buildings and structures, greater efficiency of infrastructure, public transit systems, and multiple use streets and pedestrian areas. Activity centers often function as destination points or gathering places of local and regional significance.

The five activity centers designated by the City of Belen are all unique in terms of location, function, and potential for future growth. These activity centers (discussed in detail later) are briefly described as follows:

- **Belen Center** – the current “downtown” area of the City. This area functions as Belen’s central business district, and includes the City Hall as well as other public facilities and the commuter rail station.
- **North Belen Gateway** – a key entry point into Belen from the Albuquerque metropolitan area. This area is also a major access into the Rancho Cielo master planned community.
- **West Belen Gateway** – the primary access from the Interstate Freeway to the Airport and West Mesa development, and the most direct entrance into the downtown area.
- **South Belen Gateway** – the southernmost entrance into Belen from the Interstate Freeway and the rural areas south of Belen.
- **Airport Center** – the area immediately surrounding Belen’s Alexander Municipal Airport. This is a special activity center for airport-related development.

**Figure 1**  
**Belen Activity Centers Map**



## Belen Center

**Characteristics.** This activity center contains the central business district for the City of Belen. In addition to the concentration of retail and commercial businesses and office buildings, there are established residential neighborhoods scattered throughout the downtown area. Locally regarded as the “downtown” of Belen, this activity center functions as the civic focal point of the community, containing Belen City Hall, the Belen Public Library, the Belen Public School District administrative offices, and the central offices of the police and fire departments.



*Belen City Hall*

The Belen Center covers more than 680 acres, and includes the historic railroad depot (the Harvey House) as well as the New Mexico Rail Runner Express passenger station, which opened in 2008. Major business corridors in this activity center include Main Street, Reinken Avenue, and Becker Avenue. The blocks along Becker Avenue from the railyards to Main Street are being promoted as the “Heart of Belen” corridor and the City has funded major improvement projects recently in this area. The future of Becker Avenue is envisioned as an entertainment area with stores, restaurants, galleries, and civic buildings. There is a great diversity

of land use in the Belen Center including railroad industrial, retail commercial, business and government offices, neighborhood residential, and even small field agricultural activities on the eastern edge of the activity center. The local farmers market is located off Reinken Avenue, in Anna Becker Park. The Belen arts community is also active in this activity center, promoting arts business and culture.

The Belen Center also exhibits historic character, containing numerous buildings and structures of historic significance. The gridded street pattern west of the railyard reflects the railroad development period of the late 1800s. Distinctive historical architectural styles are evident throughout the Belen Center area. The development of a downtown historic preservation district is discussed in Part IV of this Strategic Growth Plan. Although the Belen Center is divided by the railroad tracks, there are planning and development projects underway (i.e., pedestrian crossing from the Rail Runner station to the downtown area) in order to moderate that barrier and link the neighborhoods east and west of the tracks within the Belen Center.



*Becker Avenue Businesses*

**Demographics.** The current (2008) estimated population residing within the area defined as the Belen Center is about 2,280 people living in approximately 990 housing units. Data tables for population and employment statistics are provided in Appendix B. Population is forecast to slowly increase to approximately 2,630 people who will be residing in Belen Center by 2020.

Also, there are almost 2,300 jobs currently located within this activity center, nearly half of the total number of jobs within the City of Belen. The expectations expressed in this strategic plan are that job growth will increase by an estimated 400 jobs in this activity center over the next decade but will be relatively disbursed throughout the area. Furthermore, incentives for mixed-use development should provide motivation for “live/work” buildings along Main Street, the Becker/Dalies Avenues, and the Reinken-River Road corridor. Small-scale apartment buildings are also anticipated to emerge throughout this activity center.



*Belen Main Street*

### **Rail Runner Station Area**

**Development.** A Rail Runner Station Area Study was recently completed for the City of Belen and the Mid-Region Council of Governments. The Study was approved and endorsed by resolution of

the Belen City Council (see Appendix C). The purpose of the study was to address potential development around the station. The Belen Station Area Planning Study presents concepts for transit oriented development based on a community planning and design process that identified issues and opportunities for land use and development, multi-modal transportation and circulation, expanded public spaces, and key projects to enhance the area surrounding the New Mexico Rail Runner Express Station (see Appendix C for a text summary of the Study).



*Belen Rail Runner Station*

The Study provides the City of Belen with a guide for planning and development in the station area; and is intended to inform future land-use and policy decisions by elected officials, outside agencies, and developers. Key suggestions for development around the Station Area include the following concepts:

- higher density, mixed-use forms of new development,
- preservation of the agricultural and open spaces east of the station area,
- more efficient and less disruptive circulation and access through the nearby neighborhoods,

- improvements to major street intersections near the station,
- a new railroad pedestrian crossing near the Reinken Avenue overpass,
- public transit services City-wide to provide better access to the station,
- gateway approaches, multi-purpose pathways and bicycle routes, and
- additional parks and plazas.

**Goals and Objectives.** The following goals and objectives pertain specifically to the Belen Center. Goals and objectives for all of the activity centers have been approved by resolution of the City Council (see Appendix I). There are four goals for the Belen Center, each followed by several objectives intended to achieve all or some aspect of a goal. *Two of the goals (A and B) focus on the opportunities of the downtown neighborhoods and commercial areas to establish a unique and distinctive place, attracting local and regional interest, and preserving the history and culture of Belen.*

These goals promote walkable neighborhood design in combination with mixed-use buildings to produce a vibrant downtown area for residents and tourists alike. Two other goals (C and D) seek to promote new types of development around the commuter railroad station that helps to sustain the transit systems serving Belen and generate additional economic activities.

**Goal A: Create a central business district of regional significance.**

**Objective 1:** Continue to implement the strategic marketing plan for the “Heart of

Belen” project, particularly the Becker Avenue District.

**Objective 2:** Promote development and redevelopment that emphasizes mixed-use construction, higher density structures, pedestrian amenities, shade trees and extensive street landscaping, and historic architectural elements.

**Objective 3:** Provide parks and plazas that furnish places for civic activities, festivals, and cultural events in downtown and the Rail Runner station area.

**Objective 4:** Maintain a downtown street system for multiple transportation modes such as public transit, park-and-walk lots, handicapped-accessible pedestrian walkways, and bike facilities.

**Objective 5:** Establish connections between the current downtown and the Rail Runner station area to create a unified district offering a variety of amenities.

**Goal B: Preserve and protect the historic character of downtown Belen.**

**Objective 1:** Designate a downtown historic district and provide regulatory guidance as provided in the Belen Municipal Code to preserve and enhance its historic character.

**Objective 2:** Maintain a detailed inventory of historic and cultural properties and landmarks in the downtown area.

**Objective 3:** Promote new development in the downtown historic district to be compatible with the

prevailing historic, architectural, and cultural features of the district.

**Objective 4:** Highlight Belen's unique history both as a settlement along the Camino Real and as a turn of the century railroad town.

**Objective 5:** Improve the pedestrian experience in the downtown historic district as well as the area around the Rail Runner station with infrastructure such as wide sidewalks, multi-purpose paths, shade trees or structures, seating areas, and other amenities.

### **Goal C: Establish the Rail Runner station as a special gateway into Belen.**

**Objective 1:** Develop public space, retail uses and other amenities in the area adjacent to the station to increase visitor's interest and attraction to the area.

**Objective 2:** Enhance the railway and roadway approaches to the Rail Runner station with scenic views, thematic signage, and specially designed "streetscapes" and "railscapes" leading into the station.

**Objective 3:** Establish an accessible and well-marked pedestrian connection between the Rail Runner station and the Belen downtown area west of the railroad tracks.

### **Goal D: Enhance and improve the area surrounding the Rail Runner station.**

**Objective 1:** Ensure that the future development patterns adjacent to the Rail Runner station include a variety of housing types, commercial sites, and compact mixed-use development.

**Objective 2:** Provide adequate and secure parking for Rail Runner passengers; but also provide sufficient shuttle transit services to the station from remote parking areas.

**Objective 3:** Encourage pedestrian oriented retail, service, and commercial uses that serve transit users and local residents and increase visitors' interest in the station area.

**Objective 4:** Explore additional roadway and regional bikeway system access to the station; and develop improved road connectivity in areas around the station.

**Objective 5:** Seek to preserve and maintain the rural and semi-rural character of areas east of the Rail Runner station.

By 2010, reconstruction of the North I-25 Interchange will provide new access to lands west of the freeway.

## **North Belen Gateway**

**Characteristics.** The North Belen Gateway begins with the I-25 Highway interchange on the north side of Belen. Although Belen has annexed a substantial amount of land (i.e., Rancho Cielo Master Plan area) on the northwest quadrant of this interchange, the North Belen Gateway remains as the principal freeway entry into Belen closest to the Albuquerque metropolitan area.

Originally, a business loop route as part of the I-25 Highway, this gateway road has been renamed as an extension of

Belen's Main Street, which joins NM Highway 314 through the City.

This stretch of highway carries just under 14,000 vehicle trips per day (2008 Valencia County Traffic Flow Map, MRCOG) and has a significant development potential due to the amount of vacant lands that exist along this corridor.



#### *North Belen Interchange and NM 314*

At present, the activity center designated as the North Belen Gateway contains just over 700 acres of land (See Appendix A). The land around this I-25 interchange is mostly vacant and undeveloped, although there are some established residential and industrial land use activities. By 2010, the interchange is scheduled to be reconstructed to provide new access to lands west of the freeway. Proposed industrial development is anticipated to occur soon after the reconstruction of the interchange as the Rancho Cielo master planned area west of the freeway is initiated.

Additional development in the North Belen Gateway Activity Center includes a mixed-use development that will be located in the northeastern quadrant of the freeway interchange. The master plan for this development includes

residential housing that will be built during the early stages of construction.

**Demographics.** It is estimated that there are less than 20 people currently (2008) residing within this activity center; and that population is forecast to dramatically increase to about 330 people in 2020 (refer to Appendix B).

Employment consists of around 50 jobs presently located in this activity center. A job forecast for the year 2020 envisions a significant growth of about 730 new jobs locating in industrial and commercial buildings in this activity center on both sides of the I-25 Highway. As a result, the North Belen Gateway will function as a major destination point for work trips into the activity center as well as a principal route for traffic entering the City of Belen.

**Goals and Objectives.** A singular goal with related objectives pertains specifically to the North Belen Gateway and has been approved by resolution of the City Council (refer to Appendix I). This goal envisions a major commercial and industrial job center developing with easy access to the I-25 Freeway. There is also a desire by the Mayor and City Council to improve the road into Belen from that freeway Interchange by creating a corridor design concept that would result in a broad, landscaped boulevard or parkway with multi-purpose trails and enhanced street lighting as a grand entrance into the City of Belen

#### ***Goal E: Establish a North Belen commercial/industrial center.***

***Objective 1:*** Provide access to large lot commercial and industrial development areas.

**Objective 2:** Reconfigure the I-25 Highway interchange to provide west-side access to the Rancho Cielo master planned area.

**Objective 3:** Create a unique gateway and entry into Belen Main Street and downtown by way of a grand boulevard with pedestrian trails and thematic landscaping.

**Objective 4:** Allow for concentrated planned residential development with easy access to the I-25 Highway.

## West Belen Gateway

**Characteristics.** The West Belen Gateway is identified by the I-25 freeway interchange, which provides direct access west to the Alexander Municipal Airport, as well as a convenient access into the downtown area of Belen (i.e., Belen Center) by way of Camino del Llano to Main Street. The West Belen Gateway is exceptional as an activity center, which offers panoramic and spectacular scenic views of downtown Belen, the westside escarpment, the Rio Grande Valley, and the Manzano Mountains as a background to the east. In addition, this activity center currently serves as the primary gateway to the emerging development on the west mesa of Belen.

Funding is already available for expanding the roadway from the Freeway to the top of the west mesa. Increased traffic carrying capability will be ensured with the completion of a five-lane roadway (with a continuous left-turn center lane) while major drainage control structures will be included to handle rainfall runoff on the steep slope

topography. Pedestrian pathways will also be extended as part of the roadway construction.

*Reconstruction of Camino Del Llano will address storm water runoff, and will include pedestrian pathways.*

This activity center contains medical-related facilities such as an urgent care center as well as an assisted living center and housing for the elderly. Motels and eating establishments have developed around this interchange to serve highway drivers and possibly tourists seeking a rest area or entering the City of Belen for business or pleasure. Being centrally located among all of the activity centers of Belen this particular activity center is best situated to cater to the travelling public.



*West Belen Gateway*

**Demographics.** The current (2008) population residing within this activity center is approaching 500 persons living in a diversity of housing types. There are a number of people living in small apartment buildings; and a nursing home is located in the southeast quadrant of the interchange. The resident population is forecast to increase to about 650 people in this activity center by the year 2020 (see Appendix B).

The number of jobs currently located within the West Belen Gateway is approximately 465 employees; a 2020 forecast of employment in this activity center includes an increase of about 70 new jobs locating with access to the Freeway Interchange.

**Goals and Objectives.** The following adopted goals and objectives pertain specifically to the West Belen Gateway. Continuation and expansion of the mixed use development and tourist oriented businesses are reflected in Goal F, while the other two goals focus on transportation system improvements in this activity center. There are opportunities here for establishing multi-modal transportation options such as transit stops and a commuter park-and-ride lot for ridesharing arrangements.

**Goal F: Create a mixed-use development cluster for West Belen.**

**Objective 1:** Encourage the concentrated development of commercial and business activities around the I-25 Interchange.

**Objective 2:** Promote the development of hotels, motels, restaurants and associated services for travelers around the I-25/Camino del Llano Interchange.

**Goal G: Establish a Highway Transportation Hub for Belen**

**Objective 1:** Develop an intermodal facility near the I-25/Camino del Llano Interchange that provides public transit connections to the Belen airport, downtown Belen, and the Rail Runner train station.

**Objective 2:** Develop a commuter park-and-ride lot with easy on/off access to the I-25 Highway.

**Goal H: Improve accessibility to Belen West Mesa community.**

**Objective 1:** Expand the transportation functions of Camino del Llano from I-25 Highway to the airport.

**Objective 2:** Establish and maintain a drainage control system for the Camino del Llano Corridor to accommodate intensive development along the steep grades.

*The South Belen Gateway Activity Center serves as the first exit for northbound freeway traffic from southern New Mexico and points south.*

## South Belen Gateway

**Characteristics.** The southernmost I-25 Highway interchange into Belen is the focal point for the South Belen Gateway. The land development in this activity center exhibits a rural character that includes open fields, agricultural activities, low density residential buildings, and small retail businesses along the highway (NM 314 transitioning into NM 116). Historically, this highway used to be US 85, the major thoroughfare along the Rio Grande before the freeway was built.

This Gateway serves as the key access into southern Belen from the freeway and along a “farm-to-market” road connecting Belen to the farmlands and rural communities south of the city. This activity center also serves as the first

exit for northbound freeway traffic from southern New Mexico and points south (i.e., Socorro and Las Cruces, N. M. and El Paso, Texas).



*South Belen Gateway*

**Demographics.** There are currently about 270 people living within the area designated as the South Belen Gateway, an activity center of about 450 acres. It is anticipated that housing development will proceed slowly over the next decade with a forecasted increase of around 20 new housing units, thus increasing the activity center population to slightly over 300 residents by the year 2020 (see Appendix B). The current employment within the South Belen Gateway activity center is estimated to be around 40 jobs. That number is forecast to slightly increase to more than 60 jobs by 2020. Of course, any such forecast can be superseded by the establishment of a new business or major expansion of an existing business within the next ten years.

**Goals and Objectives.** The following adopted goal and objectives pertain specifically to the South Belen Gateway. This area is envisioned to remain low density emphasizing rural features and agricultural activities; and to provide highway-related services for freeway travelers.

**Goal I: Concentrate highway-related business activities in South Belen.**

**Objective 1:** Promote low-density commercial development adjacent to the I-25 Interchange.

**Objective 2:** Encourage agriculture-related businesses along NM 314 and NM 116 (Old Highway 85) in proximity to the I-25 Interchange.

**Objective 3:** Encourage the development of vehicle services (i.e., gas stations and vehicle repair) and facilities (i.e., RV parks) to attract travelers from the I-25 Highway.

Airport expansion includes the construction of a crosswind runway along with additional airport service facilities.

## Airport Center

**Characteristics.** Belen's Alexander Municipal Airport is the dominating feature of this activity center, which is nearly 2,300 acres in size, by far the largest of the Belen activity centers. The Airport is located on top of a large plateau forming the west mesa of Belen. Recently, the City annexed land to provide land use controls in the buffer zone around the Airport; and has purchased property to increase the size of the publically owned airport. These acquisitions will allow a crosswind runway and expansion of airport-related activities as well as other industrial development.

An airport, however, generates a number of impacts on all lands that surround the facility. There are unique restrictions to development around

airports, some due to federal regulations, and others due to local zoning laws. There is some concern that the surrounding land development, especially residential land use, may not be compatible with airport operations. Nevertheless, there are already scattered housing units in all directions within a mile of the airport runways.



*Belen Alexander Municipal Airport*

**Demographics.** It is estimated that in 2008 there were over 200 people living within the designated airport activity center, generally on the fringe area of the airport complex, and more recently along the escarpment of the west mesa overlooking the Rio Grande valley. The population is forecast to increase slightly to about 240 residents within this activity center. Of greater consequence is the anticipated new employment in this activity center; with a growth in jobs forecast to increase from less than 50 in 2008 to about 150 by the year 2020.

**Goals and Objectives.** The following adopted goals and objectives pertain specifically to the Airport Center. Goals and objectives addressing growth for the

Belen Alexander Municipal Airport and the surrounding area are based on input from the Strategic Growth Plan Steering Committee, the Belen Airport Commission, and city staff. Airport expansion will soon be underway and, within the next few years, a new crosswind runway will be constructed along with additional airport service facilities. In addition, a significant amount of open land around the airport runways is available for industrial development.

***Goal J: Expand the functions and services of Belen's municipal airport.***

***Objective 1:*** Add the proposed crosswind runway to increase the operational capacity of the airport.

***Objective 2:*** Expand airport-related services, hangar space, and terminal facilities.

***Objective 3:*** Establish a land use plan for future development within airport property.

***Goal K: Ensure compatible development of lands surrounding the airport.***

***Objective 1:*** Establish a land use plan for lands abutting the airport property.

***Objective 2:*** Execute a formal agreement between the City of Belen and Valencia County regarding land use management around the airport.

## PART III

### BELEN CORRIDORS

The Activity Centers in Belen cannot function effectively without strong linkages, or connecting corridors. As mentioned previously, this Strategic Growth Plan for the City of Belen is based on the concept of links and nodes as a form of development. In effect, corridors bring activity centers together by providing more efficient movement and accessibility among distinctive neighborhood communities. The City of Belen occupies a relatively small area, so connected local activity centers enables a land and energy conserving pattern of development.

In order to tie all of the activity centers together, six corridors have been identified as essential components of the Strategic Growth Plan for Belen. The six corridors are shown on Figure 2 in relation to the activity center boundaries. The corridors have been designated as follows:

- North Main Corridor,
- Downtown Corridor,
- South Main Corridor,
- Camino del Llano Corridor,
- Reinken/River Road Corridor, and
- The I-25 Corridor.

These corridors have been characterized below; and, with the exception of the I-25 Interstate Highway, suggestions are made to enhance their functions beyond the means of efficiently moving vehicles through the community. To be more specific, the city streets connecting activity centers in Belen should operate as complete

streets that accommodate all modes and types of transportation. These should be vibrant corridors with an emphasis on pedestrian connections between homes, shopping, jobs, and transit services.

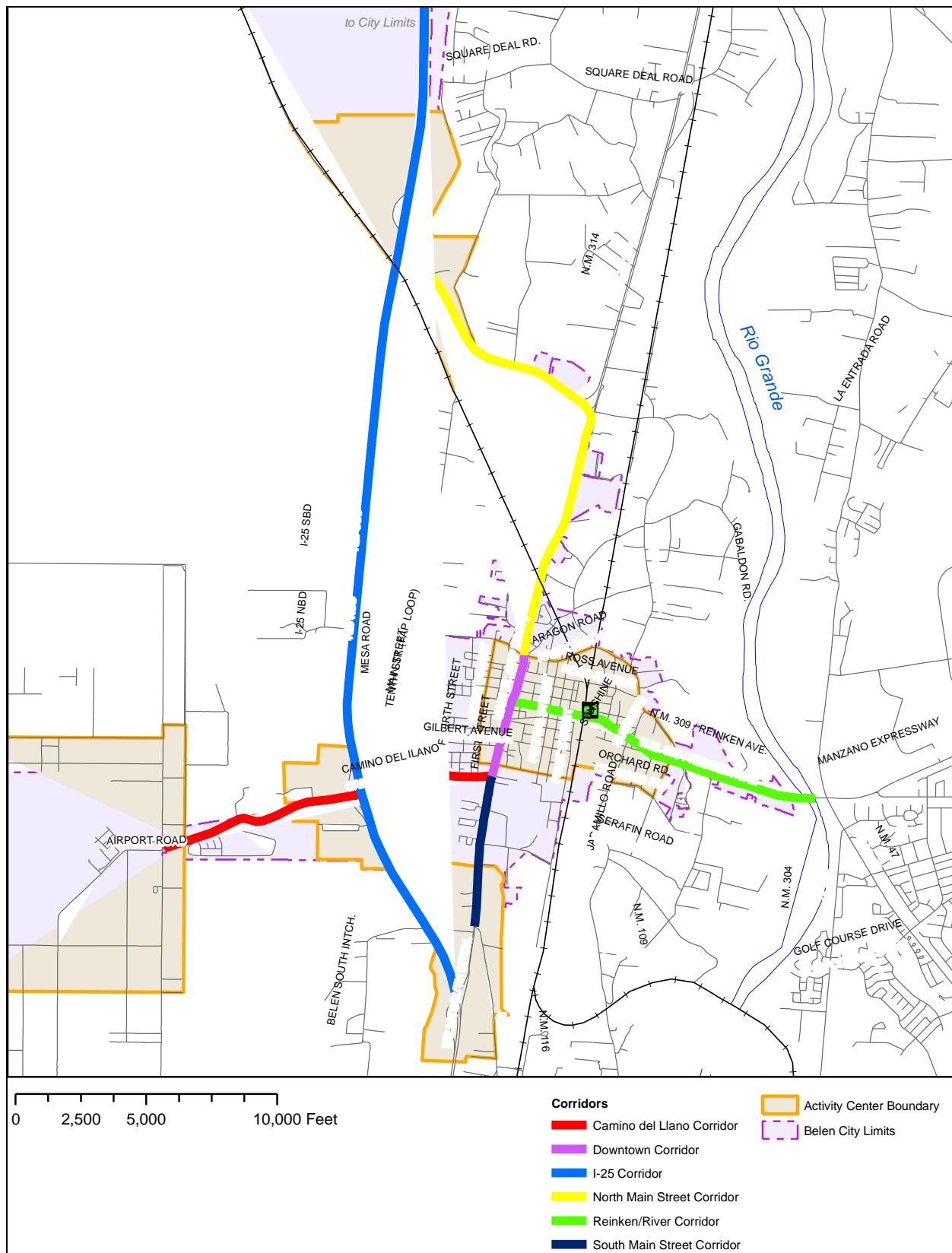
*The Focus Group identified six corridors that have important links to the Activity Centers in the Strategic Growth Plan.*

#### North Main Corridor

Stretching from the north Belen interchange to the south Belen interchange through the middle of Belen, Main Street is the longest street in the City. Because of its length and various performance functions, it is suggested that Main Street should be developed as three distinctive corridors, each providing access to abutting lands that involve different types of neighborhoods, unique visual presentation to the public and particular forms of development in the City.

The North Main Corridor of Belen's Main Street is the most commonly used roadway entrance into downtown Belen, primarily because it provides an efficient travel connection between Belen and Albuquerque. The roadway in this corridor can be further described by two segments: one from the I-25 Interstate Highway interchange to the grade-separated intersection at NM Highway 314; and the other segment continuing from that point to the intersection of

**Figure 2**  
**Belen Corridors Map**



Main Street and Aragon Road, which is considered the northern end of the corridor.

Although the two segments of the North Main Corridor are similar in function, they have developed under quite different historical settings. The lands along the segment of the North Main Corridor that connects the I-25 Highway to the NM 314 Highway are largely undeveloped with the exception of a Wal-Mart Supercenter and the Valencia County Fairgrounds. This type of land use is representative of a “big box” pattern of development that is unique in the City of Belen.

The other segment (NM 314) is comprised of linear commercial and business development abutting the old north-south highway (US 85) through Belen and along the Rio Grande valley. One of the benefits of designating the North Main Corridor is to unify the land development and streetscape along this relatively new entry route into Belen by way of a gateway activity center.



*North Main Corridor*

The right-of-way for the North Main Corridor is exceptionally wide and, for that reason, might be improved as a boulevard or parkway with limited access restrictions for the roadway. Currently, this corridor is built as a four-

lane divided highway with a wide center median. There may be sufficient open space within the corridor right-of-way to accommodate landscaping and possibly a multi-purpose trail system for bikes and pedestrians. Thematic design elements (i.e., lighting, signs, and pedestrian amenities) along this corridor would accent the special quality of the drive into Belen from the freeway.

## Downtown Corridor

Main Street, Belen’s principal through-town corridor, has evolved from the historical exploration and trade route along the Rio Grande to become the central commercial/business street of the City. For purposes of this Strategic Growth Plan, the Downtown Corridor is defined as that portion of Main Street in Belen between the Aragon Road intersection and the Camino del Llano intersection. The traffic flow on this portion of Main Street can be more than 20 thousand cars per day on some blocks (2008 Traffic Flow Map, MRCOG).

This Downtown Corridor is situated on the western side of the Belen Center, but is connected to many of the east-west streets of the Belen Center, including Becker Avenue and the Reinken/River Road Corridor that crosses the railroad tracks and the Rio Grande.

This portion of Main Street is Belen’s high density corridor and has a long history of commercial and business development. A significant number of older structures along this corridor have building fronts placed at the street line with no setback, allowing direct

pedestrian access from the street side but requiring on-street parking or off-street parking lots on the side or behind the buildings. This form of development reflects the traditional urban form of Belen and can be replicated and improved through regulatory codes. Such codes would be used to emphasize the physical appearance of building facades and the public realm of the street, rather than regulating the use of land with separation between the street and the building frontages.



*Downtown Corridor*

By regulating infill development along this Downtown Corridor to tie in with the placement and accessibility of historical buildings, a special character will evolve with a higher level of urban intensity and activities. In order for development in this corridor to achieve a more traditional urban form, there should be a focus on the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, instead of the segregation of land use and site development controls such as units per acre, setback, and parking ratios.

Furthermore, the scale of streetscapes can become more pedestrian friendly with wider walkways, landscaping, and outdoor amenities such as benches and

tables. Also, compact and mixed-use development in this corridor could work mutually to create a different, yet more traditional image of downtown Belen.

## **South Main Corridor**

The South Main Corridor is defined as that segment of Main Street between the Camino del Llano intersection and the south Belen interchange at the I-25 Highway. This corridor exhibits a low density profile and has a rural character that readily connects with the farmlands south of Belen. There are small scale businesses and commercial buildings spread out along the highway and interspersed with scattered housing and open space. The traffic carrying capacity of the South Main Corridor is adequate for the traffic flow, which is around 10 to 12 thousand cars per day (2008 Traffic Flow Map, MRCOG).



*South Main Corridor*

The rural atmosphere along this corridor provides a transitional link from the higher density corridors and activity centers in Belen to the farmlands and open fields that extend from the southern portion of the City. This section of Main Street in Belen is more relaxed and less intense than the other corridors and maintains a different character that could be protected and retained to be

reminiscent of the rural highways of the past. Highway-related businesses in this corridor should be encouraged in order to attract northbound freeway traffic as it approaches Belen from the south.

## **Camino del Llano Corridor**

The Camino del Llano Corridor provides a direct linkage between three major activity centers: the Belen municipal airport, the downtown business district, and the West Belen Gateway. This corridor connects Main Street in Belen with the Alexander Municipal Airport on the west mesa. This corridor also provides the quickest access to downtown Belen and the Belen High School campus from the freeway. There is a great potential for new, higher density development along this corridor, particularly in the West Belen Gateway activity center, which is unique because it already has diverse and medium density land uses in the area.



*Camino del Llano Corridor*

The portion of this corridor from the I-25 Highway west to the top of the escarpment will be reconstructed in 2010 to increase traffic-carrying capacity and safety, and to improve drainage control for the storm water runoff down the steep slopes of the west mesa escarpment. The project will result in a

five-lane road section (including a continuous left-turn center lane) replacing a two-lane undivided road.

Although there are less than 4,000 vehicle trips a day going up to the west mesa on Camino del Llano (2008 Traffic Flow Map, MRCOG), there are a number of current and proposed land development projects on the west mesa that are expected to generate a significant increase of trips on this portion of Camino del Llano.

## **Reinken/River Road Corridor**

This corridor serves as the principal river-crossing route to the east side of the Rio Grande from Main Street in Belen. The Reinken/River Road Corridor in this Strategic Plan provides a link from Main Street to the Rio Grande Bridge and territory east of the river.

This is the only corridor in the Strategic Growth Plan that does not provide a link from one activity center to another. An activity center at the Rio Grande bridge crossing was discussed during public meetings, but was considered more of a long term potential which might result in the designation of a Belen gateway at the Rio Grande on some future date. Also, an activity center at this location was not identified on the Comprehensive Plan for Belen.

Reinken Avenue transitions into River Road after crossing over the BNSF railroad tracks and proceeds east to the Rio Grande Bridge. On the east side of the river, this corridor continues as it intersects with NM Highway 47 in the Rio Communities area and transitions again into the Manzano Expressway.



*Reinken/River Road Corridor*

## I-25 Corridor

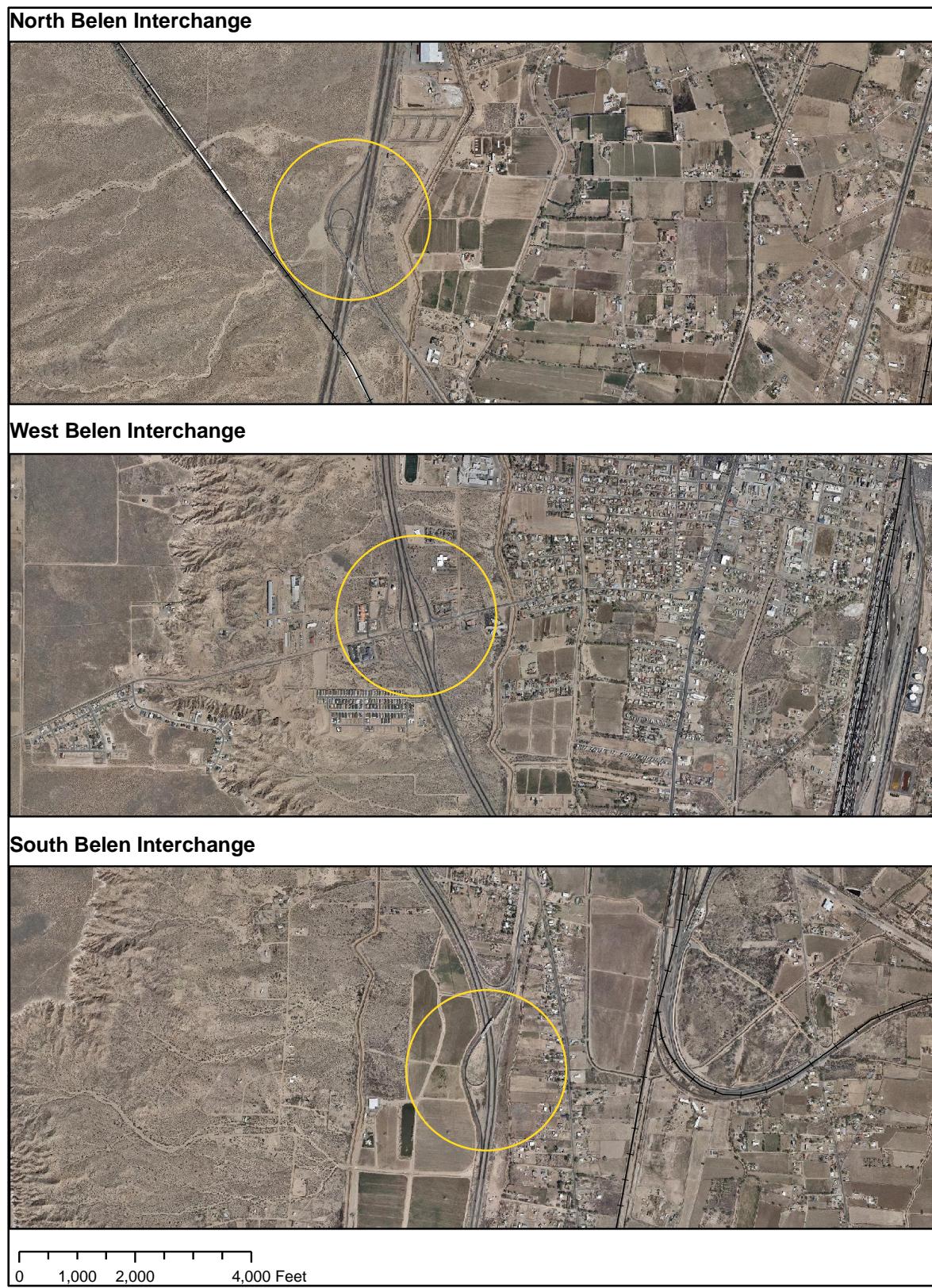
This north-south interstate highway was originally designed as a by-pass freeway for long-distance travel to be diverted around the City of Belen. The I-25 Highway was initially located on the western edge of Belen; but the growth of the City has “leapfrogged” over the freeway to the vast open spaces of the west mesa. The Camino del Llano, or West Belen Interchange, currently provides the principle access to the lands of the West Mesa.

Three freeway interchanges provide access into Belen as designated by the circles that are superimposed on aerial photos shown in Figure 3. The north and south interchanges were constructed with east side access only, which limits future development on the west. All three interchanges may ultimately provide access to the west side of the freeway as Belen develops more in that direction. By 2020, assuming the reconstruction of the North Belen Interchange, only the South Belen Interchange is not anticipated to provide direct access to the west side of the freeway.

Currently access to the west of the South Belen Interchange is achieved through a local road underpass (Cannon Road) north of the Interchange that provides a connection from South Main Street to the residential development and recently-established agricultural fields on the west side of the freeway.

Access to the west side of the South Belen Interchange can be improved by extending frontage roads leading south of the West Belen Interchange. What is important about the I-25 Corridor is that it feeds traffic into the three Belen Gateway activity centers and into the Belen community; and simultaneously collects traffic from Belen for trips made to regional and long distance destinations. While Belen has no control or administration over the freeway system itself, the City does regulate the abutting land uses along the roadway through its zoning jurisdiction.

**Figure 3**  
**Belen Interchanges Map**



## PART IV

### BELEN HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND LANDMARKS

Each new arrival of settlers to the Belen area brought in new influences on the architectural styles that are reflected in the diverse building styles found throughout the City. Currently, Belen has three buildings listed on the New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties as well as the National Register of Historic Places. These properties are located within the municipal boundaries and include the Belen Harvey House, the Belen Hotel, and the Felipe Chavez House.

#### Belen Historic Character

The earliest settlers in Belen were Native Americans. According to the New Mexico Historic Cultural Properties Inventory Manual, building traditions of Native American tribal groups include the use of earth, stone, and wood, with building methods of mud blocks, and mud plaster.



*Felipe Chavez House*

The Spanish settled in Belen in the late 1500s and incorporated the existing

Pueblo designs of sun-dried adobe bricks as building materials. Buildings had longer vigas, allowing for larger interior spaces and rooms linked around a courtyard or placita. The Spanish influence on building styles in the 1800s continued the hacienda style, which might have included a compound with a store, saloon, and dance hall.

The territorial period (1846-1912) is broken into two periods: the pre-railroad (1846-1880) and the post-railroad (1880-1912). The territorial style is a blending of the Pueblo and Spanish styles with the Greek revival style. The Felipe Chavez house, built in 1860 is an excellent example of the territorial style.

The railroad introduced a variety of building styles from other places. These styles tended to be more ornate than previous buildings in New Mexico. The pre-railroad period introduced new materials such as brick, mill-sawn lumber, and glass. Styles used during this period include territorial and gothic revival styles. An example of a building constructed during the post-railroad period is the historic Harvey House, which was built in the early 1900s. Another historic structure built in the same period is the Belen Hotel. This two-story structure was constructed with bricks made in Belen.

Congress admitted New Mexico as the 47th state in the Union on January 6, 1912. Statehood and first half of the twentieth century architectural styles (1912-1946) brought a renewed interest

in native building traditions, combining Pueblo and Territorial styles with American and European styles. New materials during this period included terra cotta, hollow tile, tapestry brick, and metal casement windows. Buildings during this period featured prairie, bungalow/craftsman, Spanish-Pueblo revival, and international.

Post World War II building styles were influenced by economic growth and the growth of suburbs. New materials used during this time included concrete block, asbestos in rolls and shingles and aluminum sliding windows. The post-war period buildings styles were characterized by Ranch style and alternative energy design, which included solar structures.



*Harvey House in Belen*

Belen has many structures that represent the building styles discussed previously. An inventory of historic structures in Belen was conducted in 1989. This inventory identified approximately fifty potential historic structures. Using a recent aerial map of Belen, MRCOG staff overlaid the location of approximately fifty potential historic structures identified by the 1989 inventory. While approximately ten percent of the structures no longer exist due to demolition or redevelopment,

the inventory provides a basis for the creation of the historic district and designation of historic landmarks. The loss of such historic structures provided, in part, the impetus for the establishment of a historic district and designation of historic landmarks.



*Hotel Belen*

## Historic District Ordinance

Adopted by the Belen City Council in 1983, the Historic District Ordinance established procedures for the creation of a Historic Properties Review Board and subsequent processes for the official designation of historic districts and landmarks within the City of Belen. The Historic District Ordinance (Chapter 15.16 of the City of Belen Municipal Code) is provided in Appendix D of this report. The purpose of the ordinance is to preserve property values, attract tourists and residents by supporting the continued existence and preservation of historic areas and buildings, and to enhance the identity of the City by protecting the City's heritage and prohibit unnecessary destruction or defacement of its cultural assets.

## **Historic Properties Review Board**

In 2009, the Belen City Council confirmed the appointment of five board members to serve on the Historic Properties Review Board. The Board members are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. The Historic Properties Review Board is composed of Belen residents who are knowledgeable in local history and historic preservation. The Board adopted bylaws, which sets up term limits for Board Members, and procedural guidelines for the organization of Board meetings (see Appendix E).

The Board makes recommendations to the City Council as to the designation of historic districts, the classification of historic landmarks, the maintenance, alteration, or demolition of historic landmarks and structures, and construction of new structures within a historic district. Recommendations by the Board are based on standards of review for historic district and historic landmarks. These standards, which are in the form of questions, provide the basis for more specific guidelines for development review.

The first priority in the designation of historic districts is to complete a comprehensive survey of properties in the City. Such a comprehensive survey will take approximately 12 to 16 months and will involve community meetings and education of Belen residents. Upon the completion of the survey, the Historic Properties Review Board may choose to designate several areas as Historic Districts.

## **Designation of Historic Districts**

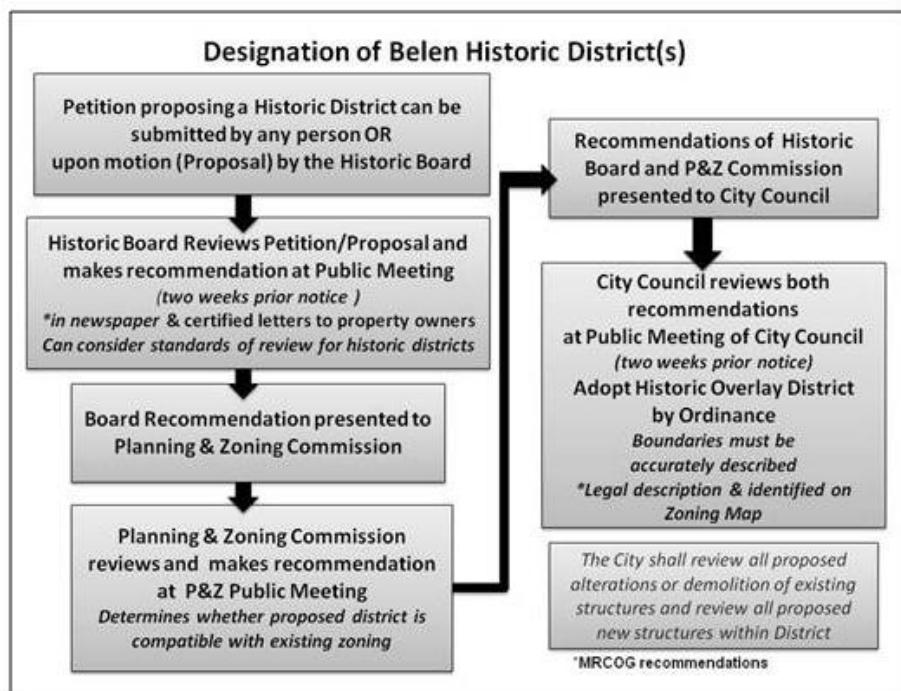
The Belen Historic District Ordinance characterizes a historic district as an area or neighborhood that has historic, architectural, or cultural significance. The process for designation of a historic district is shown in Figure 4. A historic district can be proposed by any person or by the Belen Historic Properties Review Board. Upon recommendation by the Historic Board, the proposal is presented to the Belen Planning and Zoning Commission, who then reviews and makes a recommendation based on whether the district is compatible with existing zoning. Both recommendations from the Historic Board and the Planning and Zoning Commission are presented to the Belen City Council. At a public meeting, the City Council can adopt the Historic District by ordinance.

*One of the first priorities of the Belen Historic Properties Review Board is to complete a survey of properties.*

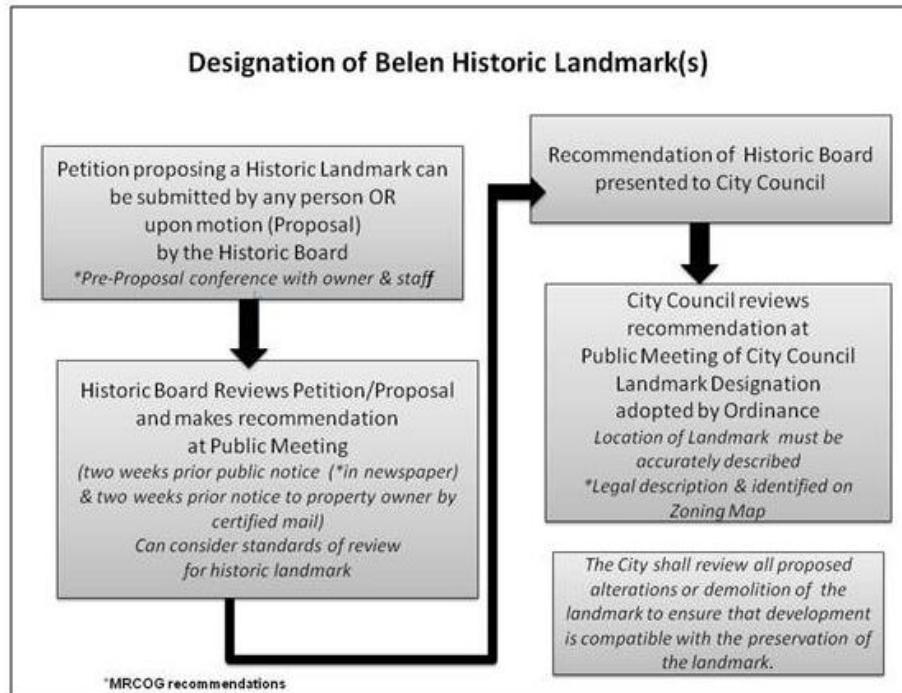
## **Designation of Historic Landmarks**

The process for designating historic landmarks in Belen is similar to the historic district process, with the exception that a proposed historic landmark does not require consideration by the Planning and Zoning Commission (see Figure 5). A historic landmark can be any structure located either inside or outside a designated historic district and has historic, architectural, or cultural significance. Historic landmarks can be proposed by any person or by the Historic Board and is approved by the City Council by ordinance.

**Figure 4**



**Figure 5**



## The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The Standards that follow were originally published in 1977 and revised in 1990 as part of the U.S. Department of the Interior Regulations (36 CFR Part 67, Historic Preservation Certifications). They pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior of historic buildings. The Standards also encompass related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached adjacent or related new construction. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility. Standards are as follows:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old design in color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that causes damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken in the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic

integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

## Belen Historic District Guidelines

Design guidelines apply to residential and commercial structures. They are developed with the information found in "The Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation" and out of specific needs of the community. The principal approach in design guidelines is the emphasis on preservation over complete restoration. This view is illustrated by such words as *repair*, *retain*, *maintain*, and *protect*. It is important to **repair** original materials rather than replace them; **retain** original landscape feature like stone retaining walls; **maintain** the original wood siding because it is integral in displaying historic character, and **protect** the original setting of the house to protect its integrity.

The primary facade of buildings is emphasized in the design guidelines. Primary facades are those readily visible from the street or sidewalk, such as the front and sides of the building. Primary facades are the areas generally given the greatest amount of detail and decoration and largely define the architectural character of the property.

The guidelines apply to the exterior only. Although interior space is not insignificant, only the part visibly accessible to the public is subject to the guidelines for preservation. Decisions regarding the interior of private property are strictly reserved to the owner.



*Commercial buildings on Becker Avenue*

The process of creating specific design guidelines for the Historic Districts and Landmarks begins with the identification of standards that the Belen Historic Properties Review Board determines are appropriate for the community. MRCOG staff developed a Historic Design Guidelines Worksheet that listed standards that the Historic Board could consider in their determination of design guidelines. For example, current zoning regulations require a larger setback for buildings. Older communities typically allowed buildings closer to the street. In order to maintain the prevailing setback, new structures should be allowed to build in line with existing structures, when possible.

Other design guidelines to be considered include porches, porticos, and awnings. Belen has several bungalow/craftsman homes, which are characterized by porches. The Historic Board should determine whether new porches be architecturally compatible

with the main building. In respect to awnings, new awning may obscure architectural detailing.

To maintain the historic integrity of the historic districts, guidelines could be implemented that required the screening of accessory structures and utility facilities, such as satellite dishes and solar panels. The placement of heating and air conditioning equipment on roofs may also detract from the historic authenticity of the historic building.



*Home in Belen*

The implementation of design guidelines will aid in the survey of structures that will have to be undertaken by the Historic Board in order to determine the boundaries of any historic district.

MRCOG staff developed a two-page historic property inventory worksheet that can be utilized during the survey process. Information on the worksheet include the address, present use of the property and a description of the historic use of the property and significant character. The worksheet also has a checklist of criteria for Belen Landmark designation.

The newly created Historic Board considered the feasibility of undertaking an extensive survey of structures utilizing the State historic properties survey process. By using the State process and forms, owners of historic properties will be able to apply to the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division for state historic designation. Participating in the state process will allow property owners to apply for Federal historic designation.

The survey will be undertaken by the Historic Board and will be assisted by experts in the field of historic preservation and architecture. These experts will train the Board and interested residents in the survey process. The surveys will then be used to determine the boundaries of Historic Districts and the location of Historic Landmarks in the City. However, such an extensive inventory may not be feasible at this time. The Board may want to consider a less intensive survey using the inventory worksheet developed by MRCOG staff.



*Belen Neighborhood*

## PART V

### BELEN AIRPORT STUDY

An Airport Action Plan and Airport Layout Plan for Belen Alexander Municipal Airport was completed in January 2007. That Action Plan performed an inventory of the existing airport facilities, described the current zoning of the airport area, and reviewed airport maintenance activities. The Action Plan also calculated aviation demand forecasts and future facility requirements. An analysis of development alternatives in the Action Plan provided a basis for a five-year capital improvement program and environmental analysis. The Action Plan concluded with proposed improvements for the airport, including land acquisition, rehabilitation of the existing runway, construction of a new crosswind runway, upgrading airport-related buildings and parking areas, and various security features. Although the five-year schedule of airport improvements has been delayed, the Airport Action Plan is generally considered valid today.

The Belen Alexander Municipal Airport is classified as a general aviation airport. The New Mexico Airport System Plan further categorizes the Belen Airport as a General Aviation (GA) Gateway Airport. A GA Gateway Airport provides services and facilities for business aircraft within 30 minutes driving time from population centers.

#### Airport Area Land Use

The focus of the Strategic Growth Plan is on the impact of aviation activities to surrounding land uses and assurances

of compatibility between the airport and adjacent land use activities. Belen's Alexander Municipal Airport is the only publicly owned, publicly operated airport in Valencia County. This airport functions as part of a regional system of airports in the Albuquerque metropolitan area. Consequently, there is a clear potential for ongoing expansion of the airport operations and facilities, leading to significant impacts on the surrounding area in the future. The role of the airport is important to the future of the Belen area. Therefore, growth of non-airport related development around the airport should be carefully monitored and managed to ensure orderly and appropriate development near the airport. Of concern is the affect of aircraft noise on nearby homes and the height of structures near the airport runways.

The Strategic Growth Plan identifies the planning area for the Airport Center as an extensive area surrounding the airport property. An aerial photo of the Airport Center area is provided in Appendix A. The designated Airport Center covers approximately 2,230 acres. The Belen Airport property, which included 89 acres in 1978, has grown to 750 acres by 2009 through land purchase and annexations. In order to regulate more airport area land uses, the City recently annexed approximately 1,490 acres surrounding the Airport that was previously under Valencia County jurisdiction. As part of the annexation, the City purchased sufficient land to

accommodate the construction of the proposed crosswind runway.

Because land within the Airport Center includes public and privately owned properties, it will be problematic to ensure that land development is compatible or minimally impacted by the Belen Airport. There is privately owned land near the perimeter of the existing airport runway and the proposed crosswind runway. The private land is primarily occupied by scattered, single-family residential housing units on large lots. Within a one-mile radius of the runways (includes the proposed crosswind runway) there are 250 housing units with the usual array of accessory buildings and structures.

Currently, much of the land near the airport has been subdivided into large lots; although there are several small-lot subdivisions that are developing on or near the eastern portion of the Airport Center. Other uses in this area include several non-airport-related commercial and industrial activities that are generally compatible with the airport activities. There is limited livestock grazing on some of the undeveloped lands within three miles of the airport justifying, in part, the need for new perimeter fencing around the airport runways and facilities.

### **City/County Jurisdictions around the Airport**

Regulation and management of the lands in and around the airport is complex due to the application of zoning jurisdictions that include both the City of Belen and Valencia County. The zoning authority for the City ends at the municipal boundary, where County

zoning takes over. However, in addition to this demarcation of zoning between the City and the County, both the City and County have adopted specific ordinances that control land development around airports. These airport zoning ordinances are essentially overlay zoning regulations pertaining to airport operations; and they are additional to the underlying zoning requirements of the City and County zoning ordinances. Airport zoning generally reflects the regulations of the Federal Aviation Administration, although the City and County airport ordinances differ. The City and County Airport Zoning Regulations are provided in Appendix F of this strategic plan.

*The Strategic Growth Plan recommends the adoption of a Joint Powers Agreement between the City and the County to address development around the Belen Airport.*

The subdivision of lands around the airport property is also complicated because State law requires joint authority to review and approve the subdivision of land within the City's planning and platting jurisdiction outside the municipal corporate limits. For the City of Belen, the planning and platting jurisdiction includes all land within the municipal corporate limits, plus all land outside the corporate limits within three miles of the boundary, but not within the boundaries of another municipality. In the portion of the planning and platting jurisdiction that lies outside the City, a concurrent jurisdiction exists where proposed subdivisions require independent approval by both the municipality and the county prior to

official filing of the plat with the County Clerk.

This Strategic Growth Plan recommends the adoption of a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between the City and the County to establish common standards and to regulate development around the Belen Airport. A proposed JPA is made available in Appendix G for consideration by the City and County governments. Language in the JPA is intended to clarify the dual zoning authorities and the jurisdictional issues of a concurrent City and County land subdivision review process. The JPA also recommends that a joint airport area master plan be undertaken to provide a unified planning and development process for the Belen Airport.

### Airport Ground Access

The Belen Airport is classified as a General Aviation, Gateway Airport that is intended to provide for business-related activities and improved access to the local business community. The principal access road to the Belen Airport is Camino del Llano, which essentially serves as an arterial street in the City of Belen. Camino del Llano connects directly to Interstate Highway 25 and feeds into the City's Main Street Corridor (NM 314). Access to major transportation routes provides opportunities for industrial development to locate at the Airport.

There are presently no alternative routes that connect to the airport from the street and highway network below the escarpment. This could prove to be

a problem for emergency access to the airport if Camino del Llano becomes blocked or cut off. In the long term, the City should plan for secondary access to the airport.

### Airport Area Development Potential

Currently, the Belen Alexander Municipal Airport is home to over fifty aircraft, a skydiving club, a propeller overhaul facility, an aerial photographer, and other small aviation businesses. The airport is supported by one fixed base operator (FBO) providing fuel services and aircraft tie-down parking. Aircraft maintenance and parts are also provided. The existing building currently used as the fire station is inadequate, has been recently condemned for health and safety reasons, and will need replacement in the near future.

There is a current proposal to develop the Airport as an alternative energy center, focusing primarily on solar technology. The proposed development will provide 60 new jobs with a training center related to innovations in solar energy collection. In addition to the green jobs, an aircraft assembly plant is proposing to locate at the airport and will employ 30 employees. There will also be additional employment resulting from the expanded airport with the completion of the crosswind runway.

An airport area master plan prepared and adopted by the City and County should provide a framework for appropriate new development at the airport. Such a plan would benefit both the City and the County in strengthening the economic base of the region.

## PART VI

### STRATEGIC ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the Strategic Growth Plan provides recommendations for a wide range of strategic actions to enhance the growth potential and stimulate orderly development in the City of Belen. The strategies that are recommended below are grouped according to the five designated activity centers, and are organized in relation to the goals adopted for the Strategic Growth Plan. The numerical sequence of these strategies is for reference only and do not indicate priority. In essence, these strategic action recommendations are derived from the goals and objectives presented in Part II of this Strategic Plan and formulated through a process of public workshops and meetings of the Steering Committee.

The MRCOG staff prepared the initial drafts of strategic action statements based on research and analysis of data compiled from various sources during the planning process, and with specific reference to the adopted goals and objectives for the Strategic Growth Plan. The draft action recommendations were reviewed, discussed, and revised (in some cases) as a result of open meetings, workshops, and public hearings; and were ultimately approved by the Belen City Council as essential strategies to generate new growth in the City.

#### Belen Center

The Belen Center is where the “Heart of Belen” lies. It is also a center for government, education, transportation,

and commerce for the City of Belen. The Strategic Growth Plan for this activity center recommends numerous actions to increase the diversity and attraction of the central portion of Belen. A vibrant downtown community with more efficient circulation and accessibility is the motivation for many of the strategic actions identified below. Also, capitalizing on the commuter rail station provides new economic development opportunities for Belen.

#### ***Goal A: Create a central business district of regional significance.***

**Strategy A-1:** Complete the Becker Avenue street improvement project from Main Street to First Street. Develop a conceptual plan for a proposed First Street Plaza at the Harvey House; and design and construct the First Street Plaza if feasible.

**Strategy A-2:** Promote and support Belen’s designated Main Street district in conjunction with the New Mexico MainStreet Program.

**Strategy A-3:** Support the Belen Art League to advance and promote the arts through special events, programs, and services in downtown Belen.

**Strategy A-4:** Establish special use zone districts in the Belen Zoning Ordinance pertaining to specific purposes or designated areas in the downtown area, employing standards and regulations that:

- allow for higher density and mixed-use development in select areas,
- require a variety of streetscape amenities for pedestrians,
- promote transit, shared parking, and pedestrian/bikeways, and
- protect historic properties and residential areas.

**Strategy A-5:** Redefine the Main Street Overlay Zone in the Belen Zoning Ordinance to begin at the railroad overpass on the north end and extend to the south Belen Interchange (I-25/NM 314); and apply the development principles of Form-Based Zoning to buildings and structures fronting on the segment of Main Street between the intersections of Aragon Road and Camino del Llano.

**Strategy A-6:** Create special design concepts for a neighborhood development plan pertaining to the area north of the Rail Runner station and other key development properties near the station.

**Strategy A-7:** Prepare an inventory of key properties for potential redevelopment/rehabilitation that would advance the development concepts of the Rail Runner station area study approved by the Belen City Council in May 2009.

***Goal B: Preserve and protect the historic character of downtown Belen.***

**Strategy B-1:** Designate a downtown historic district in Belen, and regulate construction activities within the district

in order to preserve its historic architectural and cultural features.

**Strategy B-2:** Administer a building permit review process for designated historic districts and landmarks, based on local standards for rehabilitation and other significant changes that may be proposed for relevant buildings and structures.

**Strategy B-3:** Document and maintain an official inventory of historic landmarks within the City of Belen, based on local, State, and/or Federal criteria.

***Goal C: Establish the Rail Runner station as a special gateway into Belen.***

**Strategy C-1:** Develop a conceptual plan for an “Arrival Park” along both sides of the railroad tracks extending from the Rail Runner station north to Aragon Road.

**Strategy C-2:** Develop a “pedestrian connections plan” defining various routes between the station and the Becker Avenue district. This plan may include elevators and/or ramps, stairs, pedestrian infrastructure on Reinken Street Bridge, sidewalks, acequia path, and street intersection improvements.

**Strategy C-3:** Develop a conceptual plan to enhance visual continuity between the Rail Runner station and Downtown Belen, including “wayfinding” signage, uniform streetlights, special flags/banners, and pavement treatments.

***Goal D: Enhance and improve the area surrounding the Rail Runner station.***

**Strategy D-1:** Acquire or protect right-of-way for a new road along the east side of the railroad tracks from Aragon Road to the Rail Runner station to provide additional access and on-street parking; and create a buffer for the surrounding uses.

**Strategy D-2:** Continue to seek funding to remediate the brownfield site on the northwest corner of Wisconsin and Reinken in order to provide a more functional roadway access to the Rail Runner station from Wisconsin Street.

**Strategy D-3:** Create and adopt a roadway, pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure plan connecting the Rail Runner station with Downtown, nearby neighborhoods, and the regional bikeway network.

**Strategy D-4:** Evaluate the current zoning of lands east of the Rail Runner station with the objective of preserving agricultural land use and protecting rural neighborhoods. Research alternative zoning and land management techniques to preserve the rural character and provide a buffer to the more intensive development near the Rail Runner station and along River Road (and Reinken).

**North Belen Gateway**

There are three gateways into Belen from the I-25 freeway. The North Belen Gateway is a key entry into the City because of its proximity to the Albuquerque metropolitan area. Master

planned areas around this gateway establish a potential for a new employment center for Belen. The action strategies for developing this activity center include promotion of job producing industrial and commercial development with direct access to the freeway and improving the corridor leading from this gateway into Belen.

***Goal E: Establish a North Belen commercial/industrial center.***

**Strategy E-1:** Complete the reconstruction of the North Belen Interchange to provide access to the west side of the I-25 Highway, in particular the Rancho Cielo master planned area that was annexed by the City in December 2006.

**Strategy E-2:** Prepare and adopt a North Belen Corridor Plan for the northern portion of Main Street between the I-25 Highway interchange and the NM 314 overcrossing, focusing on the streetscape (i.e., landscaping, lighting, pedestrian trails) and appropriate land development along the roadway.

**West Belen Gateway**

The West Belen Gateway has a significant potential for concentration of mixed-use development with ready connections to downtown, the high school campus, and the municipal airport. The strategy for growth in this activity center is to increase the intensity of development, including residential activities, and provide an entry point for travelers by highway and by air into Belen.

**Goal F: Create a mixed-use development cluster for West Belen.**

**Strategy F-1:** Establish a new zone district in the Belen Zoning Ordinance to be referenced as the West Belen Gateway District employing standards and regulations that allow for higher density residential and compact mixed-use development.

**Strategy F-2:** Promote the continuing development of traveler accommodations such as hotels, motels, and restaurants around the I-25 Interchange.

**Goal G: Establish a Highway Transportation Hub for Belen.**

**Strategy G-1:** Acquire or lease land near the interchange for development as a park-and-ride lot with amenities such as lighting, security fencing, and pedestrian shelters.

**Strategy G-2:** Provide transit services with stops in the vicinity of the Camino del Llano/I-25 Highway interchange.

**Goal H: Improve accessibility to the Belen West Mesa community.**

**Strategy H-1:** Reconstruct the Camino del Llano roadway segment from the I-25 Highway over the top of the escarpment of the west mesa area of Belen.

**Strategy H-2:** Prepare and adopt an areawide drainage master plan for the West Belen Gateway District to protect future development along the I-25 Highway and mitigate storm water runoff in steep slope areas.

**Strategy H-3:** Develop secure funding sources for implementing drainage plans on the western escarpment by activating the statutory process to establish and implement a regional Flood Control District [72-18-1 et seq. NMSA 1978] that includes all of the Belen area.

**South Belen Gateway**

This gateway activity center has a special character relating to the rural and agricultural history of Belen. The South Belen Gateway is a transitional area between the City and rural agricultural areas to the south. The growth strategy for this activity center is to maintain this special rural character to ensure a diversity of neighborhoods in Belen. In addition, the South Belen I-25 interchange is the first northbound approach to Belen on the freeway, and there should be opportunities to draw business from highway travelers.

**Goal I: Concentrate highway-related business activities in South Belen.**

**Strategy I-1:** Review both City and County Zoning of lands surrounding the South Belen Interchange and develop incentives for rural oriented businesses, particularly along NM314 and NM 116 (Old Highway 85).

**Strategy I-2:** Evaluate the feasibility of annexing additional lands around the South Belen Interchange.

**Strategy I-3:** Promote the development of an RV park with traveler amenities and services near the South Belen Interchange.

## Airport Center

Belen is fortunate to have the only public airport in the County. Much can be done to capitalize on the airport services. The growth strategy for this activity center is to improve accessibility into the airport area, protect and expand the functions of the airport, and increase development around the airport that is compatible with airport activities.

### ***Goal J: Expand the functions and services of Belen's municipal airport.***

**Strategy J-1:** Relocate Camino del Llano around the airport and construct a new crosswind runway with taxiway at the municipal airport.

**Strategy J-2:** Construct new hangars with direct access to the new crosswind runway.

**Strategy J-3:** Construct a new fire station at the airport.

### ***Goal K: Ensure compatible development of lands surrounding the airport.***

**Strategy K-1:** Adopt a future land use plan and recommended zoning for the municipal airport and surrounding lands within a three-mile radius of the airport runways.

**Strategy K-2:** Adopt a Joint Powers Agreement between the City of Belen and Valencia County to coordinate zoning jurisdiction of lands around the municipal airport.

## Implementation of Strategic Actions

The preceding strategic actions are intended to be carried out during the next ten years. If accomplished, the growth in Belen will become more focused in areas with the highest potential for development. In addition, these strategic actions emphasize and enhance the unique characteristics that define Belen as a special place.

This Strategic Growth Plan seeks to provide support by the City and the local business community to stimulate future development in five designated activity centers. These activity centers are already primed for development due to location, access, and visibility in the community and the region. The Strategic Growth Plan is not intended or designed to detract from growth in other areas of Belen, but to create a catalyst for development throughout the City as a whole.

Actions and decisions to implement this strategic growth plan will be influenced by factors such as overall costs, staffing capability, and the ease of scheduling and completion of projects. During times of economic uncertainty, a strategic planning process focuses on programs and projects that can be implemented in the short term and with the most efficient utilization of limited resources. A strategic planning process also builds a foundation for long term growth and sets the stage for Belen to become a more vibrant and healthy community.

The implementation table provided in Appendix H provides a matrix of all strategic actions categorized by goals

expressed for each of the activity centers. Of the eleven goals adopted by the City Council for the Strategic Growth Plan, thirty-four strategic actions are presented as recommendations for implementation by the City. Strategic action statements within the matrix table are further described in abbreviated terms (i.e., Implementation column) and a target year is suggested for completion of the action. About one third of the strategic actions pertain to administrative changes to regulatory ordinances currently in place. Another third of the strategic actions involve new studies or adoption of specialized plans to provide a basis for future decisions necessary to achieve the goals stated in the Strategic Growth Plan.

## PART VII

### REGULATORY AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS

#### Activity Centers

**Belen Center.** The goals and objectives that were adopted for the Belen Center envision the downtown area of Belen as a location of regional significance and a key destination for visitors to the City. This is the foremost activity center for the City; and, as the downtown commercial sector for Belen, is expected to be an economically vibrant, aesthetically attractive, and pedestrian-friendly place. While there have been numerous studies and plans focusing on this activity center, the actual implementation of any recommended projects in this area depend on funding, promotion and marketing, and regulatory controls effecting future development of downtown Belen.

The “Heart of Belen” was identified in a 2004 Strategic Marketing Plan as a specific locality centrally located in Belen, extending from Baca Avenue to Dalies Avenue and from the historic Harvey House and BNSF rail yard to the Belen Municipal Building located at Main Street and Becker Avenue. To date, improvements to Becker Avenue include the installation of themed lighting and signage, reconstruction of on-street parking, landscaping and other improvements to pedestrian walkways, street name pylons at major intersections, and the adoption of the Becker Avenue Zoning District. The Becker Avenue Zone was incorporated into the zoning ordinance in 2005 to promote the revitalization of properties fronting Becker Avenue from Main

Street to the Harvey House, and to provide public gathering places for the community. The Becker Avenue zoning regulations encourage concentrated mixed-use development with pedestrian amenities, diverse commercial activities, and government facilities.

Belen was also officially designated as a New Mexico MainStreet Community in 2009. The New Mexico MainStreet Program is an economic development program that assists communities in revitalizing their traditional commercial neighborhoods. As part of the MainStreet program, Belen will need to define boundaries for a MainStreet Downtown District. In addition, an organizational structure for the MainStreet District will need to be established by the City of Belen. Once established, the City can proceed with the development of special district plans, programs, and funding mechanisms.

The Rail Runner station area is the subject of a study completed in 2009 and endorsed by the Belen City Council (see Appendix C). The study presented numerous concepts for transit oriented development around the commuter rail station. Among the concepts for future land use in the study area were proposals for more mixed use and higher density development, emphasis on multimodal transit facilities, a more efficient and less disruptive street network accessing the station area, and improved pedestrian walkways including a new pedestrian overpass from the rail

station to the Becker Avenue District. Although there were a number of capital improvement recommendations, some of these concepts could be implemented by special regulatory controls focusing on transit oriented development.

Belen has a number of distinctive historic buildings and structures located in the Belen Center. The Mayor and City Council have determined that any historic landmarks within the City should be identified and protected. In order to set up a process for locally designating historic landmarks and districts, the Belen Historic Properties Review Board (HPRB) was created and has begun work to develop procedures and standards for listing the historic properties in Belen. The initial focus of the HPRB is to develop an inventory of historic properties, and delineate boundaries for historic districts where there are sufficient clusters of historic properties. It is anticipated that at least one historic district in the vicinity of the Harvey House could be established in the Belen Center area.

The overall strategy for the Belen Center is to maintain a complex of special districts working in concert to create a diverse and energetic downtown area that would emphasize and promote the unique character of Belen. Special districts are typically defined and regulated through the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and other types of regulatory ordinances. In practice, a special district imposes regulations and procedures that are distinctive and often different from the citywide zoning regulations. Consequently, the diverse character of the activity center is identified and maintained as future

development or redevelopment occurs within the boundaries of the special districts. The following special districts, existing or proposed, are specifically recommended for the Belen Center:

- *Becker Avenue District* – a zoning category in the Belen Zoning Ordinance that is intended to control development of lands adjacent to Becker Avenue from Main Street to First Street, with new emphasis on mixed-use development, entertainment and the arts.
- *Belen MainStreet District* – an area associated with a segment of Main Street in downtown Belen to be delineated in the near future; planned and developed with the backing of the New Mexico MainStreet Program.
- *Belen Rail Runner Station Area District* – a yet-to-be delineated area for transit oriented development of lands surrounding the commuter rail station.
- *Belen Historic District(s)* – one or more districts established under the Historic District Ordinance by recommendation of the Historic Properties Review Board and approved by the City Council.
- *Belen Main Street Downtown Corridor* – proposed for consideration of alternative zoning techniques utilizing form-based zoning along the Downtown Corridor as described in this Strategic Growth Plan. (Refer to discussion of regulatory and development controls for the Belen Corridors later in this Part for more detail.)

**North Belen Gateway.** A significant portion of the land within this activity center is organized by master plans. The City should work with the master plan developers to ensure that the build-out of these areas is done in a coordinated manner and is consistent with the preferred character of the North Belen Gateway. The goals and objectives for this activity center envision a major employment center for industrial and commercial activities with direct freeway access and that can be supported by compatible but limited residential development in peripheral areas.

The anticipated reconstruction of the freeway interchange in this activity center will change the traffic circulation patterns thus requiring a reevaluation of the land use management for this area. Since this activity center provides a gateway into Belen, there should be special development standards adopted for landscaping, signage, and other visual features to enhance the experience of exiting the freeway and entering the City of Belen. As a planned major employment center, the North Belen Gateway would function more efficiently with local and/or regional transit services provided to the major job locations.

The City should reevaluate the current zoning within the North Belen Gateway and revise to encourage development that is compatible with the master planned areas. A proposed strategy would be to establish “Gateway Special Districts” as a new zoning category for the Belen Zoning Ordinance. Gateway Special Districts could be applied to the three activity centers located at the freeway interchanges that have been

designated by this Strategic Growth Plan. Although similar to the general Special District (SU-1) in the Belen Zoning Ordinance, each Gateway Special District could be tailored to promote the special character envisioned by the goals and objectives of the Strategic Growth Plan. Added regulatory and financial incentives for Gateway Special Districts might also encourage the preferred development in these activity centers.

**West Belen Gateway.** Although scattered, the developed areas within the West Belen Gateway are already above average in density for Belen as a whole. A significant number of the buildings in this activity center are taller than single-story construction; and the residential units are located on small-lot subdivisions and in multiple-unit structures. This activity center is also unique in that it functions as a motel cluster adjacent to the freeway interchange that is most central to the City of Belen. Access to the municipal airport as well as the downtown is convenient. There is a variety of land uses already established within this activity center, many of which benefit by their proximity to freeway access. Other travel related businesses are anticipated to locate in the West Belen Gateway.

There is an abundance of undeveloped area within this activity center. If the current level and type of development is continued, the West Belen Gateway could become a showcase for mixed-use, compact development for the City of Belen. With a growing concentration of development in this activity center, pedestrian amenities and transit services can be readily justified. As noted previously, a Gateway Special

District can be applied in this activity center to advance the special goals and objectives adopted for the West Belen Gateway.

**South Belen Gateway.** Among the gateway activity centers designated in the Strategic Growth Plan, the South Belen Gateway is exceptional in that it does not propose a higher density of development than that which currently exists. The reason for the contrast to the other gateway activity centers is the preference for preserving a rural neighborhood character within Belen itself and providing a transitional approach into Belen from the predominantly rural and agricultural areas to the south. The pertinent goals and objectives envision a dispersed and low profile business development in this activity center with rural or large lot residential neighborhoods located behind the commercial strip development of the South Main Street Corridor. The strategy for managing the land use in this activity center could be achieved by establishing a Gateway Special District; or the City could reevaluate and apply existing zoning regulations for low-density development.

**Airport Center.** The strategic goals and objectives adopted for the Airport Center were intended to make certain that surrounding land uses are compatible with airport operations; and that the planned future expansion of the airport is accomplished. Development on property located within the Belen municipal boundaries is regulated by the Belen Zoning Ordinance under various zoning categories. Land use activities in the vicinity of the airport that might affect aircraft operations are also controlled by the City Airport Ordinance.

The City-owned airport property is designated by the City as a Special Use (SU-1) District, which allows such activities as airports and aircraft sales and services. However, there are other types of land uses that are permitted in the SU-1 zone district, subject to public hearing and City Council approval:

- automobile salvage,
- cemeteries,
- prison and detention facilities,
- explosives storage, manufacturing or sales,
- Fairgrounds,
- golf courses, recreational parks and stadiums,
- junk and salvage yards,
- mobile home parks,
- sand and gravel operations,
- schools and colleges,
- livestock feed lots,
- fuel wholesalers and storage, and
- drive-in theaters.

Of the 1,490 acres recently annexed by the City, 695 acres are under private ownership. All of the newly annexed land has been zoned C-1, General Commercial, under the Belen Zoning Ordinance. The intent of this zoning district is to allow a wide range of commercial uses, such as retailing, financial, and personal services that may or may not be compatible or associated with a nearby airport.

The lands surrounding the Airport that are outside the Belen City Limits are under the jurisdiction of Valencia County and are zoned either Rural Residential (RR-1) or Outland District (OD) according to the County's zone map. The purpose of the County RR-1 Zone is to provide for low density rural residential uses, one dwelling unit per

minimum one-acre parcel. Limited agricultural uses are also allowed in the County RR-1 Zone. The purpose of the County OD Zone is to accommodate large undeveloped areas in the County, although limited low-density residential and ranching activities related to the grazing of livestock are permitted.

Both the City and the County comprehensive zoning ordinances include airport overlay zones in addition to the underlying zone districts. These overlay zones generally reflect the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) restrictions on land uses adjacent to or nearby public airport runways. These restrictions are intended to provide both airspace protection and compatibility with airport operations.

Development on and immediately adjacent to the airport is regulated by the City Municipal Airport Ordinance. Lands adjacent to the airport that are located outside of the Belen City Limits are regulated by the Valencia County Airport Encroachment Overlay District Ordinance (AEOD). Both of these airport overlay ordinances including schematics are provided in Appendix F of this plan document. The Belen Airport Zoning Regulations (Belen Municipal Code Chapter 11.12) apply to lands only within the municipal limits of the City. That municipal ordinance establishes approach zones, transitional zones, a horizontal zone, and a conical zone relative to the runways of the airport (see Appendix F for more detail).

The Valencia County AEOD establishes a height limitation zone, noise impact zone, and airport runway protection zone (Section 154.153, AEOD), which apply only within the unincorporated

areas of the County in relation to the Belen Alexander Municipal Airport. The Belen Airport is also subject to State planning and zoning laws pertaining to municipal airports [3-39-1 through 3-39-27 NMSA 1978].

Proposed land development around the airport within the City limits is typically reviewed for zoning compliance by the Belen Planning and Zoning Commission. Development proposed outside the City limits is reviewed for zoning compliance through the County zoning process. The subdivision and platting of land near the airport is reviewed by the City or the County or both the City and County depending on where the subdivision occurs. Any subdivision of land in territory located outside the Belen corporate limits but within the municipal planning and platting jurisdiction is subject to concurrent review and approval by the City and the County. Consequently, two sets of regulations and procedures are imposed on subdivisions in this area. Subdivision and development of land near the Belen Airport should be given special attention regarding airport impacts and compatibility.

The Strategic Growth Plan goals and objectives recommend that an agreement between the City of Belen and Valencia County be formalized to ensure compatible and coordinated development of land surrounding the airport. A proposed Joint Powers Agreement regulating land uses around the Belen Municipal Airport can be found in Appendix G.

## Corridors

**North Main Corridor.** The recommended strategy for this corridor is to transform a relatively standard state highway into a grand boulevard that carries traffic into and out of downtown Belen through the North Belen Gateway. A Belen Corridor Map is provided in Figure 2. This corridor stretches from the North Belen Gateway to Aragon Road, and has sufficient right-of-way north of the railroad overpass to be improved and maintained as a divided highway with a landscaped median. Improvements to the highway design however must be authorized and administered by the New Mexico Department of Transportation. Almost all of the abutting lands on this highway are within the corporate limits and zoning jurisdiction of the City of Belen. These lands are currently zoned under a Main Street Overlay Zone which affects zoning and development along Main Street from the “northerly boundary” to the “southerly boundary” of the City. However, annexations have redefined and extended this overlay zone significantly such that the intent and purpose of the overlay zone comes into question and should be reevaluated. In addition, new development such as the Wal-Mart Supercenter has changed the character of the land use along this corridor and does not currently meet the intent of the Main Street Overlay Zone.

A Corridor Study and Plan should be prepared in order to analyze the existing development along the highway and reevaluate the purpose and relevance of the Main Street Overlay Zone particularly as it applies to the North Main Corridor designated in the Strategic Growth Plan. A North Main

Corridor Plan would provide the necessary planning framework to consolidate and unify the various segments of these Main Street highways that have evolved over recent years.

**Downtown Corridor.** Main Street in Belen changes in character as it passes through the downtown area. The segment of Main Street from Aragon Road to Camino del Llano has a high degree of intensity and density of buildings along the street front. Some of the older buildings in this corridor are built to the street line, connected side-to-side and presenting a unified frontage along the street. Parking for customers or workers for these buildings is provided on the street or behind the building. This type of building placement is quite different from the typical present-day development of buildings that are set back from the street to accommodate a parking lot in front of the building.

The strategy for the downtown corridor is to restore the historic pattern of development where buildings are situated close to the street while dedicating pedestrian space and landscaping between the building facades and the street edge. This form of design provides a more intimate, pedestrian-friendly backdrop along Main Street and possibly an increase in the visual intensity of downtown. Incentives for mixed-use development, residential apartments, and live/work condominiums bring in historical characteristics that existed in Belen and other similar communities many years ago.

A relatively recent zoning technique known as “form-based zoning” or “form-based codes” has been adopted in a number of communities to encourage development that emphasizes visual appearance instead of regulating and separating land use activities. Form-based zoning prescribes “build-to lines” and emphasizes the physical form and presence of buildings in relation to the street. Form-based zoning encourages a healthy mix of retail and residential uses.

In contrast, more conventional zoning establishes requirements for open space setbacks around buildings and imposes listings of allowable uses for the property. Conventional zoning often allows strip commercial development that can discourage pedestrian activity and increase dependence on cars as shoppers drive from store to store.

This Strategic Growth Plan recommends a special regulatory application to the lands abutting Main Street within the Downtown Corridor somewhat like the zoning category created specifically for the Becker Avenue District. The Downtown Corridor can be rezoned under a new zoning category for designation as a form-based zoning district. By using the principles of form-based zoning, the intent would be to initiate the transformation of the Downtown Corridor into a more traditional commercial street reminiscent of historic Belen but with added residential, mixed-use, and pedestrian oriented development.

**South Main Corridor.** Development in the South Main Corridor has been relatively static or in decline over the past decade or two. This portion of Main

Street in Belen retains a rural highway character and, as Belen grows, may attract more highway-related development and other low-density land use activities. This Strategic Growth Plan recommends that the City and landowners in this area seek to capitalize on the existing rural characteristics. Development of highway-related services and agricultural industries might be encouraged by providing regulatory relief from zoning requirements. Zoning of the lands along this highway corridor needs to be reviewed and revised if necessary to encourage new development as well as redevelopment of abandoned buildings. Public transit services would be feasible if infill growth occurs and produces a more intensive linear commercial development along South Main Street.

**Camino del Llano Corridor.** There are two distinct sections of the Camino del Llano Corridor, one is east of the I-25 Freeway and the other is west. The eastern portion was expanded from a narrow two-lane to a predominantly three-lane roadway within the past decade but is limited by right-of-way for further expansion. The western portion is an undivided two-lane road that is scheduled for reconstruction to a five-lane roadway in the near future. Within the West Belen Gateway activity center, Camino del Llano serves as the principal access road to lands around the freeway interchange. A significant change to land use regulation along Camino del Llano will be created by the designation of a Gateway Special District for the West Belen Gateway.

**Reinken/River Road Corridor.** The Reinken/River Road Corridor provides an east-west route from Belen to the Rio Grande bridge crossing and connecting to the lands on the east side of the river. The roadway in this corridor is designated as NM Highway 309 and is under the administrative jurisdiction of the New Mexico Department of Transportation. Lands along this corridor are zoned predominantly for commercial use from downtown Belen to the river. The portion of this corridor within a quarter-mile radius of the Rail Runner station should be included in the Belen Rail Runner Station Area District. That proposed district plan is intended to promote transit oriented development along the Reinken/River Road Corridor.

**I-25 Corridor.** Although the City of Belen has no control over the design and construction of the I-25 Interstate Highway, Belen does have zoning jurisdiction on lands abutting the freeway that are within the municipal corporate limits. However, there are large segments of the freeway that are bordered by unincorporated lands of Valencia County. There are also lands within some of the Gateway activity centers that are outside the Belen City limits. Obviously, coordination with the County is important to ensure that development along the I-25 Corridor is not detrimental to the City of Belen.

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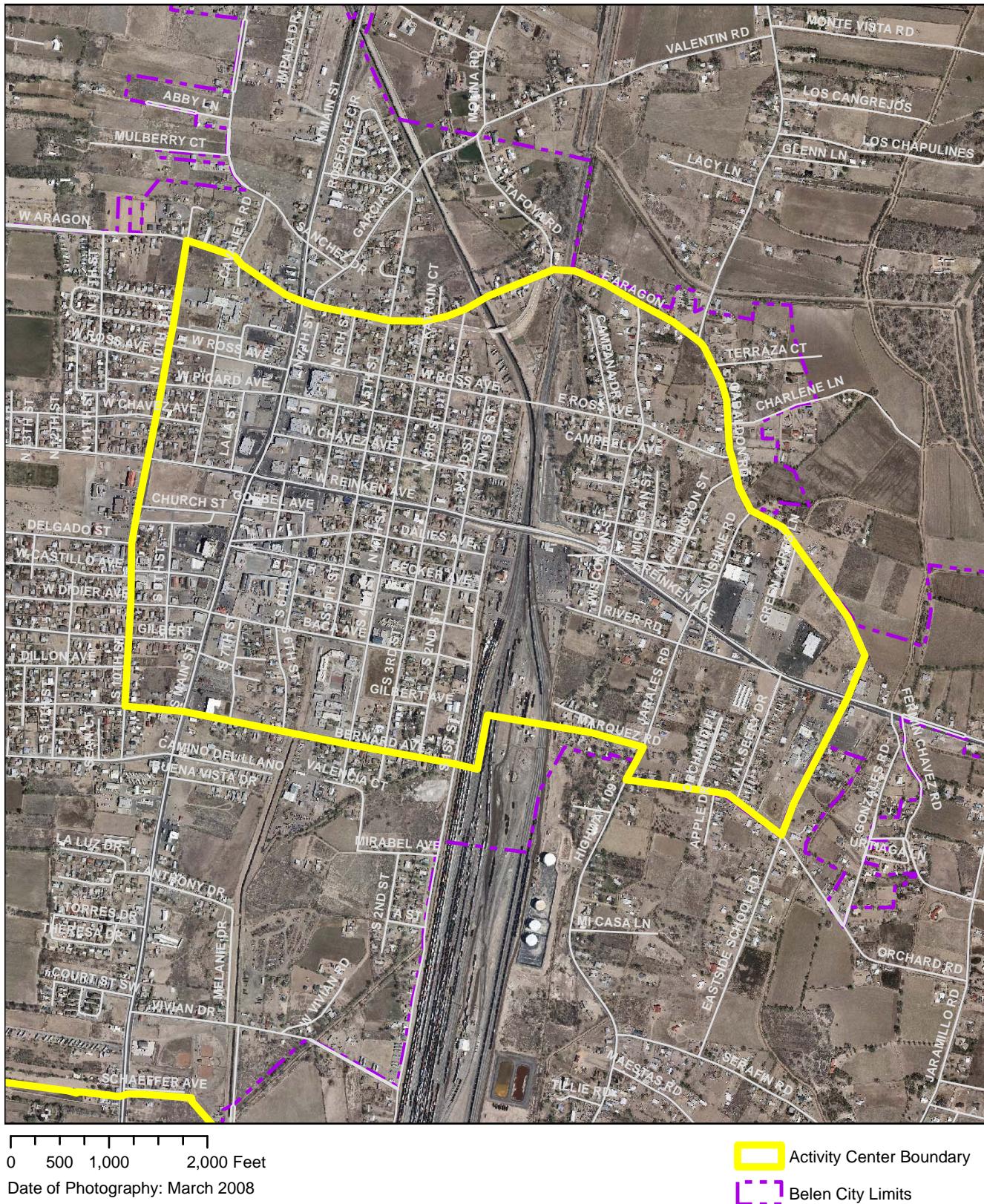
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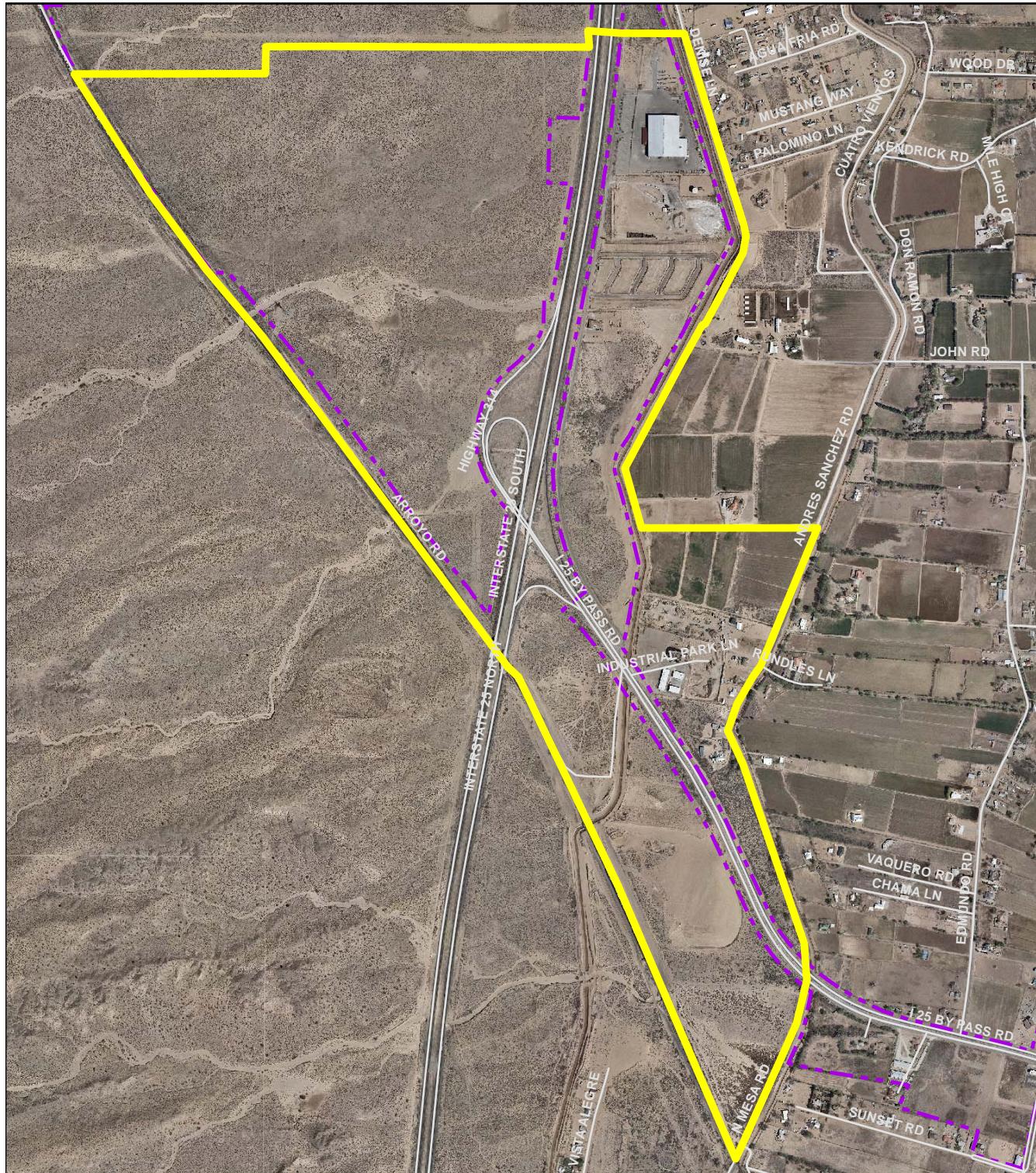
**APPENDIX A**

**Activity Center Maps**

# Belen Center



## North Belen Gateway



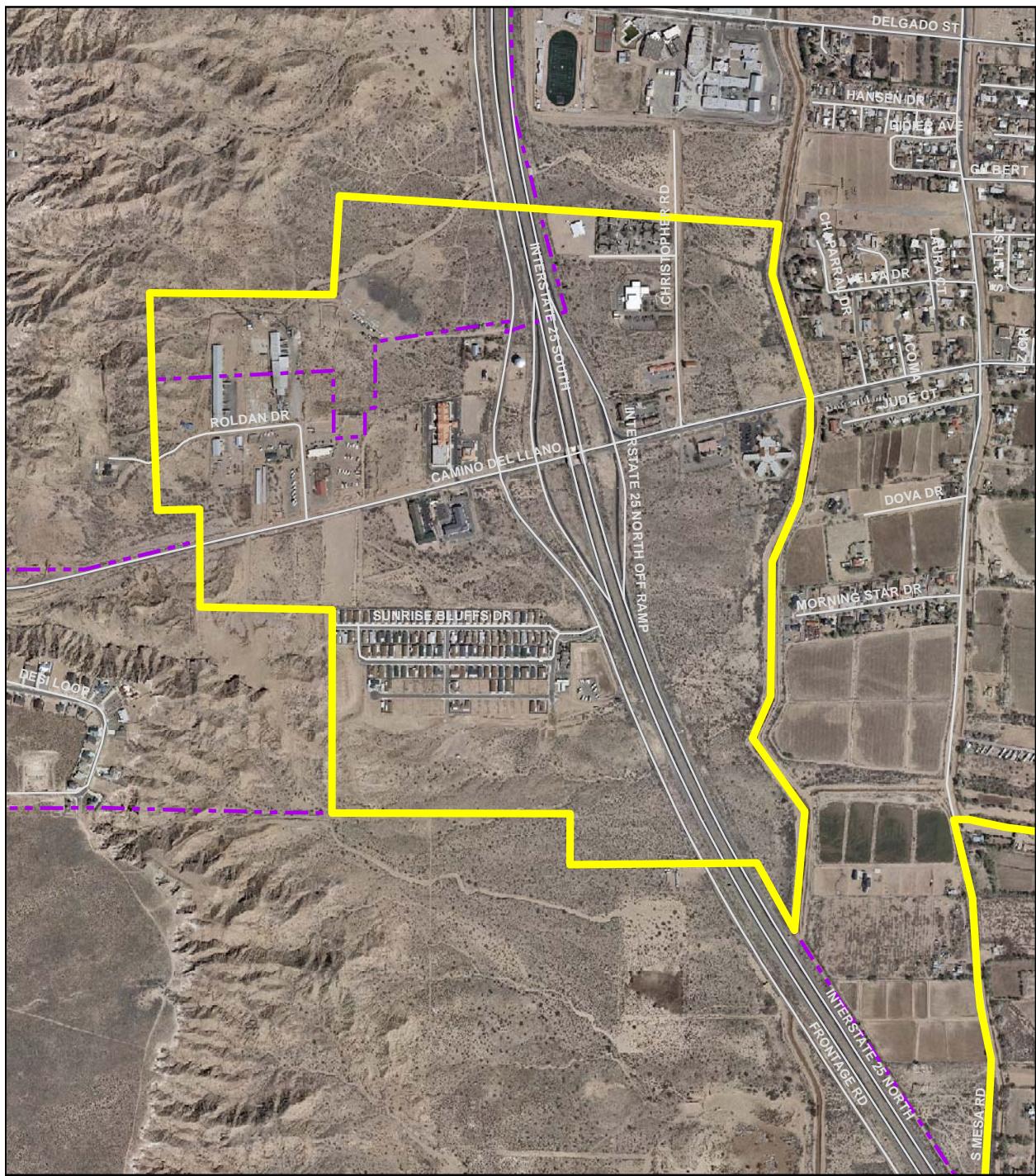
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Date of Photography: March 2008

  Activity Center Boundary

  Belen City Limits

## West Belen Gateway



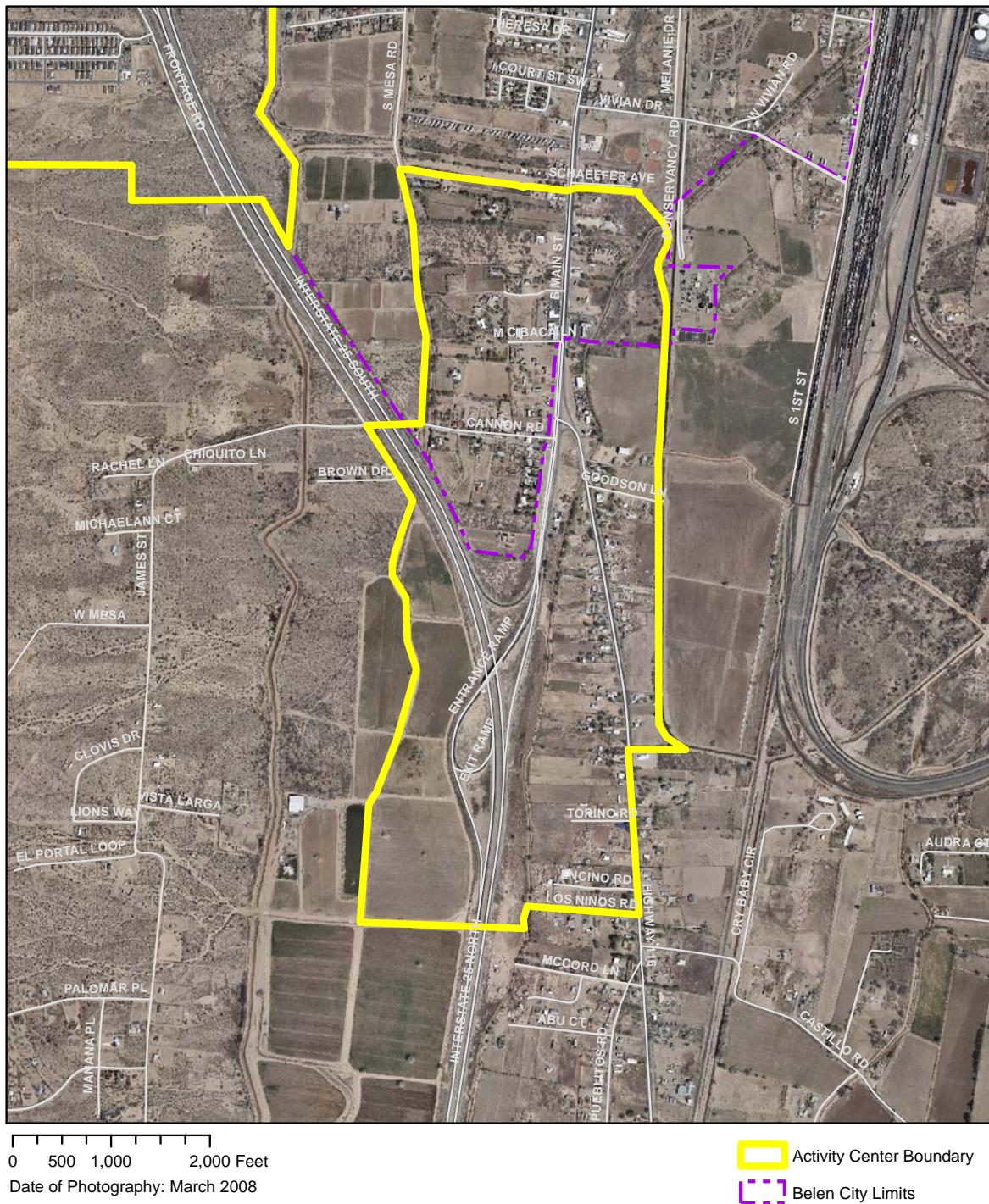
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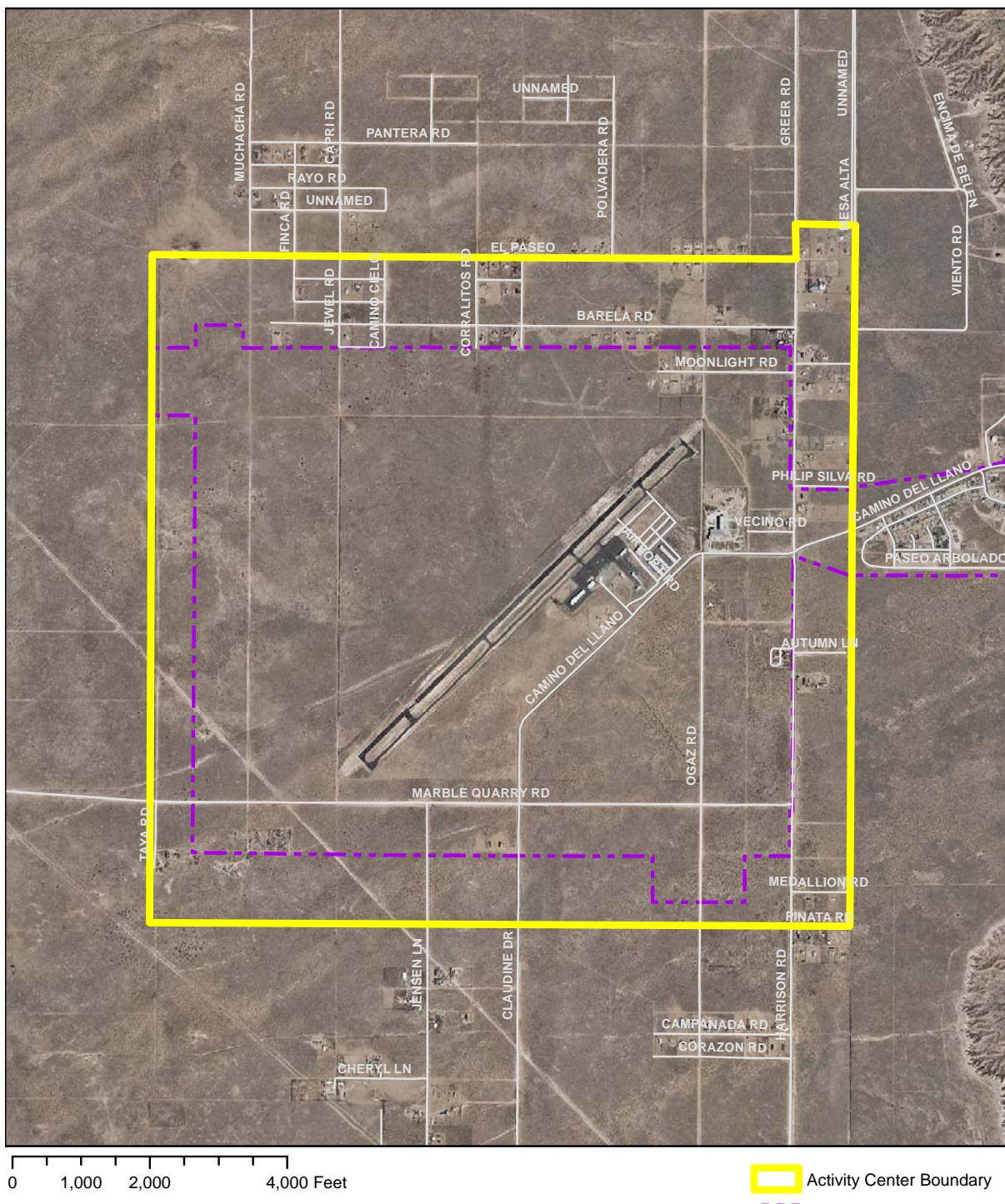
  Activity Center Boundary

  Belen City Limits

## South Belen Gateway



## Airport Center



Date of Photography: March 2008

**APPENDIX B**

**Population and Employment Data Tables**

## **Belen Strategic Growth Plan – Demographics Methodology**

### ***Population***

The 2008 population estimate for Belen was developed by MRCOG using a composite of two methods: the housing unit method and a ratio method. The housing unit method is a means of estimating population based on the housing stock, or the number of dwelling units in the municipality. Under the housing unit method, total population is determined by adding the household population – the number of persons living in residential units determined by the product of the occupancy rate, persons per household ratio, and the housing stock – to the number of persons living in group quarters such as dormitories, nursing homes, or prisons.

Total Population = Household Population (Housing stock \* occupancy rate \* persons per household) + Group Quarters

The ratio method works backward from a county control total, developed by MRCOG and Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER), using the countywide total number of new housing permits and the housing unit method. The key difference in the ratio method is that municipality's share of the county housing permit total is equivalent to the new population. MRCOG's Belen municipal population estimate is an average of the two methodologies.

### **Belen Historical Population Adjusted for Current Boundaries**

| Year       | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
|------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Population | 7059 | 7091 | 7118 | 7167 | 7204 | 7396 | 7467 | 7544 | 7709 |

Belen population projections assume no annexations occur and that corporate limits are held constant between 2008 and 2020. Three methodologies were used in the development of the 2020 estimate: 1) an extrapolated population based on historical trends; 2) the housing unit method based on extrapolated housing unit growth; and 3) a shift share method which assesses the percent share that Belen comprises of the total Valencia County population.<sup>1</sup> In all three cases, data from 2000 to 2008 was used as the basis for 2020 projections.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Extrapolated population*

The first, and most simplistic methodology, is an extrapolation or trend scenario. This method assumes previous rates of population change will hold constant. The population of Belen grew from 2000 to

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<sup>1</sup> Demographic models, which are common tools for predicting population, involve birth rates, death rates, and migration patterns applied to age-cohorts over time. However, for multiple reasons a demographic estimate was not undertaken. First, the increasing obsolescence of the 2000 Census data gives any estimate a high margin of error, particularly among age-cohorts. Second, the study lacked meaningful migration data other than comparing changes in age-cohorts from the 1990 and 2000 censuses. While this is an accepted method, the time elapsed since the most recent census makes this method a tenuous one for a small area estimate as in the case of Belen.

<sup>2</sup> Projections often utilize historical data over a longer period of time than the Belen Strategic Growth Plan. However, given the short time frame, as well as changes in Belen's municipal limits, which make comparison of historical data over time difficult, 2000 to 2008 data were considered sufficient for developing projections.

2008 by 1.11% annually.<sup>3</sup> Assuming this growth rate as constant, the Belen population grows from 7,709 residents in 2008 to 8,868 in 2020.

#### *Housing Unit method*

Rather than projecting forward the total population, the housing unit-based projection analyzes the rate of new housing unit development from 2000 to 2008 based on the number of permits granted by the City of Belen. The trend in housing growth was projected forward to 2020 to create a projected housing stock. As with the 2008 municipal estimate, the new total housing stock was multiplied by projected 2020 occupancy rates and persons-per-household ratio. The housing unit growth method predicts Belen's housing stock will contain more than 450 new housing units by 2020.

The projected occupancy rate was taken from 2000 Census and maintained as constant from 2008 to 2020. This decision is based on several principles. First, the occupancy rate for Belen in both the 1990 and 2000 Censuses was virtually the same, 88.1% and 87.9% respectively, providing historical precedent. Second, occupancy rate is volatile and difficult to predict with any certainty, tending to vary based on market conditions rather than predictable trends. Finally, local officials corroborated the occupancy rate given the current patterns in housing and land use. Nationally, the persons-per-household ratio is predicted to decline slightly over time.<sup>4</sup> This rate of national decline was applied to the 2000 Census total, which also served as the 2008 base year ratio. The final input for determining total population, the group quarters population, is predicted to remain the same.

#### **Projected Housing Characteristics**

| Year | Persons per Household | Occupancy Rate |
|------|-----------------------|----------------|
| 2000 | 2.61                  | 87.9%          |
| 2008 | 2.61                  | 87.9%          |
| 2010 | 2.59                  | 87.9%          |
| 2015 | 2.57                  | 87.9%          |
| 2020 | 2.55                  | 87.9%          |

#### *Shift-share method*

The third method analyzes the percent share that Belen comprises of the Valencia County population over time. A historical review shows that Belen constituted a decreasing share of the Valencia County population over time. MRCOG projected Belen's percent share forward and contrasted the total to the Valencia County population as projected by BBER. An interesting consideration for this methodology is that Valencia County is projected to grow at a rate significantly higher than the City of Belen. The resulting population estimate is the highest of the three, despite the declining share Belen represents of Valencia County.

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<sup>3</sup> Incidentally, the City of Belen grew by a similar rate of 1.20% annually between 1970 and 2000.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. "Projection of the Number of Households and Families in the United States: 1995 to 2010," April 1996

### Initial Population Estimates

| Year | HU Method | Extrapolated | Shiftshare | Average |
|------|-----------|--------------|------------|---------|
| 2008 | 7709      | 7709         | 7709       | 7709    |
| 2010 | 7879      | 7886         | 7778       | 7878    |
| 2015 | 8258      | 8373         | 8418       | 8381    |
| 2020 | 8653      | 8868         | 9074       | 8898    |

A review of the methodologies and their results shows that the housing unit method produces the lowest estimate, followed by the extrapolated total. The shift share produces the highest estimate for Belen and may most accurately reflect the growth potential for Belen as the City could reasonably absorb some of Valencia County's expected population growth. MRCOG decided to take an average of the three methodologies as the source of projections for the *Belen Strategic Growth Plan*. The result is a population gain of 1,189 and an additional 588 housing units.

### Final Population and Housing Estimates for City of Belen<sup>5</sup>

| Year | Population | Housing Units |
|------|------------|---------------|
| 2008 | 7,709      | 3,318         |
| 2010 | 7,878      | 3,401         |
| 2015 | 8,381      | 3,648         |
| 2020 | 8,898      | 3,906         |

### **Activity Center Population Totals**

The 2008 activity center populations were developed using the housing unit method. Activity center housing stocks were determined based on MRCOG's inventory of land uses, residential permits, 2000 Census data, and aerial photography. The municipal persons-per-household and occupancy rates were used for all activity centers except the West Belen Gateway, which includes the Sunrise Bluffs retirement community and consequently contains different demographic characteristics.

|                     | Population | Household Pop | Housing Units | Households | Group Quarters | Employment | Acres  |
|---------------------|------------|---------------|---------------|------------|----------------|------------|--------|
| Airport             | 206        | 206           | 90            | 79         | 0              | 46         | 2276.6 |
| Belen Center        | 2281       | 2270          | 990           | 871        | 11             | 2276       | 682.9  |
| North Belen Gateway | 16         | 16            | 7             | 6          | 0              | 53         | 720.0  |
| South Belen Gateway | 266        | 266           | 116           | 102        | 0              | 40         | 451.0  |
| West Belen Gateway  | 481        | 356           | 193           | 183        | 125            | 464        | 387.4  |

While the *Belen Strategic Growth Plan* encourages certain forms of development and growth in each activity center, not all locations will develop evenly or substantially. Activity Center estimates for 2020 are based on known plans and developments, and inputs from the focus group and local officials. These estimates should be viewed as a forecast "what if" scenario; that is to say, a picture of what would happen if development unfolds a certain way. Apart from known construction projects, the focus group considered the likelihood of development of each specific activity center. The *North Belen Gateway*,

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<sup>5</sup> By comparison, the 2003 *Belen Comprehensive Land Use Plan* projected a population of 7,710 in 2020, a number almost identical to the 2008 actual Belen population. At the time the existing comprehensive plan was developed, Belen had a period of minimal growth; recent growth patterns and future development plans suggest a more dynamic future for Belen.

which contains Rancho Cielo, is expected to grow dramatically over time, however much of the growth may exceed the 2020 time horizon considered in the *Belen Strategic Growth Plan*. Housing development in the activity center will focus entirely on the Alhambra development east of I-25, with 90 single-family units and 50 multi-family units expected. The *Belen Center* area contains an imminent 60-unit multi-family complex, features a potential growth area around the Rail Runner station, and is considered likely to witness mixed-use and infill development. The *West Gateway Center* is assured of seeing the completion of the Sunrise Bluffs retirement community with an additional 25 housing units, but is unlikely to experience additional growth. Belen is unlikely to see substantial growth in other activity centers, which are forecast to grow at the citywide rate.

### **2020 Activity Center Housing and Population Forecasts**

|               | New Housing Units | Total Housing Units | Total Population |
|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Airport       | 16                | 106                 | 238              |
| Belen Center  | 180               | 1170                | 2633             |
| North Gateway | 140               | 147                 | 329              |
| South Gateway | 21                | 137                 | 307              |
| West Gateway  | 25                | 218                 | 652              |

### ***Employment***

MRCOG's 2008 employment estimates for Belen are based on data obtained from InfoUSA and MRCOG's own research. The estimate is a composite of known job sites and their employment totals and employment for Data Analysis Subzones (DASZs) that are entirely or partially within municipal limits.<sup>6</sup> The same methodology was used for activity center estimates.

Employment estimates for 2020 are based on inputs from the focus group, current land use plans, and Belen officials. Employment densities, based on jobs-per-acre industry averages, were applied in instances where known totals of commercial area development will occur.

Historically Belen has served as a regional employment hub and MRCOG projects that Belen's place as a regional employment center is likely to continue.<sup>7</sup> According to the 2000 Census, there were 2,608 employed persons residing in Belen, however only 44.6% of employed residents of Belen actually worked in Belen. MRCOG estimated in 2000 that Belen held 4,152 jobs, meaning that only 1,163 Belen residents also worked in Belen. Of the 2,899 Belen workers who do not reside in the City, half resided in the rest of Valencia County and half lived in Bernalillo or Socorro Counties.

Employment forecast totals are similarly based on the percent of population in Belen, Valencia County, and Socorro and Bernalillo Counties that worked in Belen according to 2000 Census data. Maintaining these percent shares reflects Belen's sustained position as a regional employment center and source of significant employment growth. MRCOG forecasts that Belen's employment will grow by 41.3% from 2008 to 2020 and will surpass 6,000 jobs.

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<sup>6</sup> MRCOG develops employment estimates by DASZs. However municipalities and activity center boundaries do not usually coincide perfectly with DASZ boundaries. MRCOG maintains a database of known job sites and their employment.

<sup>7</sup> MRCOG. "City of Belen: Forecast of Population, Housing, and Employment to 2025," November 2002

### **Employment Estimates by Year and by Worker Place of Origin**

| Year | Belen residents<br>that work in Belen | Non-Belen population<br>working in Belen | Total<br>Employment |
|------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| 2000 | 1163                                  | 2989                                     | 4152                |
| 2008 | 1299                                  | 3491                                     | 4339                |
| 2010 | 1328                                  | 3709                                     | 5037                |
| 2015 | 1413                                  | 4175                                     | 5587                |
| 2020 | 1500                                  | 4632                                     | 6132                |

Activity Center employment estimates, similar to housing and population estimates, are based on known plans and developments and inputs from the local focus group. *North Gateway* will see the construction of the Signet Solar manufacturing plant and resulting 600 jobs, plus an expected 134 retail and commercial jobs associated with the Alhambra development. *Belen Center* is likely to experience the redevelopment of a mostly vacant shopping center along Reinken Avenue, along with additional jobs associated with mixed-use development along Main St, Becker Ave, and Dailies Ave. Since it is unknown precisely how many new jobs are likely to be created in the Belen Center, a ratio of jobs to residents from 2008 was applied to the 2020 population to develop an employment forecast. The *Airport Center* will see 60 new jobs associated with the Star Center solar collection facility, 30 jobs at the LoPresti aircraft assembly plant, along with employment resulting from the expanded airport including the crosswind runway. The *West Gateway* is forecast for the establishment of an additional hotel and two small commercial sites, such as gas stations or restaurants. Finally, the *South Gateway*, which is not expected to see significant job creation in the coming decade, is forecast for employment growth at the Belen city rate until 2020.

### **2020 Activity Center Employment Forecasts<sup>8</sup>**

|               | New Employment | Total Employment |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| Airport       | 105            | 151              |
| Belen Center  | 402            | 2678             |
| North Gateway | 734            | 787              |
| South Gateway | 19             | 64               |
| West Gateway  | 71             | 535              |

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<sup>8</sup> The sum projected activity center employment total is 1,301, while the municipal forecast calls for 1,793. The difference of 492 jobs can be assumed to locate within the municipality but outside of the activity centers.

**APPENDIX C**

**Rail Runner Station Area Study Findings**

## **Belen Station Area Planning Study (February 2009)**

**[Selected Text Only; Maps, Photos, and References Excluded]**

### **Station Area Planning Study**

The Belen Station Area Planning Study is a first step in a community planning and design process to identify issues and opportunities and explore ideas for land uses and development, circulation, public spaces and key projects for the area surrounding the New Mexico Rail Runner Express Station site. This report is intended to provide local staff a guide for how planning and development in the station area should occur, and inform future land-use and policy decisions made by elected officials, outside agencies, and developers. The objectives, plan elements, recommendations and illustrations are based on the following vision provided by the steering committee and policies outlined in the City's planning framework including the Comprehensive Plan and the recent "Heart of Belen" Project.

### **Station Area**

The station area includes elements within a  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile radius of the station site with a particular focus on areas of opportunity and key elements within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile or five minute walk of the station. The station site is located on 1.5 acres north of the Reinken Avenue Overpass on the east side of the tracks. The site is separated at ground level from the downtown core by the rail yards where an average of 100 freight trains move through Belen each day. Immediately to the east of the station site is an established single family neighborhood; on the north, vacant and underutilized properties and to the south a large Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) parking lot.

The station area also includes a portion of the **Heart of Belen Project** which focuses on revitalization of the historical district of Belen to draw residents and visitors alike to the downtown area, generating increased trade and a more vibrant and attractive community. It envisions a healthy mix of retail establishments; restaurants, quiet gathering places and a paseo that will add to the dynamic qualities and emotional pull of the place and keep people in the area longer than would be the case in typical downtowns. Covering about a quarter mile, the Heart of Belen Project extends from Baca Avenue to Dalies Avenue and from the historic Harvey House to Belen's Municipal Building on Main Street. The target street for revitalization is Becker Avenue.

### **Planning Process**

The planning effort took place during a six month period from June 2008 to December 2008. The process began with initial information gathering and field research by the HDR consulting team, City staff and planners from the Mid-Region Council of Governments with guidance from members of the steering committee and various public agencies. After the initial research was completed the process was organized around two  $\frac{1}{2}$  day workshops with the steering committee as well as on-going input from committee members. The first workshop established strong themes and key elements as well as identifying issues and opportunities to be addressed in the planning study. At the second workshop, the team presented initial ideas and schematic concepts for the steering committee to consider and build on. Feedback from the participants provided the basis for the plan elements and recommendations.

### **Planning Framework**

City and related county, regional government policies, goals, objectives, strategies and regulations as well as community profiles are documented in several plans and reports. Many of the goals, objectives

and strategies involving land use changes, circulation and transit, code regulations and future projects are addressed in this study. Below is a list of plans and documents that form the planning framework for the study:

- Belen Comprehensive Plan- 2003
- Valencia County Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2005
- Belen Zoning Code
- City of Belen Strategic Growth Plan (on-going)
- Valencia County Mobility Plan
- Heart of Belen Revitalization Project
- Main Street Design Guidelines
- Becker Avenue Zone- (Ord. 2005-08 § 1 (part))
- MRCOG 2030 Regional Forecast
- HDR/MRCOG Station Locations Assessment Report for Belen
- EPS Market Study

## **Issues and Opportunities**

During the planning process, issues and opportunities were discussed as two sides of the same coin. With a focus on the vision and the opportunities that the Rail Runner Express brings to Belen, the team identified and mapped key issues, opportunities, and initial ideas to be addressed in the planning process.

### **Issues:**

- Difficult pedestrian connections between the downtown core and Station Area including the lack of way finding elements and visible connections.
- The long walk, up and over the tracks via the Reinken Avenue Overpass to the downtown core limits the number of visitors and commuters willing to make the journey on foot.
- The lack of convenient commuter parking.
- The lack of transit options to the station from the surrounding neighborhoods and communities.
- Poor station access for cars and transit causing long waits to get in and out of station parking area.
- The lack of designated pedestrian and bike routes to the station platform from the surrounding neighborhoods and communities.

### **Opportunities:**

- Capitalize on the regional demand for new commercial and residential uses in areas within walking distance of commuter transit services.
- Develop vacant and underutilized properties in the plan area to accommodate new residential growth in a sustainable development pattern that reflects the traditional neighborhoods of historic Belen.
- Redevelop underutilized commercial areas to enhance area vibrancy, create mixed-use pedestrian friendly neighborhoods and strengthen the local economy.
- Further develop quality public spaces, historic and community facilities to increase visitor interest and meet community needs.
- Preserve and activate the rural landscape to strengthen community ties to their rural character, contribute to environmental sustainability and capitalize on the trend for local organic produce.
- Strengthen the pedestrian connections between the east and west sides of the city.
- Provide visitors who come to watch the trains, safe and unique viewing venues.

## **Plan Concepts**

The following concepts were developed as a result of analyzing the issues and opportunities in light of the vision. They are used to guide plan elements and recommendations for future improvements.

### **Homecomings and Arrivals**

For Visitors: The importance of inviting public spaces and streets, pedestrian safety and comfort, way finding elements, views from the train and a variety of active places to visit. For Commuters: The importance of conveniently getting to and from the platform, bicycle routes, parking, transit and facilities like restrooms, public telephones and schedule information.

### **Walkable Complete Neighborhoods**

Neighborhoods with a variety of housing types, pedestrian friendly streets, comfortable public places and convenient shopping, require compact mixed-use development with quality pedestrian and public enhancements; wide sidewalks and paths, shade, parks and plazas that provide places for daily gathering and annual community events.

### **Where Rail Meets the Trail**

Enhancing and building on Belen's unique history as both a turn of the century railroad town and rich legacy as part of the Camino Real during the Spanish and Mexican periods requires preservation of historic buildings and elements, strong visual and pedestrian connections between attractions and allowing new contemporary development that fits within historic street patterns.

### **Staying Green**

Preserving, enhancing, and connecting with the rural landscape will contribute to a sustainable community. Supporting the farmers, the land and the acequia system close to the heart of Belen will increase available local foods, help to ensure future water supplies, preserve views to the mesas and mountains, and provide green open space that is within walking distance of most homes in the station area. Active support of the functioning rural landscape will also enhance the City's efforts as it seeks new funding for "green" sustainable programs and projects.

## **Plan Elements**

Study recommendations are presented under the following plan elements:

- Land Use and Development Patterns
- Station Access, Commuter Parking and Transit
- Key Frontages and Gateways
- Pedestrian Circulation and Connections,
- Bicycle Routes
- Parks and Plazas

### **Land Use and Development Patterns**

There are many opportunities in the planning area to consider redevelopment of both vacant and underutilized parcels as well as enhancing established traditional neighborhoods and key historic properties. Extending the grid of short blocks, tree-lined streets and alleys of the traditional

neighborhoods to new development areas will ensure high-level of connectivity and walkable neighborhoods with a variety of housing types and mixed-use shopping and services close by.

## **Residential Development**

### **Residential Development East of the Tracks**

Creating new compact neighborhoods at the block level and allowing infill development in established neighborhoods in both eastern quadrants - north and south- of Reinken Avenue will provide new compact housing within walking distance of the station site and future customers for the underutilized commercial development along east Reinken Avenue. The mix of housing typologies from single family to townhouses and multi-family complexes will ensure a variety of architectural styles, price points and accommodate "in town" life styles.

**Traditional Neighborhood Development.** Traditional neighborhoods in Belen consists of primarily single family homes on a regular grid of streets and sidewalks with short blocks and alleys that were developed from the early 1900's to through the 1980's. East of the station site are several blocks of established single-family houses that will continue to accommodate families for many years. Generally, the plan recommends residential infill on the scattered vacant lots and allowing accessory dwelling units on lots with alley access as a way to stabilize the neighborhood, increase property values and provide affordable housing. Any new zoning district that allows accessory dwelling units must ensure compliance with local fire codes and include appropriate parking standards.

**Multi Family Neighborhood Development.** Just north of the station site between the acequia and the rail yard are several vacant and underutilized lots that are appropriately located and large enough to accommodate multi-family housing, which should be master planned in order to ensure efficient utility placement, safe circulation, landscaping and drainage, adequate buffering from the rail yards, sufficient parking and appropriate building placement and orientation.

**Compact Neighborhood Development.** Directly east of the site is a long vacant parcel that can accommodate two story compact townhouses and provide a new entrance for both cars and pedestrians to the station site from Wisconsin Street. This will reduce traffic on Desoto Avenue while providing access to the backs of properties on the north side of Desoto Avenue creating the opportunity for accessory dwelling units and garages. The schematic plan shows this area as compact neighborhood development which will require sensitive building placement and design to fit in with the surrounding established neighborhood.

Within a 5 to 10 minute walk of the station site north and south of Reinken Avenue are large areas of underutilized and vacant lots that should be redeveloped at the block level to accommodate new townhouses, duplexes and single family residences. Properties that are currently in use and viable as residential units should remain and should be included on master plans at the block level.

**Clustered Rural Residential Transition Zone.** There are large tracks of agricultural land and rural residential neighborhoods within walking distance of the station site that provide unique amenities such as amazing views to the mountains, open space, and functioning acequia system that keeps the area lush and inviting. Treating this area as a transition zone between the town site and the large tracts of agricultural fields that follow the river provides an opportunity to keep the rural character close to the

more dense downtown neighborhoods while envisioning new limited clustered residential development that reduces minimum lot size to set aside portion of the gross area as contiguous common open space for agriculture or recreational use. The schematic plan identifies key tracks of agricultural land for preservation and possible community agriculture as well as designating adjacent parcels particularly along Argon Road as clustered rural residential neighborhoods. Creating a transition zone will enhance the City's efforts and dialogue with other communities for a larger conservation district north into the Tome area and further recommendations presented by Lance Davision, Urban Forrester with State forestry.

### **Residential Development West of the Tracks**

Most of the area west of the tracks within a ½ mile radius of the station site is on a traditional grid of well connected small blocks, streets and alleys that accommodates both the historic downtown commercial and institutional development as well as walkable compact residential neighborhoods. Keeping the established block pattern while allowing more intense infill development, mixed-use building types along with rehabilitating historic properties to accommodate new uses will extend the boundaries and contribute to the objectives of the “Heart of Belen” project.

**Traditional Neighborhood Development.** Figure 5, Schematic Plan: General Land Use on page 31 shows most of this area as traditional neighborhood and the corresponding building typologies are modeled after the variety of housing types found in the historic neighborhoods. Encouraging infill that follows established setbacks and allowing accessory dwelling units for parcels with alley access can reinforce the pattern while stabilizing areas in decline and adding to the vibrancy of a high value area.

**Compact Neighborhood Development.** The exception to the pattern north of Reinken Avenue is the residential area adjacent to the tracks. This area is seen as affordable and should remain so. However there is a need for more protection from noise and vibrations of the rail yard. A compact neighborhood pattern using manufactured houses or attached site built houses with a continuous line of attached garages to form a buffer can provide added protection and remain affordable.

Just south of the downtown core fronting 2<sup>nd</sup> Street from Castillo Avenue to Baca Avenue are several contiguous vacant lots that are appropriately located and can accommodate ground related 2-3 story townhouses. These homes can provide a 24 hour presence to the east end of downtown and an urban lifestyle for residents.

### **Commercial Mixed-Use Redevelopment**

Allowing mixed-uses including office and residential uses and increasing intensities on commercial properties in conjunction with new residential development in the neighborhoods may revitalize the commercial activities of the station area. This will provide the surrounding neighborhoods with commercial services and employment opportunities that are within walking distance of their homes and contribute to the local economy.

**Commercial Development East of the Tracks.** Adaptive reuse of existing buildings, improved landscaping, shared parking behind buildings, façade improvements with elements such as portals, courtyards, frequent and inviting entrances can help to create a live/work and shopping environment that is more inviting and vibrant. The station site is located in a primarily residential district with the exception of the Rail Café, which fronts the station parking lot and provides a welcoming place for visitors and commuters to take respite and gather information. It should remain a commercial establishment and be allowed to add on to the building as part of any expansion of the station site.

**Commercial Development West of the Tracks.** The historic Kuhn Hotel site as well as the surrounding parcels between First and Second Street from the Reinken Avenue Overpass to Chaves Avenue on the north is underutilized. This area is seen as an area of opportunity that, with improved pedestrian and vehicle access, increased intensity and a variety of uses, will enhance the vitality of the station area and provide an important and necessary connection from the station site to the “Heart of Belen”.

Architectural styles and scale should be clearly linked to the historic Kuhn hotel and provide a welcoming front façade oriented to the station site across the tracks. Due to the noise and vibrations of the rail tracks day-time uses such offices, retail and restaurants should be encouraged over residential uses. Most commercial properties located south of the Reinken Avenue Overpass to Castillo Avenue between 1st and 2nd Street are currently underutilized or vacant. This area contains many historic structures that should be rehabilitated to accommodate new uses with an emphasis on ground floor retail that is oriented to the street. To increase vibrancy and complete the historic fabric, new infill development that follows established setbacks, heights and guidelines of the Becker Street Ordinance should be allowed on underutilized and vacant lots. All new and redevelopment projects should be master planned at the block level showing existing buildings, improved access, shared parking behind the buildings and integrated landscaping that provides seating, shade and way finding elements for pedestrians.

### **Supporting Agriculture, Recreation and Alternative Energy**

There is an opportunity to locate a variety of open yard facilities on vacant land between the tracks south of Aragon Road Overpass and on underutilized land fronting the tracks north of Ross Avenue. Due to drainage issues, limited access and proximity to the rail yards this area is seen unsuitable for commercial or residential uses. Possible uses include BMX bike or skate park, composting and/or nursery, and a site for solar panels or wind turbines.

### **Community Agriculture**

Belen is a community with deep rural roots that are still prevalent today. Up and down the Rio Grande Valley, there is an interest in community agriculture, community gardens and community food production that capitalizes on the demand for locally grown organic food. With its rich rural landscape, farming traditions and proximity to the market in Albuquerque, Belen is well positioned to foster agriculture incubation. However, there are increased pressures threatening the future of agriculture as it competes with development for both land and water. Within the station planning area there are large agricultural properties in production as pasture or growing alfalfa. These lands provide valuable open space and help to preserve the functioning acequia system and long range views to the mountains. There is an opportunity to preserve these areas as productive landscapes for historical, community, economic and educational purposes.

The schematic plan identifies a transition zone between the denser compact neighborhoods and the outlying rural areas with shared community gardens and agricultural uses in conjunction with clustered rural residential development. This allows for non-agricultural residential development to occur on a small portion of agricultural land while preserving the remaining land for agricultural uses. It is envisioned that the agricultural portion of the land in the transition zone accommodate community gardens or agricultural activities farmed and leased by individuals or community groups. This method is a compromise between those that want to protect agricultural land and those that want to be able to develop their land. The agricultural portion of the land can be owned by the owner/developer, but cannot be further developed, and should be held under a conservation easement by a non-profit land trust organization. Family transfers of land can occur, while still preserving agricultural land. A

conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between the landowner and a government agency or private conservation organization. A conservation easement ensures protection of agriculture resources today and into the future. The restrictions on the property can cover the entire property or portions of the property. Conservation easements provide tax incentives to farmers to protect their land. However, conservation easements require a qualified conservation organization, such as the Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust, or public agency to monitor and enforce the restrictions.

## **Circulation, Commuter Parking, Station Access, and Transit**

The Belen Rail Runner Express Station serves many commuters who live in outlying communities and households that are not within walking distance of the station or transit routes. This requires driving to the station and has created the need for additional commuter parking and better access to the station site. Increasing transit options both in and out of town, creating additional parking and improving access and circulation in and out of the station area will reduce travel times for commuters and increase ridership.

### **Circulation**

Proposed new streets and alleys are primarily a response to land use patterns and to maintaining and connecting to the existing grid of short blocks, tree-lined local streets and back alleys. Adjustments are naturally made to transition from the grid to the more organic circulation and land use pattern of the rural areas.

### **Commuter Parking**

There are several opportunities to develop additional commuter parking that is convenient to the station site. For the immediate future there may be an opportunity to locate temporary parking on vacant land north of the station site. Additionally, if a shuttle is provided, temporary parking could be accommodated on the large parking lots associated with the vacant super market at Reinken Avenue and Caldwell Avenue. However, these should be considered as very temporary solutions. Permanent commercial and residential developments are the most appropriate and highest use for these areas.

In the long run, the most appropriate location for additional commuter parking is the BNSF parking lot just south of the Reinken Avenue Overpass. There is an opportunity to create a shared parking lot that meets the needs of BNSF and future commuters. In order to take advantage of this location a pedestrian connection to the platform should be made that is convenient, safe and does not interfere with BNSF operations. There is an opportunity and space to create a pedestrian path under the overpass along the existing road used by BNSF vehicles. There may also be an opportunity to create a pedestrian connection as part of a mixed use office development or parking structure that is connected to and provides public access to the upper levels of the overpass. In conjunction with commuter parking and convenient pedestrian connections to the platform, this site should also be considered for a transit drop off location or future transit facility that includes commercial uses catering to the commuters and possibly offices for BNSF. Another possibility is commuter parking on vacant land west of the tracks north of Chaves Avenue and east of the acequia. This is realistic if convenient pedestrian crossing on the Reinken Avenue Overpass is developed. A limited amount of new parking may become available at the station site if additional land is acquired for new facilities such as a transit center.

### **Station Access**

Additionally, vehicle and transit access to the station site needs to be improved to reduce the time it takes to get in and out of the station. There is an opportunity to plan for new access to the station as a

part of the redevelopment of several of the surrounding vacant lots. Better access will relieve congestion in and out of the station site. A new road paralleling the tracks from Aragon Road just east of where it crosses the tracks to the north end of station parking lot should be considered as adjacent vacant property is planned and developed. It should be designed as a parkway with transit lanes, landscaping, bike routes and pedestrian pathways as well as landscape features oriented to the views from the Rail Runner Express. A new vehicle and pedestrian entrance to the station site from Wisconsin Street should be considered as the vacant lot east of the station site is planned and developed. The new entrance can be integrated with new residential development and provide pedestrian friendly street design and signage while reducing traffic and parking issues associated with residents on Desoto Avenue.

## **Transit**

As the Rio Metro Regional Transit District expands to serve more commuters, transit routes to the station site should be designated and locations for transit stops carefully considered within the larger circulation pattern of the city and region. Two new transit routes within the station area are proposed if station access points are developed. Both proposed transit routes are adjacent to proposed multifamily housing and avoid the congestion associated with the intersection at Reinken Avenue and Wisconsin Street.

A transit route for trips coming from development east and south of the tracks (Rio Communities, UNM Valencia Campus, businesses along N.M. 304, Veguita, Jarales, Bosque and Pueblitos), should be designated on River Road with the drop-off point for the station site located just south of the Reinken Avenue Overpass on BNSF Property. This will require a short pedestrian pathway under the overpass to the platform. Another transit route should be designated on the proposed parkway road that parallels the tracks from Aragon Road to the station site to accommodate trips from north and west of the tracks.

A shuttle that circulates between the historic district and the station site geared towards visitors who come on the train should be considered particularly during annual cultural events.

A transit facility should be considered either at the current station site or on BNSF property south of the overpass as part of the transit drop location. Both sites are currently underutilized and are conveniently located with proposed access and transit routes. Transit facilities can meet a wide variety of community needs including areas for public events but at a minimum should include restrooms, an emergency phone and an information kiosk for commuters, visitors and transit employees.

## **Pedestrian Circulation & Connections**

Safe, comfortable, and convenient pedestrian connections from the station site to the surrounding neighborhoods, regional trails and the downtown core are essential to realizing the vision for the station area.

### **Reinken Avenue Overpass Crossing**

Several options for improving the pedestrian crossing from the station site over the tracks to the west side were developed and explored during the planning process. Figure 7 Schematic Plan: Pedestrian Circulation and Connections page 43 shows the option most likely to be accepted by all stakeholders including BNSF, NMDOT and the City of Belen. This option uses the current overpass with the following improvements:

- Two elevators on the north side of the overpass, one located at the south end of the station site and one on the BNSF parking lot west of the tracks.

- Steps from the station site up the overpass apron to the top of the overpass.
- Decreasing the width of traffic lanes and widening the sidewalks on both the north and south sides of the overpass from Wisconsin Street to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street,
- A designated viewing area located on the north side of the overpass associated with the elevators.
- Improved fencing to provide security for the rail yard from the overpass and better viewing opportunities for the pedestrians.

Convenient pedestrian connections and amenities should also be a major component of any new commercial development, community facility, or parking structure being considered for development on parcels adjacent to the overpass. All pedestrian connections and amenities on areas adjacent to the rail tracks or as part of the overpass should be carefully analyzed to make sure they are compliant with BNSF's security objectives for local operations. Outdoor public elevators may attract vandals and the design must consider ways to prevent vandalism. While it is impossible to prevent all vandalism in elevators, there are several steps to reduce the frequency and impact of vandalism. For example, installing vandal-resistant interiors and control panels in the elevator cabs will reduce the number of incidents and costs to repair damage. Visibility of entrances and hours of operation are also other factors that should be considered in strategically dealing with vandalism.

### **Key Intersections**

The schematic plan identifies the following intersections as key pedestrian connections that are in need of pedestrian improvements:

**Wisconsin and Reinken Avenue.** This intersection is signalized and is an important north/south crossing for pedestrians. The primary concern at this intersection is pedestrian safety. The issue results from Reinken Ave, a wide urban arterial carrying local as well as through traffic, having four travel lanes with a narrow median and left turn lane. There is a need to narrow the distance of asphalt that a pedestrian has to cross, improve visibility of pedestrians by drivers and slow turning speeds for vehicles turning right on to Wisconsin. Curb extensions or bulb outs, raised crosswalks and/or widening the median to provide a pedestrian refuge should be considered.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Reinken Avenue.** This is an unsignalized intersection and not a safe north/south crossing due to poor visibility and high traffic speeds on Reinken. Improvements such as higher median barrier and/or signage should be added to discourage pedestrian crossing.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Reinken Avenue.** This is a key intersection providing the first signalized crossing for pedestrians after the Reinken Avenue Overpass and important connection for pedestrians who are walking to the downtown core from the station. In addition to the issues and recommendations for the intersection at Wisconsin and Reinken, strong way finding elements, such as distinctive paving, signage and landscaping, should be integrated into any intersection improvements.

### **Pedestrian Friendly Streets**

New residential streets should be narrow, enhanced with street trees in landscape buffers and include continuous minimum 5' wide sidewalks. The "Heart of Belen" project should be extended to include pedestrian enhancements and street standards on both sides of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street from Reinken Avenue to Becker and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street from Reinken Avenue to Castillo. First Street should be redeveloped to include pedestrian enhancements and way finding elements as part of the Harvey House Plaza and

redevelopment of the Kuhn Hotel site. All streets need pedestrian-scale lighting features and safe designated crossings.

### **Way Finding**

Information about the history, culture and directions to attractions can be expressed in a variety of elements throughout the station area. Street furniture, paving treatments, public art, signage and plantings should all be integrated in a station area master landscape plan with an emphasis on way finding.

### **Multi-purpose Pathways**

The schematic plan shows several off-street multi-purpose pathways along the acequias on both sides of the tracks. The pathways are intended to draw pedestrian and bicyclists from throughout the area and connect with developing regional trails including the Rio Grande Trail. Residents and visitors will use the pathways for recreation and in many cases as more direct access to the station site and downtown, particularly along the acequia that parallels 1<sup>st</sup> Street. Pathway facilities should be at least 10' wide and include benches, trash receptacles and signage.

### **Station Area Shuttle**

A shuttle van that circulates between the historic district and the station site geared towards visitors who come on the train should be considered particularly during annual cultural events.

### **Bicycle Routes**

Areas that are within a two mile radius of the station site can be covered by bicyclists in ten minutes. Commuting to the Rail Runner Express on bicycles continues to increase locally. Nationally the trend for both commuting to work and as recreation has resulted in thousands of miles of new routes and trails. Several bicycle routes in the station area have been identified in the Valencia County Mobility Plan as "existing routes"; although they may not be engineered for designation as existing routes. A study of Reinken Avenue, Ross Avenue, Aragon Road, Main Street, and Jarales Road should be conducted to see if these routes can be safely designated and signed as bicycle routes with specific connections to the station site for commuters and visitors. To support bicycle commuters who take the Rail Runner Express, secure bicycle storage should be added as part of any new station site improvements.

### **Key Frontages and Gateways**

The Rail Runner Express has created a new gateway into Belen. Locating arrival art or gateways and landscaping areas that front the tracks well before the train pulls up to the platform is important to creating a sense of arrival. Once visitors step down to the platform they should not have to look far to understand that they have arrived at their destination and are ready to explore. Welcoming frontages and way finding elements visible from the platform can reassure visitors that Belen is a safe, comfortable and interesting place to visit. All of the arrival elements should be designed and planned as an integrated system that express community identity, history while providing clear directions to points of interest and community facilities.

The key frontages are on several buildings, parking lots and open spaces that front the tracks as well as locations for arrival "gateways". The first of the gateways is located at the intersection of the tracks and Aragon Road. The second is at the intersection of Ross Avenue and the tracks and the third is the north façade of the Reinken Avenue Overpass. Key building and parking lot frontages include the Harvey

House Museum site, the BNSF offices and parking lots, The Kuhn Hotel, the Rail Café, the station site parking lot and any new development on the station site.

## Parks and Plazas

Redevelopment in the station area provides an opportunity to expand the City of Belen's network of parks and plazas and support the community tradition of la resolana; daily socializing with your friends and neighbors in favorite gathering spots. Comfortable and accessible outdoor gathering places will attract locals and visitors and provide spaces for a variety of functions:

- Socializing and relaxing
- Public events and activities
- Historic and cultural expression
- Integrated energy generation

In addition to neighborhood parks associated with proposed residential development on east of the tracks and new courtyards, plazuelas, pocket parks and pedestrian friendly streets associated with proposed commercial mixed-use development the following public outdoor gathering spaces are identified:

- The Harvey House Museum and First Street Plaza
- Plaza Vieja
- Arrival Park

### Harvey House/ First Street Plaza

The "Heart of Belen" Project identified the area at the intersection of Becker Avenue and 1<sup>st</sup> Street including the Harvey House Site as a key location for a downtown plaza. The Harvey House Site is just north of the intersection and out of direct alignment with Becker Avenue. Creating a plaza area that ties the intersection of 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Becker Avenue with the Harvey house site will create an active outdoor gathering space that enhances the overall pedestrian environment, provides a sense of place and continues the vision of the "Heart of Belen" Project . It is envisioned as a high use area and focal point of the historic district. As a major public plaza the following things need to be considered:

- Determine plaza function, size and activities.
- Respond to micro climate in the plaza design.
- Consider views, circulation, boundaries and subspaces particularly as they relate to Becker Avenue, 1<sup>st</sup> street, the Acequia , the Harvey House and the Rail Yard.
- Provide appropriate amount of seating.
- Provide an abundance of shade with trees and portals.
- Provide interactive civic art and fountains.
- Increase safety through wayfinding, lighting and visibility

### Plaza Vieja

One block south of the intersection of Wisconsin Street and Ross Avenue is the site of the original Catholic Church in Belen which was moved after flooding destroyed most of the buildings in the area. The site is currently a private residence. There is an opportunity to consider redeveloping it as a historic landmark which can also function as small neighborhood community center and park that provides a play area for children, a plaza designed for neighborhood events and shade and seating for everyday use.

## **Arrival Park**

The views from the train and the experience of both commuters and visitors when they arrive can be greatly enhanced with landscaping and public art. Treating the experience as a long unified park from the intersection of the tracks with Aragon Road to the Reinken Avenue Overpass including the station site can create a sense that this is a safe, comfortable and interesting place to visit or call home. Part of the concept should include an active civic presence either as part of public facilities or transit center at the station site or regular events such as farmers markets and organized tours that start at the station. Landscape features should be integrated and include public art, wayfinding elements, furniture, water features, trees and plantings that reflect the agricultural heritage and sustainable water harvesting and drainage practices. The Arrival Park should be integrated with the larger station area landscape master plan and include pedestrian pathways and connections along the acequia that parallels 1<sup>st</sup> Street , key building and parking lot frontages, and the proposed parkway road that parallels the tracks from Aragon Road to the station site.

**APPENDIX D**  
**Belen Historic District Ordinance**

## CITY OF BELEN MUNICIPAL CODE

### **Title 15 Buildings and Construction**

#### **Chapter 15.16 HISTORIC DISTRICT**

15.16.010 Purpose and title.

15.16.020 Historic properties review board.

15.16.030 Definitions.

15.16.040 Designation of historic district.

15.16.050 Designation of historic landmark.

15.16.060 Alterations.

15.16.070 New construction.

15.16.080 Demolition.

15.16.090 Maintenance.

15.16.100 Standards of review for historic district and historic landmark.

15.16.110 Duties of the municipal building inspector.

15.16.120 Violation--Penalty.

15.16.130 Interpretation and conflict.

#### **15.16.010 Purpose and title.**

This chapter is enacted for the purpose of promoting the economic, cultural and general welfare of the citizens of Belen and to insure the harmonious, orderly and efficient growth and development of the city of Belen. This chapter is deemed essential in order to protect the outward appearance of the city of Belen, to preserve property values and to attract tourists and residents alike by supporting the continued existence and preservation of historic areas and buildings, and to enhance the identity of the city of Belen by protecting the city's heritage and prohibit the unnecessary destruction or defacement of its cultural assets.

Pursuant to this chapter, the city of Belen may designate areas located within the city as historic districts and, further, the city may classify certain structures as historic landmarks. The city of Belen shall adopt rules and regulations regarding the

identification and designation of historic districts and the identification and classification of historic landmarks.

The ordinance codified in this chapter is adopted pursuant to New Mexico Statutes Annotated 3-21-1 et. seq. and 3-22-1 et. seq. (1978), as amended. (Ord. 1983-8 § 1)

### **15.16.020 Historic properties review board.**

- A. The city of Belen shall create a historic properties review board composed of five voting members. Members of the board shall be appointed by the mayor, subject to the consent and approval of a majority of the city council. Members of the board shall serve in their capacities without compensation.
- B. The board shall designate a chairman by a majority vote of the board on an annual basis. The chairman shall have a vote the same as any other board member. All actions taken by the board shall be accomplished by a majority vote of a quorum of the board.
- C. Any vacancy created on the board shall be filled by the appointment of a member by the mayor, subject to the consent and approval by a majority of the city council. Removal of a board member shall only be by a majority vote of the city council.
- D. The board may adopt rules and regulations which are not inconsistent with the terms of this chapter. Any rules and regulations adopted by the board shall not be given effect until they are approved by a majority vote of the city council. Any rules and regulations which are adopted by the board and approved by a majority vote of the city council and which are inconsistent with the terms of this chapter shall be null and void and the terms of this chapter shall control.
- E. The board shall act in an advisory capacity to the mayor and city council of the city of Belen. It shall be the duty of the board to identify potential historic districts and potential historic landmarks and shall make recommendations to the city of Belen regarding:

1. The proposed designation of areas located within the city of Belen as historic districts;
2. Proposed classification of structures as historic landmarks;
3. The maintenance, proposed alteration or demolition of historic landmarks and structures located within a historic district; and
4. The proposed construction of new structures located within a designated historic district.

The board shall adopt the standards of review hereinafter set out in this chapter and the board shall incorporate the standards of review in the rules and regulations of the historic properties review board. (Ord. 1983-8 § 2)

### **15.16.030 Definitions.**

“Alteration” means any construction, modification, addition, moving or partial destruction which would affect the exterior appearance of a structure or historic landmark which is located in a historic district.

“Board” means the historic properties review board.

“Commission” means the Belen planning and zoning commission.

“Construction” means the erection of any new structure or historic landmark on property located within a historic district.

“Council” means the city council of the city of Belen.

“Demolition” means the complete removal of a historic landmark or structure located within a historic district.

“Exterior appearance” means the visual character of all outside surfaces of a structure of historic landmark, including the kind and texture of the building material, the type and style of all roofs, windows, doors, signs, light fixtures, steps or pertinent elements.

“Historic district” means any area designated under the authority of this chapter. A historic district shall be an area or neighborhood located within the city of Belen which has historic, architectural or cultural significance and which embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type of period or method of construction or portrays the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style or process high artistic value in the character of its construction, or has a relationship to a distinctive landmark which makes the preservation of the area critical.

“Historic landmark” means any property designated as historic landmark under the authority of this chapter. Historic landmark shall be any structure located either inside or outside a designated historic district which has historic, architectural or cultural significance and which embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type of period or method of construction, or portrays the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by distinctive architectural style or process, high artistic value in the character of its construction, or has a relationship to a distinctive historic zone which makes the preservation of the structure critical.

“Owner(s)” means the owner of any real property, or agent of any owner(s) of real property located within a historic district or which is a historic landmark.

“Structure” means anything constructed or erected above ground level in a historic district which requires location on the ground or attachment to something located on the ground, but not including tents, vehicles, vegetation or public utility poles and lines.

(Ord. 1983-8 § 3)

#### **15.16.040 Designation of historic district.**

A. Any person may petition the board to recommend the designation of an area located within the city limits of the city of Belen as a historic district. The petition shall be made in writing and shall describe the approximate boundaries of the proposed historic district and the petition shall also include the reasons why the proposed historic district should be designated a historic district.

B. The board upon its own motion may propose a historic district. Any such motion adopted by the board shall describe the approximate boundaries of the proposed historic district and the reasons why the proposed historic district should be designated a historic district.

C. The board shall review all proposed historic districts and shall thereafter make a written recommendation to the city of Belen regarding the advisability of designating an area as a historic district. Before issuing its recommendation, the board shall conduct a public meeting at which time the board shall solicit public comment upon the proposed historic district. The board shall give at least two weeks notice of this public meeting and

the board may thereafter continue this meeting upon its own motion and in its discretion. The board shall consider the standards of review for historic districts as set out in this chapter when conducting the review of any proposed historic district and the standards of review shall be addressed in the recommendation issued by the board.

D. After conducting a review as set forth in the preceding sections, the board shall adopt its recommendation by a majority vote of the board. The board shall make its recommendation to the city council and the recommendation shall reflect the vote of the board.

E. The recommendation of the board shall thereafter be presented to the planning and zoning commission of the city of Belen for review and comment by the commission. The commission shall review the board's recommendation. In making its review, the commission shall determine whether the proposed historic district is compatible with the existing zoning of the area.

F. Both the recommendation of the board and the review of the commission shall thereafter be presented to the city council for consideration. The city council shall conduct a public meeting at which time the council may solicit public comment upon the proposed action. Thereafter, the city council may adopt an ordinance designating the proposed historic district as a historic district. Such ordinance shall accurately describe the boundaries of the historic district.

G. After creating a historic district by ordinance, the city of Belen shall thereafter review all proposed alteration or demolition of existing structures located within the historic district and review all proposed construction of new structures located within the historic district to ensure that development within the historic district is compatible with the preservation of the district. (Ord. 1983-8 § 4)

#### **15.16.050 Designation of historic landmark.**

A. Any person may petition the board to recommend the classification of a structure as a historic landmark. The petition shall be made in writing and shall describe the location of the proposed historic landmark and the petition shall also include the reasons why the proposed historic landmark should be designated a historic landmark.

B. The board, upon its own motion, may propose a historic landmark. Any such motion adopted by the board shall describe the location of the proposed historic landmark and the reasons why the proposed historic landmark should be designated a historic landmark.

C. The board shall review all proposed historic landmarks and shall thereafter make a recommendation to the city of Belen regarding the advisability of designating the structure as a historic landmark. Before issuing its recommendation, the board shall conduct a public meeting at which time the board shall solicit public comment upon the proposed historic landmark. The board shall give at least two weeks notice of this public meeting and the board may thereafter continue this meeting upon its own motion and in its discretion. The board shall notify the owner(s) of the structure at least two weeks before the public meeting by certified mail.

The board shall consider the standards of review for historic landmarks as set out in this chapter when conducting the review of any proposed historic landmark and the

standards of review shall be addressed in the recommendation issued by the board.

D. After conducting a review as set forth in the preceding sections, the board shall adopt its recommendation by a majority vote of the board. The board shall make its recommendation to the city council and the recommendation shall reflect the vote of the board.

E. The recommendation of the board shall thereafter be presented to the city council for consideration. The city council shall conduct a public meeting, at which time the city council may solicit public comment upon the proposed action. The city council may adopt an ordinance designating the proposed historic landmark as a historic landmark. Such ordinance shall accurately describe the location of the historic landmark.

F. After creating a historic landmark by ordinance, the city council shall thereafter review all proposed alterations or demolition of the historic landmark to ensure that development of the historic landmark is compatible with the preservation of the landmark. (Ord. 1983-8 § 5)

#### **15.16.060 Alterations.**

A. Any proposed alterations of the external features of any historic landmark or structure located within a historic district shall be reviewed by the board prior to the issuance of a building permit. If, after conducting a review of the proposed alterations, the board determines that the proposed alterations do not constitute a significant change in the external features of the historic landmark or structure, then the board shall make a written recommendation to the city council to issue the building permit.

B. If, after review of any proposed alteration of the external features of any historic landmark or structure located within a historic district, the board determines that the proposed alterations constitute a significant alteration in the external features of the historic landmark or structure, then the board shall make a recommendation regarding the proposed alteration to the city council. The board shall consider the standards of review for alterations as set out in this chapter when conducting its review of proposed significant alterations of a historic landmark or structure located within a historic district.

C. After conducting a review as set forth in the preceding sections, the board shall adopt its recommendation by a majority vote of the board. The board shall make its recommendation to the city council and the recommendation shall reflect the vote of the board.

D. The recommendation of the board shall thereafter be presented to the city council for consideration. The city council shall conduct a public meeting, at which time the council may solicit public comment upon the proposed alterations. Thereafter, the city council shall adopt a resolution which either approves or denies the issuance of a building permit. (Ord. 1983-8 § 6)

#### **15.16.070 New construction.**

A. Any proposed new construction of a structure located in a historic district shall be reviewed by the board prior to the issuance of a building permit. If, after conducting a review of the proposed construction, the board determines that the proposed construction does not constitute a significant change in the external features of the

historic district, then the board shall make a written recommendation to the city council to issue the building permit.

B. If, after review of any proposed construction of any structure located within a historic district, the board determines that the proposed construction does constitute a significant alteration in the external features of the historic district, then the board shall make a recommendation to the city council regarding the proposed construction. The board shall consider the standards of review for new construction as set out in this chapter when conducting its review of new construction which significantly alters a historic district.

C. After conducting a review as set forth in the preceding sections, the board shall adopt its recommendation by a majority vote of the board. Thereafter, the board shall make its recommendation to the city council and the recommendation shall reflect the vote of the board.

D. The recommendation of the board shall thereafter be presented to the city council for consideration. The city council shall conduct a public meeting at which time the council may solicit public comment upon the proposed construction. Thereafter, the city council shall adopt a resolution which either approves or denies the issuance of a building permit. (Ord. 1983-8 § 7)

#### **15.16.080 Demolition.**

A. Any proposed demolition of any historic landmark or structure located within a historic district shall require a demolition permit and shall be reviewed by the board prior to the issuance of a demolition permit. If, after conducting a review of the proposed demolition, the board determines that the proposed demolition does not constitute a significant change in the features in the historic district, then the board shall make a written recommendation to the city council to issue a demolition permit. When demolition of a historic landmark is proposed or if, after review of any proposed demolition of any structure located within a historic district, the board determines that the proposed demolition constitutes a significant alteration in the features of the historic district, then the board shall make a recommendation on the proposed demolition to the city council. The board shall consider the standards of review for demolition as set out in this chapter when conducting its review of the proposed demolition of a historic landmark or structure which significantly alters the features of a historic district.

B. After conducting a review as set forth in the preceding sections, the board shall adopt its recommendation by a majority vote of the board. Thereafter, the board shall make its recommendation to the city council and the recommendation shall reflect the vote of the board.

C. The recommendation of the board shall thereafter be presented to the city council for consideration. The city council shall conduct a public meeting at which time the council may solicit public comment upon the proposed demolition. Thereafter, the city council shall adopt a resolution which either approves or denies the issuance of a demolition permit. (Ord. 1983-8 § 8)

### **15.16.090 Maintenance.**

A. Any historic landmark or structure located within a historic district shall receive reasonable care and maintenance and in no event shall such structure or historic landmark fail to meet the minimum building codes of the city of Belen, unless a waiver is granted consistent with the terms of this chapter.

B. The municipal building inspector shall issue a citation to the owner(s) of any structure or historic landmark located within a historic district for failure to reasonably care for and maintain any structure or historic landmark such that the structure or historic landmark fails to meet the minimum building codes of the city of Belen. The citation shall direct the owner(s) to appear before the board and the citation shall note the specific defects identified by the municipal building inspector.

C. The owner(s) of any structure or historic landmark located within a historic district may make application to the board for a recommendation that a waiver be granted from the application of this chapter. Such application may be made in response to a citation issued by the municipal building inspector, as set out in the preceding section, or such application may be made independently by the owner(s) of any structure or historic landmark located within a historic district.

The board shall consider the standards of review for maintenance as set out in this chapter when conducting a review of any citation for failure to maintain a building pursuant to this chapter or any application for waiver made pursuant to this chapter and the standards of review shall be addressed in the recommendation issued by the board.

D. After conducting a review as set forth in the preceding sections, the board shall adopt its recommendation by majority vote of the board. The board shall make its recommendation to the city council and the recommendation shall reflect the vote of the board.

E. The recommendation of the board shall thereafter be presented to the city council for consideration. The city council shall conduct a public meeting at which time the city council may solicit public comment upon the advisability of granting a waiver from the application of this chapter. Thereafter, the city council shall adopt a resolution which either approves or denies the granting of a waiver from the application of this chapter. If the city council adopts a resolution which denies the granting of a waiver from the application of this chapter, then the city council shall direct the municipal building inspector to enforce the municipal building code. (Ord. 1983-8 § 9)

### **15.16.100 Standards of review for historic district and historic landmark.**

#### **A. Standards of Review for Historic District.**

1. Does the proposed historic district meet the definitional criteria established for historic district in Section 15.16.030 of this chapter?

2. Are there beneficial economic aspects to designating the proposed area of historic district?

3. Are there detrimental economic aspects to designating the proposed area a historic district?

4. What is the public response to the proposed designation of the area as a historic district?

**APPENDIX E**

**Historic Properties Review Board Bylaws**

# **City of Belen, New Mexico Historic Properties Review Board**

## **BYLAWS**

### **ARTICLE 1. Name of the Board**

The name of this Board shall be the Historic Properties Review Board of the City of Belen and shall be designated and referred to in these Bylaws as the "HPRB."

### **ARTICLE 2. Authorization**

The HPRB was established in accordance with Chapter 15.16 of the City of Belen Municipal Code, adopted by Ordinance 1983-8 of the Belen City Council.

### **ARTICLE 3. Membership**

- A. The HPRB is composed of five members appointed by the Mayor, subject to the consent and approval of a majority of the City Council. Members of the HPRB shall serve in their capacities without compensation. All members of the HPRB should demonstrate an ability and interest in preserving the historic and architectural character of Belen.
- B. Beginning with the date of adoption of these Bylaws, three members shall be designated to serve one-year terms and two members shall be designated to serve two-year terms as members of the HPRB. As the term for each member expires, subsequent appointments shall be for two-year terms in order to maintain the original staggering. Members may be appointed to successive terms without limitation.
- C. A vacancy created on the HPRB shall be filled by the appointment of a member to serve the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner that a new member is appointed.

### **ARTICLE 4. Organization**

- A. The HPRB shall elect, by majority vote, a Chair and a Vice-Chair from its members to serve as officers for one-year terms. Officers may be reelected for an indefinite number of terms. The Chair shall convene and preside at all meetings of the HPRB; the Vice-Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair.
- B. The HPRB shall adopt a monthly meeting schedule at the beginning of each calendar year. However, meetings will be convened only as necessary to process historical reviews, conduct hearings, or to undertake special sessions

concerning relevant historical issues. All meetings require prior notice and shall be open to the general public in accordance with the Open Meetings Resolution of the City of Belen. In the event that a scheduled meeting date is not required, a notice shall be posted in appropriate locations to inform the general public of the cancelled meeting.

- C. For the conduct of any meeting or hearing and the taking of any action, a quorum shall be four members of the HPRB. Any action taken by the HPRB shall require a majority vote of members present.

## **ARTICLE 5. Minutes and Records**

The staff of the Belen City Planning Department shall prepare and maintain all materials and records related to the business and activities of the HPRB including but not limited to: agendas, minutes of meetings, application reviews, historic property inventories, certificates, and correspondence. All records and reports shall be kept on file and made available for public inspection at the offices of the Planning Department.

## **ARTICLE 6. Functions and Duties**

- A. It shall be the duty of the HPRB to identify potential historic districts and landmarks, and to advise the Belen City Council regarding the protection and preservation of all historic properties within the City of Belen.
- B. The HPRB shall make recommendations to the Belen City Council regarding:
  1. The proposed designation of areas located within the City of Belen as historic districts, subject to the endorsement of the Planning and Zoning Commission;
  2. The proposed designation and classification of buildings and structures as historic landmarks;
  3. The maintenance, proposed alteration, or demolition of historic landmarks and structures located within or outside the boundaries of a historic district; and
  4. The proposed construction of new structures located within a designated historic district.
- C. The HPRB may conduct research on and propose the nomination of significant historical properties, landmarks, and districts to the National Register of Historic Places and the New Mexico Register of Cultural Properties and other appropriate lists of programs.
- D. The HPRB may develop informational brochures and educational materials about the historical properties in Belen; and may promote, conduct, or participate in activities that educate or enhance the community's understanding of the City's history and historical resources.

- E. The HPRB may actively pursue, with the prior approval of the Belen City Council, grants, gifts, donations and other sources of funds for the purposes of protecting and preserving historical resources in the City of Belen.

#### **ARTICLE 7. Amendments**

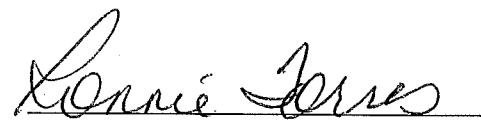
These Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the HPRB, subject to the approval of a majority of the Belen City Council.

**PASSED, ADOPTED and APPROVED** this 16<sup>th</sup> day of Nov., 2009, by the Historical Properties Review Board of the City of Belen, New Mexico.



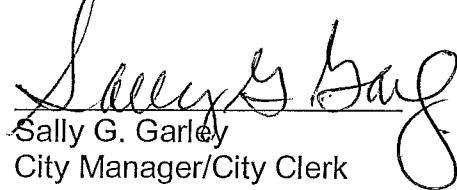
W.W. Wade  
Chair, HPRB

**PASSED, ADOPTED and APPROVED** this 16<sup>th</sup> day of Nov., 2009, by the Belen City Council.



Connie Jones  
Mayor, City of Belen

Attest:



Sally G. Garley  
City Manager/City Clerk

**APPENDIX F**

**City and County Airport Zoning Regulations**

## **City of Belen**

### **Chapter 11.12 AIRPORT ZONING REGULATIONS**

#### **11.12.010 Scope, authority and title.**

These regulations are applicable to the area within a nine thousand (9,000) foot radius from the center of each end of the primary surface of each runway of each airport and connecting the adjacent arcs by lines tangent to those arcs at the Alexander Municipal Airport. These regulations divide said area into zones and within such zones, specify the land uses permitted, regulate and restrict the height to which structures and trees may be erected or allowed to grow, and impose other restrictions and requirements necessary to establish the approach plan for said airport, said airport zoning plan being herein formulated and adopted by the ordinance codified in this chapter, and the authority for same and for these regulations being NMSA 1978 Compilation, Sections 3-39-16 through 3-39-26, all as appearing in Laws of 1965, Chapter 300; and Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 77, Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace.

These regulations shall be known and may be cited as the Alexander Municipal Airport zoning regulations. (Ord. 1981-5 § 1)

#### **11.12.020 Definitions.**

As used in these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires:

“Airport” means Alexander Municipal Airport, near Belen, New Mexico.

“Airport elevation” means the established elevation of the highest point on the usable landing area, which is five thousand one hundred ninety-three (5,193) feet, MSL.

“Airport reference point” means the point established as the approximate geographic center of the airport landing area and is established at a location described as follows: Longitude 106°49'57"W, Latitude 34°38'51"N.

Height. For this purpose of determining the height limits in all zones set forth in these regulations and shown on the zoning map, the datum shall be mean sea level unless otherwise specified.

“Landing area” means the area of the airport used for the landing or take-off of aircraft.

“Nonconforming use” means any structure, tree or use of land which is lawfully in existence at the time these regulations become effective and does not then meet the requirements of said regulations.

“Primary surface” means a surface longitudinally centered on a runway and extending two hundred (200) feet beyond each end of that runway provided the surface is hard otherwise the primary surface ends at each end of that runway. The primary surface is established as two hundred (200) feet beyond each end of the runways and has a width of five hundred (500) feet.

“Runway” means the surface of an airport landing strip.

Other definitions are as set out in NMSA 1978 Compilation, 3-39-17; and in Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 77, Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace. (Ord. 1981-5 § 2)

### **11.12.030 Zones.**

In order to carry out the provisions of these regulations, there are created and established certain zones which include all of the land lying within the approach zones, transition zones, horizontal zone and conical zone. Such areas and zones are shown on the Alexander Municipal Airport zoning map consisting of one sheet, adopted by the city council and dated May, 1979, a copy of which is attached to the ordinance codified in this chapter and made a part hereof. The various zones are hereby established and defined as follows:

- A. Approach Zones. An approach zone is established at each end of all runways on the Alexander Municipal Airport for landings and take-offs. The approach zone shall be longitudinally centered on the extended runway centerline and extending outward and upward from each end of the primary surface and having a width of five hundred (500) feet at a distance of two hundred (200) feet beyond each end of the runway, widening thereafter uniformly to a width of two thousand (2,000) feet at a horizontal distance of five thousand (5,000) feet at a slope of twenty (20) feet horizontally to one foot vertically beyond each end of the runway.
- B. Transition Zones. Transition zones are established adjacent to each runway and approach zone as indicated on the zoning map. Transition zones extend outward and upward at right angles to the runway centerline at a slope of seven feet horizontally to one foot vertically from the sides of the primary surface and from the sides of the approach surfaces of the primary surface and from the sides of the approach surfaces to the point where they intersect the surface of the horizontal zones, or the conical zone.
- C. Horizontal Zones. A horizontal zone is established as within the perimeter of which is constructed by swinging arcs of a radius of five thousand (5,000) feet from the center of each end of the primary surface of each runway of each airport and connecting the adjacent arcs by lines tangent to those arcs. The horizontal zone does not include the approach zones, conical zones, and the transition zones.
- D. Conical Zones. A conical zone is hereby established as the area that commences at the periphery of the horizontal zones and extends outward therefrom at a slope of twenty (20) feet horizontally to one foot vertically for a horizontal distance of four thousand (4,000) feet. The conical zone does not include the approach zones and transition zones. (Ord. 1981-5 § 3)

### **11.12.040 Height limitations.**

Except as otherwise provided in these regulations, no structure or tree shall be erected, altered, allowed to grow, or maintained in any zone created by these regulations to a height in excess of the height limit herein established for each zone. Such height limitations are established for each of the zones in question as follows:

- A. Approach Zones. One foot in height for each twenty (20) feet in horizontal distance beginning at a point two hundred (200) feet from and at the elevation of the end of the runway and extending to a point five thousand two hundred (5,200) feet from the end of the runway;
- B. Transition Zones. One foot in height for each seven feet in horizontal distance beginning at any point two hundred fifty (250) feet normal to and at the elevation of the

centerline of the runways extending two hundred (200) feet beyond each end thereof, extending to a height of one hundred fifty (150) feet above the airport elevation which is five thousand one hundred ninety-three (5193) feet above the mean sea level. In addition to the foregoing, there are established height limits of one foot vertical height for each seven feet horizontal distance measured from the edges of all approach zones for the entire length of the approach zones and extending upward and outward to the points where they intersect the horizontal, and conical surfaces;

C. Horizontal Zones. One hundred fifty (150) feet above the airport elevation or a height of five thousand three hundred forty-three (5343) feet above mean sea level; and

D. Conical Zone. One foot in height for each twenty (20) feet of horizontal distance beginning at the periphery of the horizontal zones, extending to a height of three hundred fifty (350) feet above the airport elevation.

Where an area is covered by more than one height limitation, the more restrictive limitations shall prevail. Nothing in these regulations shall be construed as prohibiting the growth, construction, or maintenance of any tree or structure to a height up to two hundred (200) feet above the surface of the land within a three mile radius of the airport reference point, except when such tree or structure intrudes within one of the restricted zones described above. (Ord. 1981-5 § 4)

#### **11.12.050 Use restrictions.**

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these regulations, no use may be made of land within any zone established by these regulations in such manner as to create electrical interference with radio communication between the airport and aircraft, make it difficult for flyers to distinguish between airport lights and others, result in glare in the eyes of flyers using the airport, impair visibility in the vicinity of the airport or otherwise endanger the landing, taking-off, or maneuvering of aircraft. (Ord. 1981-5 § 5)

#### **11.12.060 Nonconforming uses.**

A. Regulations Not Retroactive. These regulations shall not be construed to require the removal, lowering, or other changes or alterations of any structure or tree not conforming to the regulations as of the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter, nor otherwise interfere with the continuance of any nonconforming use. Nothing herein contained shall require any change in the construction, alteration or intended use of any structure, the construction or alteration of which was begun prior to the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter and is diligently prosecuted.

B. Marking and Lighting. Notwithstanding the preceding provision of this section, the owner of any nonconforming structure or tree is required to permit the installation, operation, and maintenance thereon of such markers and lights as shall be deemed necessary by the city council to indicate to the operators of aircraft in the vicinity of the airport, the presence of such airport hazards. Such markers and lights shall be installed, operated, and maintained at the expense of the owner of the nonconforming tree or structure, and shall conform to the current Federal Aviation Administration, Advisory Circular 70/7460-1. (Ord. 1981-5 § 6)

## **11.12.070 Permits.**

A. Future Uses. Except as specifically provided in subsections (A)(1), (2) and (3) of this section, no material change shall be made in the use of the land and no structure or tree shall be erected, altered, planted or otherwise established in any zone created unless a permit therefore shall have been applied for and granted. Each application for a permit shall indicate the purpose for which the permit is desired, with sufficient particularity to permit it to be determined whether the resulting use, structure or tree would conform to the regulations herein prescribed. If such determination is in the affirmative, the permit shall be granted.

1. In the area lying within the limits of the horizontal zone and conical zone but not within the limits of an approach zone or transition zone, no permit shall be required for any tree or structure less than one hundred fifty (150) feet of vertical height above the ground except when because of terrain, land contour or topographic features such tree or structure would extend above the height limits prescribed for such zone.

2. In the areas lying within the limits of the approach zones but at a horizontal distance of not less than one thousand two hundred (1,200) feet from each end of the runways, no permit shall be required for any tree or structure less than fifty (50) feet of vertical height above the established airport elevation, except when such tree or structure would extend above the height limit prescribed for such instrument or noninstrument approach zone.

3. In the areas lying within the limits of the conical zones beyond the perimeter of the horizontal zones, no permit shall be required for any tree or structure less than one hundred fifty (150) feet of vertical height above the ground except when such tree or structure, because of terrain, land contour or topographic feature would extend above the height limit prescribed for such conical zones.

Nothing contained in any of the foregoing exceptions shall be construed as permitting or intending to permit any construction, alteration or growth of any structure or tree in excess of any of the height limits established by these regulations except as set forth in Section 11.12.040.

B. Existing Uses. No permit shall be granted that would allow the establishment or creation of an airport hazard or permit a non-conforming use, structure, or tree to be made or become higher, or become a greater hazard to air navigation, than it was on the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter or any amendments thereto or than it is when the application for a permit is made. Except as indicated, all applications for such a permit shall be granted.

C. Nonconforming Uses Abandoned or Destroyed. Whenever the city council determines that a nonconforming structure or tree has been abandoned or more than eighty (80) percent torn down, physically deteriorated, or decayed, no permit shall be granted that would allow such structure or tree to exceed the applicable height limit or otherwise deviate from the zoning regulations.

D. Variances. Any person desiring to erect or increase the height of any structure, or permit the growth of any tree, or use his or her property, not in accordance with these regulations, may apply to the city council for a variance from such regulations. Such variances shall be allowed where it is duly found that a literal application or enforcement of the regulations would result in practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship and the relief granted would not be contrary to the public interest but will do substantial justice and be in

accordance with the spirit of these regulations.

E. Hazard Marking and Lighting. Any permit or variance granted may, if such action is deemed advisable to carry out the purpose of these regulations and be reasonable in the circumstances, be so conditioned as to require the owner of the structure or trees in question to, at his or her own expense, install, operate, and maintain thereon such markers and lights as may be necessary to indicate to flyers the presence of an airport hazard. (Ord. 1981-5 § 7)

#### **11.12.080 Administration.**

It shall be the duty of the city council to administer and enforce the regulations prescribed herein. Applications for permits and variances shall be made to said council upon forms furnished by it. Applications required by these regulations to be submitted to said council shall be promptly considered and granted or denied by it. (Ord. 1981-5 § 8)

#### **11.12.090 Board of appeals and appeals.**

There is created a board of appeals, and appeal rights and procedures, under and pursuant to NMSA 1978 Compilation, 3-39-22, sub-sections C, D (there being no existing board of appeals or adjustment), E, F, G, H, I, J (all as set out in Chapter 300, Laws of 1965). (Ord. 1981-5 § 9)

#### **11.12.100 Judicial review.**

Judicial review may be had as provided in, and under and pursuant to NMSA 1978 Compilation, 3-39-23, subsections A, B, C, D, E (all as set out in Chapter 300, Laws of 1965). (Ord. 1981-5 § 10)

#### **11.12.110 Enforcement and remedies.**

Violations, penalties, and additional relief are as provided in, and under and pursuant to NMSA 1978 Compilation, 3-39-24 (all as set out in Chapter 300, Laws of 1965). (Ord. 1981-5 § 11)

#### **11.12.120 Conflicting regulations.**

Where there exists a conflict between any of the regulations or limitations prescribed herein and any other regulations applicable to the same area, whether the conflict be with respect to the height of structures or trees, the use of land, or any other matter, the more stringent limitation or requirement shall govern and prevail. (Ord. 1981)

## Valencia County Airport Ordinance

### **154.153 AIRPORT ENCROACHMENT OVERLAY DISTRICT (AEOD).**

This section may be cited as the Valencia County Airport Overlay Zone District (AEOD), and is adopted, in part, pursuant to the authority cited in the Municipal Airport Zoning Law, NMSA 1978, §§ 3-39-16 et seq. (1965).

(A) *Purpose.* The purpose of this section is to provide both airspace protection and land use compatibility with airport operations in Valencia County. This section, through the establishment of airport overlay zones and corresponding regulations, provides for independent review of development proposals that are potentially discordant with airport operations in order to promote the public interest in safety, health and general welfare in Valencia County, as well as to ensure that all public-use airports in Valencia County can function in a safe, effective and efficient manner. Therefore, it is deemed necessary to regulate uses of land within or near the traffic patterns of airports through regulation of height of structures and objects of natural growth, and through regulation of land uses within noise impacted areas and runway protection zone areas.

(B) *Definitions.* All terms defined in the Interim Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance of Valencia County, New Mexico, as the same may be amended from time to time, shall also apply to this section, and, for purposes of this section, the following definitions shall apply unless the context clearly indicates or requires a different meaning.

**ABOVE GROUND LEVEL (AGL).** The specified height above ground level at a structure's location (see Federal Aviation Administration Advisory Circular No. 70/7460.2K (March 1, 2000)).

**AIRPORT ELEVATION.** The highest point of the airport's land area usable for takeoff and landing operations measured in feet above mean sea level (AMSL).

#### **AIRPORT HEIGHT LIMITATION ZONE.**

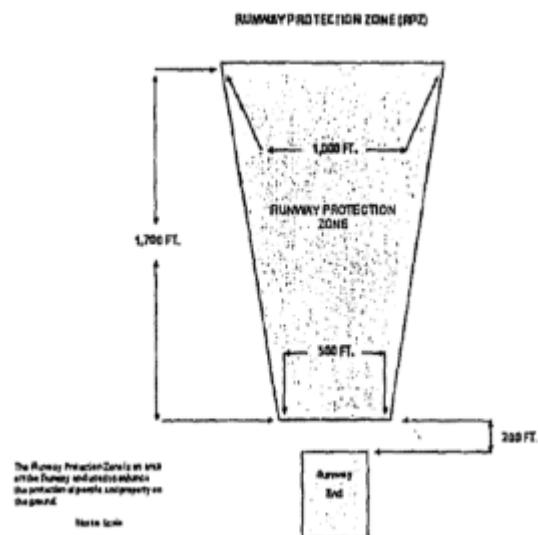
(a) **SUB ZONE A.** The area surrounding each public use airport extending outward 20,000 feet from the ends and from the side of all active runways; and

(b) **SUB ZONE B.** That area within the unincorporated area of the county not within the Airport Height Notification Sub Zone A.

**AIRPORT NOISE IMPACT ZONE.** An area contiguous to a public use airport measuring 1/2 the length of the longest active runway on either side and on the end of each active runway centerline.

**AIRPORT OBSTRUCTION HAZARD.** Any structure, object of natural growth, or use of land that would exceed the federal obstruction standards as contained in 14 CFR Parts 77.21 (April 1, 1971), 77.23 (April 1, 1971), 77.25 (April 8, 1971), 77.28 (April 1, 1971) and 77.29 (April 8, 1971), and which obstructs the airspace required for the safe operation of aircraft taking off, maneuvering, or landing at an airport or is otherwise hazardous to taking off, maneuvering, or landing of aircraft, and is un-permitted, or for which a variance has not been granted.

**AIRPORT RUNWAY PROTECTION ZONE.** A wedged shaped section of land, beginning a distance of 200 feet from each end of a runway. The boundary nearest the runway shall have a width of 500 feet, then the zone extends from the end of the runway 1,700 feet to the far end of the zone, which shall have a width of 1,000 feet, as depicted in the sketch below.



**AVIATION EASEMENT.** A right to use the airspace over real property whereby an airport proprietor and aircraft owners and operators are granted the right to operate aircraft in the airspace over the real property of another.

**LANDING AREA.** The area(s) of an airport used for landing, takeoff, or taxiing of aircraft.

**LDN.** A day/night, 24-hour average (averaged over an annual period) sound level, in decibels, obtained after the addition of 10 decibels to the sound levels occurring during the nighttime period (from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.).

**NOISE LEVEL REDUCTION (NLR), aka SOUND LEVEL REDUCTION (SLR).** Reduction in sound level in decibels between two designated locations for a stated sound frequency or band.

**PUBLIC USE AIRPORT.** An area of land or water designed and set aside for the landing and taking off of aircraft, utilized or intended to be utilized in the interest of the public for such purpose. As of adoption of this section, the currently recognized public use airports in Valencia County include Mid Valley Airpark and Belen Municipal Airport.

**RUNWAY.** A defined area of an airport prepared for landing and takeoff of aircraft along its length.

**SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL SITE.** Shall have the meaning given "solid waste facility" by NMSA 1978, § 74-9-3(P) (1990), the Solid Waste Act, as may be amended from time to time; provided, however, that at no time shall a solid waste disposal site include sites where manures and crop residues are returned to the soil as fertilizer or soil conditioner.

(C) *Establishment of encroachment zones.*

(1) Three airport overlay zones are created for public use airports in the geographical jurisdiction of Valencia County. The location of these overlay zones relative to public use airports are established by this section and shall apply to any public use airport(s) that may be established within Valencia County after adoption of this section. All development plans and objects of natural growth controllable by property owners within these zones shall comply with these airport zoning regulations in addition to compliance with all applicable underlying zoning district requirements as referenced in the county's zoning and land development regulations. The 3 overlay zones are:

(a) *Airport Height Notification Zone* (Sub Zone A and Sub Zone B). The Airport Height Notification Zone is hereby established as an overlay on the adopted county zoning maps. This zone is established to regulate the height of structures and natural vegetation for areas in proximity to all public use airports located within Valencia County, New Mexico. The Airport Height Notification Zones consists of 2 sub zones, defined as follows:

1. *Sub Zone A*: The area surrounding each public use airport extending outward 20,000 feet from the ends and each side of all active runways.
2. *Sub Zone B*: That area within the unincorporated area of the county not within the Airport Height Notification Sub Zone A.

(b) *Airport Runway Protection Zone*. There is hereby created and established, as an overlay zone on the adopted county zoning maps, an Airport Runway Protection Zone for areas at each end of every active runway at all public use airports within Valencia County. The Airport Runway Protection Zone shall be configured consistent with its definition in division (B) of this section. Within a Runway Protection Zone, certain uses shall be restricted or prohibited to reduce incompatibilities between normal airport operations and public health and safety.

(c) *Airport Noise Impact Zone*. There is hereby created and established as an overlay zone on the adopted county zoning maps an Airport Noise Impact Zone for areas surrounding all public use airports within Valencia County. The Noise Zone is an area in which uses are restricted and special construction standards are to be used to minimize the impact of airport generated noise routinely produced by continuation of normal airport operations. The *AIRPORT NOISE IMPACT ZONE* is defined as follows:

1. An area surrounding each public use airport extending outward from the ends and each side of all active runways to a distance 1/2 the length of the longest active runway centerline.
2. Notwithstanding other provisions of this section, should any public use airport conduct an official 14 CFR Part 150 (1984) study, the boundaries of that Airport's Noise Impact Zone shall be modified to comply with the official noise study, subject to amendment of the official zoning map as addressed in the county zoning regulations.

(2) Where a zone of influence overlays a portion of the property, only that portion within the zone shall be affected by the zone regulations. Furthermore, in relation to applying protection zone and noise impact zone requirements, use regulations shall apply to the structure

or facilities constituting the use and shall not generally apply to accessory open space, landscape and buffering, storm water management, or driveway and parking uses.

(D) *Airport Height Notification Zone regulations.* The Airport Height Notification Zone regulations apply only to potential airport obstructions, as defined herein. Any proposed development which is not determined by be a potential airport obstruction is exempt from any Airport Height Notification Zone permitting regulations contained herein.

(1) *Potential airport obstruction definition.* A proposed development shall be determined to be a **POTENTIAL AIRPORT OBSTRUCTION** if the proposed development would result in any structure having a height or natural vegetation having a potential, long-term height greater than an imaginary surface extending outward from the ends and sides of a public use airport active runway at a slope of 1 foot vertically from airport elevation for each 100 feet horizontally, outward to 20,000 feet horizontally (200 feet vertically) for Sub Zone A, or 200 feet above ground level (AGL) for Sub Zone B. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any proposed structure that would otherwise be a potential airport obstruction is not considered a potential airport obstruction if it is shielded by an existing structure, is an antenna structure of 20 feet or less in height, or is otherwise exempt from notice pursuant to 14 CFR 77.15 (April 1, 1971). Further, notwithstanding the foregoing, any provision of this section regulating or restricting or otherwise applying to the growth of natural vegetation shall only apply within the Airport Runway Protection Zone, as defined in this section.

(2) *Notice.* Applicants for any development proposal determined by the county to result in a structure(s) that constitutes a potential airport obstruction shall be issued a notice of potential airport obstruction during the development proposal review process by the Code Enforcement Department. Further, all potential airport obstructions shall be forwarded to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to the applicant to be reviewed for conformance to the obstruction standards detailed in Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 77, Subpart C (14 CFR Part 77) (1971), and as described in the Federal Aviation Administration Advisory Circular AC 70/7460-2K (March 1, 2000).

(3) *Permit required.* No proposed development shall be approved for construction and no building permit shall be issued for a proposal to construct any structure which is determined by the county to be a potential airport obstruction unless an airport construction permit has been granted. Further, all potential airport obstructions shall be forwarded to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to be reviewed in conformance to the obstruction standards detailed in Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 77, Subpart C (14 CFR Part 77).

(4) *Procedures for obtaining an airport construction permit.* Applicants shall submit to the Code Enforcement Department a complete airport construction permit application form (as provided by the Code Enforcement Department) and a copy of the notice of proposed construction form submitted to the FAA for the project. Prior to permit requests being considered for approval, applicants shall submit to the Code Enforcement Department the final determination issued by the FAA based on its review of the applicant's notice of proposed construction submitted in accordance with 14 CFR Part 77 (1971). The review process shall follow the Type A application procedure set forth in § 154.075.

(5) *Criteria for granting an airport construction permit.*

(a) Where the FAA has reviewed the proposed development and determined its construction would not exceed an obstruction standard of 14 CFR Part 77 (1971), the Code Enforcement Department shall grant an airport construction permit for the proposed development; provided that a condition is attached to the permit approval to ensure that the approved structure(s) is marked and lighted as soon as the obstruction height is exceeded and prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy (CO), and in accordance with the standards of Rules of the Federal Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration Advisory Circular No. 70/7460-1 (April 15, 2000).

(b) Where the FAA has reviewed a proposed development and determined that the proposed development exceeds the obstruction standards of 14 CFR Part 77, no airport construction permit may be approved, and a Valencia County airport obstruction variance must be obtained by the applicant for the proposed development to proceed.

(6) *Airport obstruction variance.* An airport obstruction variance may be granted pursuant to the Type C review procedures set forth in § 154.077, and as provided below.

(a) The applicant shall submit an application on a form approved by the Code Enforcement Department, and shall also submit:

1. A copy of the proposed construction form submitted to the FAA including aerial photography of the site as required,
2. A final determination issued by the FAA based on its review of the applicant's notice of proposed construction submitted in accordance with 14 CFR Part 77 (1971), and
3. A valid aeronautical evaluation (may consist of the evaluation performed by the FAA).

(b) An airport obstruction variance may be granted if the Board of County Commissioners determine that a literal enforcement of the regulations would result in practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship and where the relief granted would not be contrary to the public interest or aircraft safety (i.e., the development can be accommodated in navigable airspace without adverse impact on the county's public use airports or operations) but would do substantial justice and be in accordance with the spirit of applicable state statutes.

(c) A condition shall be attached to all airport obstruction variance approvals to require that the approved structure(s) is marked and lighted to indicate to aircraft pilots the presence of an obstruction in accordance with the standards of FAA Advisory Circular Number 70/7460-1 (April 15, 2000). Where such marking or lighting is required, such requirement shall be satisfied as soon as the obstruction height exceeded and prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy (CO) for the affected structure.

(d) No airport obstruction variance shall be approved unless the FAA determines that the aeronautical evaluations submitted are valid and that safety of flight operations will not be adversely affected.

(e) Further consideration shall be given to:

1. The nature of the terrain and the height of existing structures,

2. Public and private interests and investments,
3. The character of flying operations and planned development of airports,
4. FAA designated federal airways,
5. Whether construction of the proposed structure would cause an increase in the minimum decent altitude or decision height at the affected airport,
6. Technological advances,
7. The safety of persons on the ground and in the air,
8. Land use density,
9. The safe and efficient use of navigable airspace,
10. The cumulative effects on navigable airspace of all structures or proposed structures identified in the applicable jurisdiction's comprehensive plans, and all other known proposed structure in the area,
11. FAA determinations and results of aeronautical studies conducted by or for the FAA,
12. Comments and recommendations from local airport authorities and users, and
13. Other testimony and findings of aviation operations and safety experts.

(f) Conflicting criteria for variances in existing or future Valencia County zoning regulations shall not be applicable to airport obstruction variance requests. Criteria in other Valencia County zoning regulations that do not conflict, however, are applicable to review of airport obstruction variance requests.

(E) *Airport Runway Protection Zone regulations.* The following types of uses shall be prohibited within the Runway Protection Zone:

- (1) Educational centers (including, but not limited to, all types of primary and secondary schools, pre-schools, child care facilities),
- (2) Medical facilities (including, but not limited to, hospitals, medical inpatient treatment facilities, nursing/convalescent facilities),
- (3) Places of worship,
- (4) Recreational facilities, such as a race track, fairgrounds where large numbers of people may congregate (e.g., not a golf course),

(5) Commercial businesses that constitute a potential hazard (including, but not limited to, gasoline service stations, restaurants, chemical warehouses or storage facilities, etc.), and

(6) Any use not permitted in the underlying zone designation, or any use which, in the judgment of the Code Enforcement Department, constitutes an added hazard to people on the ground in case of an accident or incident involving normal aircraft movement or operation.

(F) *Air Noise Impact Zone.* Provisions of this division shall apply to construction, alteration, moving, repair and use of any building or structure for the uses specified below and located within the Airport Noise Impact Zones. The following uses located within an Airport Noise Impact Zone, unless prohibited by any other zoning district regulations, shall comply with the applicable criteria described below:

(1) Developers of child care facilities, transient lodgings, educational centers, and residential uses shall verify to the county in writing that the proposed buildings are designed to achieve an outdoor to indoor noise level reduction (NLR) of at least 25 decibels. Normal residential construction can be expected to provide an NLR of 20 to 25 decibels.

(2) Developers of hospitals, homes for the aged, places of worship, auditoriums and concert halls shall verify to the county in writing that the proposed buildings are designed to achieve an outdoor to indoor noise level reduction (NLR) of at least 25 decibels.

(3) Developers of outdoor sports arenas and spectator sports facilities shall verify to the county in writing that the proposed buildings are designed to achieve an outdoor to indoor noise level reduction (NLR) of at least 25 decibels.

(4) In lieu of providing written verification that a proposed building is designed for an NLR of 25 decibels as stated in this division (F), a developer may execute and record an aviation easement as provided below.

(5) An **AVIATION EASEMENT** is a legal document that grants to the owner or operator of a nearby airport a right to continue to operate the airport in a manner similar to current operations, despite potential nuisance effects upon uses that are being established in close proximity to the airport. Applicants choosing to provide an aviation easement shall execute the easement to the appropriate airport authority. The easement shall be in a form acceptable to the county attorney's office and shall be executed in a recordable form prior to the release of a development site plan, prior to or via recording of a final plat, or prior to issuance of a building permit, as applicable.

(6) Notwithstanding the foregoing, no land is required to meet the requirements of this division (F) if the self-generated noise from that use and /or the ambient noise from other nonaircraft and nonairport uses is equal to or greater than the noise from aircraft and airport sources.

(G) *Special requirements applicable throughout the unincorporated area of the county.*

(1) *Purpose.* Notwithstanding any other provision of this overlay district, no use may be made of land or water within the unincorporated areas of the county in such a manner as to interfere with the operation of an airborne aircraft using a public use airport. The following special requirements shall apply to proposed developments: Solid waste disposal sites shall be

reviewed in accordance with state solid waste environmental regulations. In addition, no solid waste disposal site shall be permitted to be located:

- (a) Within 10,000 feet of any public airport active runway used, or planned to be used, by turbine powered aircraft, or
- (b) Within 5,000 feet of any public use airport active runway used only by piston engine type aircraft, or
- (c) So that it places the active runways and/or approach and departure patterns of an airport between a solid waste disposal site and a bird feeding, water or roosting area, or
- (d) Outside the above locations but still within the limits of any airport overlay zone(s) if determined by the FAA to pose a hazard.

(2) *Requirements.* Proposed developments which will produce lights or illumination, smoke, glare, or other visual hazards, or produce electronic interference with airport or airplane communication or navigational signals shall be subject to standards and required to meet the standards specified in the FAA Order 7400.2F, Procedures for Handling Airspace Matters (Effective February 16, 2006), and be consistent with state statutes, as may be applied and enforced by state or federal law.

(H) *Nonconforming Uses.* The regulations prescribed herein shall not be construed to require removal, lowering, or other change to or alteration of any structure or natural vegetation not currently conforming to the regulations as of the effective date of this section, or to otherwise interfere with continuance of any nonconforming use. However, no pre-existing, nonconforming structure, natural vegetation, or use shall be replaced, rebuilt, altered, or allowed to grow higher, or to be replanted, so as to constitute an increase in the degree of nonconformity with regard to these regulations. Nothing contained herein shall require any change in the construction, alteration, or intended use of any structure, where the construction or alteration began prior to the effective date of this section and is completed within 1 year thereafter. Any existing, non-conforming use that is terminated after the date of this section is enacted shall conform to this section unless the existing, non-conforming use is re-established within 1 year after it is terminated. Nothing in this section shall permit any existing, non-conforming use to be re-established to a greater degree or extent than existed at the date that this section becomes law.

(I) *Appeals.* Appeals of any decision of the Code Enforcement Department pursuant to this section shall be heard by the Board pursuant to the procedures in § 154.062, and may be filed by the applicant, staff; or any person aggrieved or taxpayer affected or the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department.

(J) *Enforcement.* Enforcement of regulations in this section (AOED) shall be pursuant to § 154.999 and as provided or limited by applicable law.

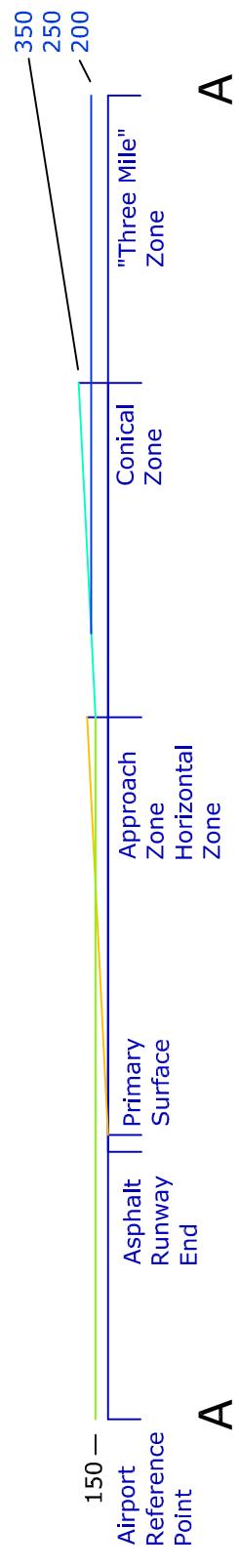
(K) *Conflicting regulations; regulation references.*

(1) Where there exists a conflict between any of the regulations or limitations prescribed in this section and any other regulations applicable to the same area, whether the conflict is with respect to the height of structures or trees, and the use of land, or any other matter, the more stringent limitation or requirement shall govern and prevail.

(2) The federal regulations referenced in this section are available at the Code Enforcement Department, Federal Aviation Administration or (at the time of adoption of this section) on the internet at the following sites:

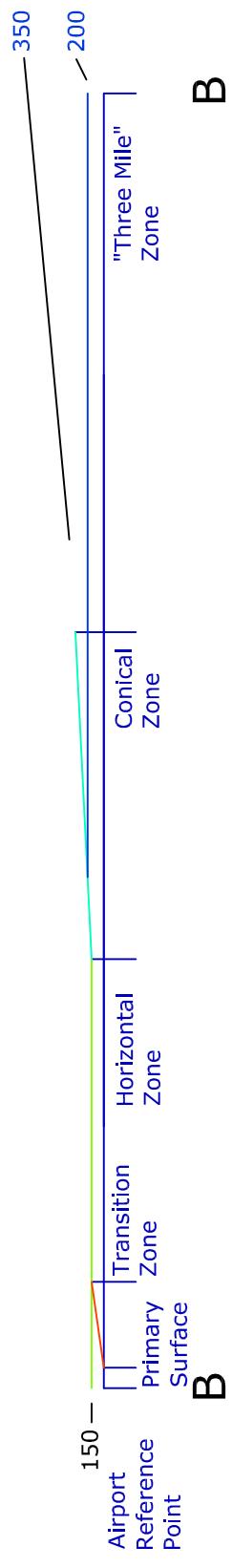
| Reference:  | Available at the following web site:   |
|---|--|
| 14 CFR Parts 71 and 77  | <a href="http://www.gpoaccess.gov/executive.html">www.gpoaccess.gov/executive.html</a> |
| 14 CFR Part 150   | <a href="http://www.gpoaccess.gov/executive.html">www.gpoaccess.gov/executive.html</a> |
| Federal Aviation Administration Advisory Circular AC 70/7460-1                            | <a href="http://www.faa.gov">www.faa.gov</a> (follow links to advisory circulars)      |
| Federal Aviation Administration Advisory Circular AC 70/7460-2K                           | <a href="http://www.faa.gov">www.faa.gov</a> (follow links to advisory circulars)      |
| FAA Order 7400.2F, Procedures for Handling Airspace Matters (Effective February 16, 2006) | <a href="http://www.faa.gov/ATpubs/AIR/">http://www.faa.gov/ATpubs/AIR/</a>            |

(Ord. 2006-07, passed 11-17-2006)



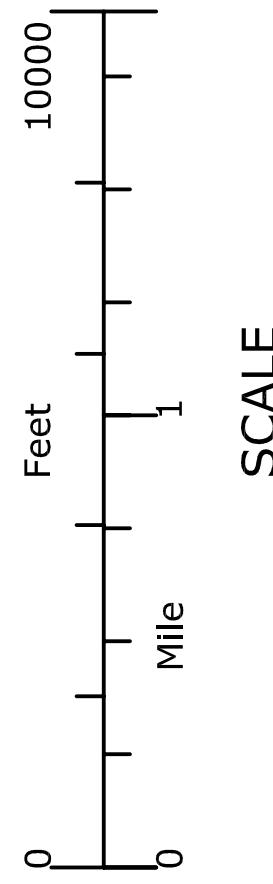
Cross section of Zones along center line of Approach Path

**A**

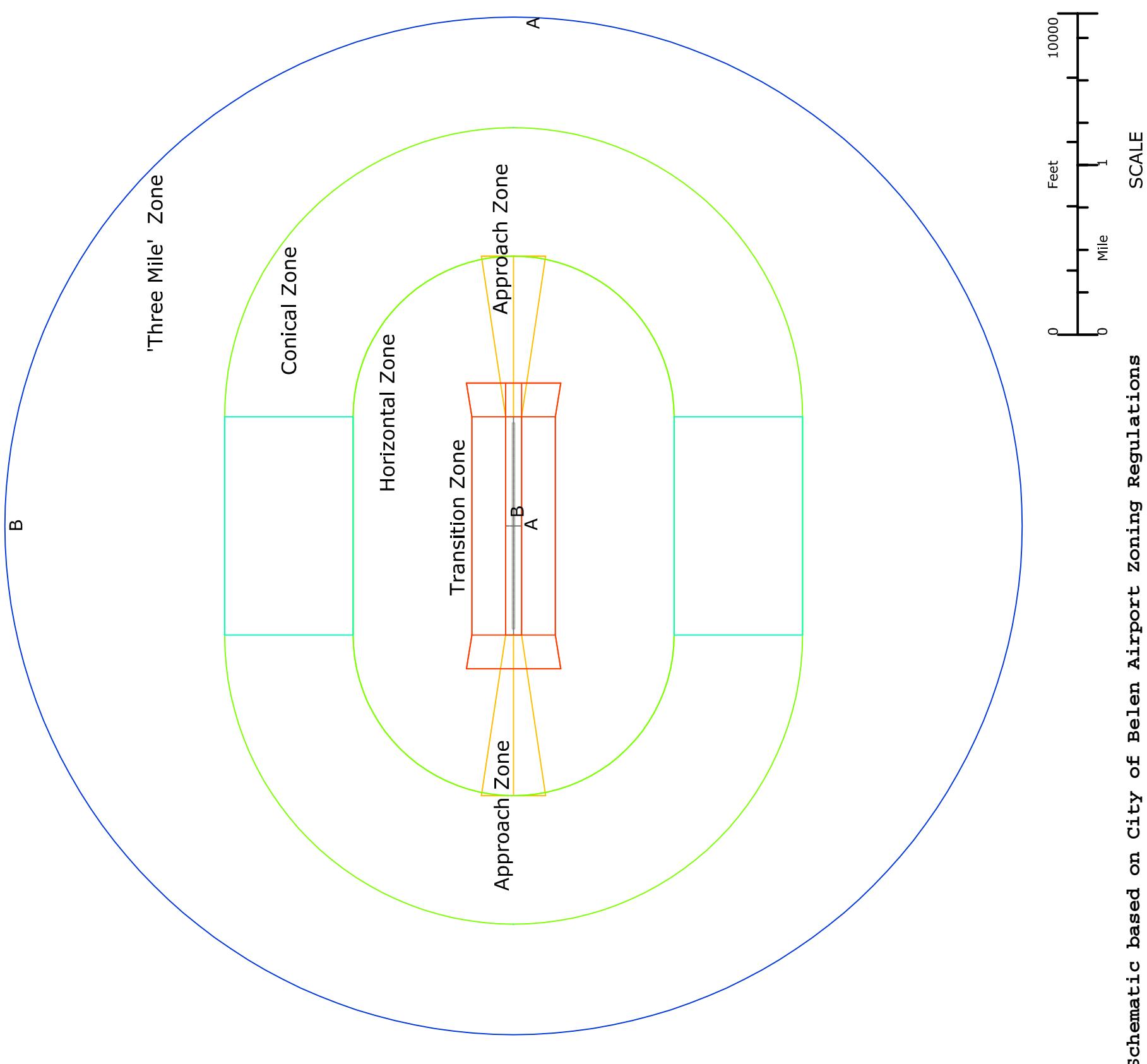


Cross section of Zones perpendicular to center line of runway

**B**



Schematic based on City of Belen Airport Zoning Regulations



Schematic based on City of Belen Airport Zoning Regulations

**APPENDIX G**

**Airport Joint Powers Agreement**

# **PROPOSED DRAFT**

JPA No. \_\_\_\_\_

## **JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF BELEN AND THE COUNTY OF VALENCIA**

### **REGULATING LAND USES AROUND THE BELEN MUNICIPAL AIRPORT**

This Joint Powers Agreement (the "Agreement") is entered into on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2009, by and between the City of Belen (the "City") and the County of Valencia (the "County").

#### **RECITALS:**

1. The New Mexico Joint Powers Agreements Act [11-1-1 to 11-1-7 NMSA 1978] authorizes two or more public agencies to jointly exercise by agreement any power common to the contracting parties [11-2-3 NMSA 1978], subject to any of the restrictions imposed upon the manner of exercising such power of one of the contracting public agencies [11-1-5 NMSA 1978].
2. The City and the County, as parties to this Agreement, desire to coordinate the regulation of land use around the Belen Alexander Municipal Airport in order to provide both airspace protection and land use compatibility with the current and future operations of the airport.
3. Municipal airport facilities are subject to the planning and zoning laws and other ordinances and regulations applicable to the area in which the airport facility is located [3-39-5 NMSA 1978].

#### **NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS AGREED BETWEEN THE PARTIES:**

1. PURPOSE: The purpose of this Agreement is to establish common standards for the City and the County to regulate land use and development around the Belen Alexander Municipal Airport.
2. AIRPORT ZONING AUTHORITY: The provisions of the airport zoning regulations of the City [Chapter 11.12, Airport Zoning Regulations] pertaining to the approach zones, transitional zones, horizontal zone, and conical zone shall prevail both inside and outside the municipal limits of the City. The County airport overlay zones pertaining to the height limitation zone, the noise impact zone, and airport runway protection zone [Section 154.153, Airport Encroachment Overlay District] shall apply only within the unincorporated areas of the County in proximity to the Belen Alexander Municipal Airport.

# **PROPOSED DRAFT**

3. AIRPORT ZONING MAP: An official airport zoning map delineating the airport overlay zones as defined by the City and County airport zoning ordinances shall be attached and made a part of this Agreement. The airport zoning map may also include the current underlying zoning categories defined by the City and County zoning ordinances and the delineation of the boundary of the municipal planning and platting jurisdiction. A copy of the airport zoning map shall be filed with the County Clerk as an official record.
4. SUBDIVISION APPROVAL AND DISCLOSURE: The municipal planning and platting jurisdiction of the City includes unincorporated territory within a radius of three (3) miles outside the municipal boundary [3-20-5 NMSA 1978]. Any proposed subdivision of land outside the City municipal limits within the municipal planning and platting jurisdiction shall be subject to concurrent review and approval by the City and the County [3-20-9 NMSA 1978]. For purposes of this Agreement, the City and the County, within their respective jurisdictions, shall require subdividers of land within one (1) mile of the airport runways of the Belen Alexander Municipal Airport to provide written disclosure to current and future property owners regarding airport zoning regulations. Such disclosure shall be part of the subdivision review process administered by the City and the County.
5. AIRPORT AREA MASTER PLAN: The City and the County shall collaborate in the development and implementation of an airport area master plan for Belen Alexander Municipal Airport. A master plan study area shall be established by consent of the City and County governing bodies. Preparation of a long range land development plan for the airport area will provide a basis for appropriate zoning and other land use regulations administered by the City and County. An extraterritorial zoning authority may be considered as an alternative to coordinated airport area zoning by the City and the County within their respective jurisdictions.
6. LIABILITY: No party shall be responsible for liability incurred as a result of any other party's acts of omissions in connection with this Agreement. Any liability incurred in connection with this Agreement is subject to the immunities and limitations of the Tort Claims Act.
7. TERMINATION: This Agreement may be terminated by either the City or the County upon delivery of written notice to the other at least ninety (90) days prior to the effective date of termination.
8. AMENDMENT: This Agreement shall not be altered, changed, or amended except by an instrument in writing executed by the parties hereto and approved by the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration.
9. GOVERNING LAW: This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of New Mexico.

# **PROPOSED DRAFT**

**10. SEVERABILITY:** If any provision of this Agreement shall be found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be illegal, in conflict with any law of the State of New Mexico or otherwise unenforceable, the validity and enforceability of the remaining provisions shall not be affected and the rights and obligations of the parties shall be construed and enforced as if this Agreement did not contain the particular provision found to be illegal, invalid or otherwise unenforceable.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement on the date first written above.

**APPROPRIATE SIGNATURE BLOCKS FOR:**

**CITY OF BELEN**

**COUNTY OF VALENCIA**

**N. M. DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

**LEGAL REVIEW**

**APPENDIX H**

**Table of Strategic Actions**

## City of Belen Strategic Growth Plan – Recommendations for Action

| Goal Statement   | ID  | Strategic Action Statement  | Implementation   | Target       |
|--|-----|---|--|--------------|
| <b>Activity Center: Belen Center</b>                           |     |   |  |              |
| Create a central business district of regional significance.   | A-1 | Complete the Becker Avenue street improvement project from Main Street to First Street. Develop a conceptual plan for a proposed First Street Plaza at the Harvey House; and design and construct the First Street Plaza if feasible.   | •Finish construction from Main Street to First.<br>•Adopt First Street Plan.   | 2012<br>2010 |
|  | A-2 | Promote and support Belen's designated Main Street district in conjunction with the New Mexico MainStreet Program.  | Activate MainStreet program.   | 2010         |
|  | A-3 | Support the Belen Art League to advance and promote the arts through special events, programs, and services in downtown Belen.  | Promote Special Events for the Arts.   | 2010-20      |
|  | A-4 | Establish special use zone districts in the Belen Zoning Ordinance pertaining to specific purposes or designated areas in the downtown area, employing standards and regulations that:<br>1) allow for higher density and mixed-use development in select areas,<br>2) require a variety of streetscape amenities for pedestrians,<br>3) promote transit, shared parking, and pedestrian/bikeways, and<br>4) protect historic properties and residential areas. | Multiple Special Districts:<br>•Becker Avenue<br>•Belen MainStreet<br>•Rail Runner Station Area<br>•Historic Districts<br>•Downtown Corridor | 2010-13      |
|  | A-5 | Redefine the Main Street Overlay Zone in the Belen Zoning Ordinance to begin at the railroad overpass on the north end and extend to the south Belen Interchange (I-25/NM 314); and apply the development principles of Form-Based Zoning to buildings and structures fronting on the segment of Main Street between the intersections of Aragon Road and Camino del Llano.   | Revise Belen Zoning Ordinance.   | 2010         |
|  | A-6 | Create special design concepts for a neighborhood development plan pertaining to the area north of the Rail Runner station and other key development properties near the station.   | Revise Belen Zoning Ordinance.   | 2011         |
|  | A-7 | Prepare an inventory of key properties for potential redevelopment/rehabilitation that would advance the development concepts of the Rail Runner station area study approved by the Belen City Council in May 2009.   | Prepare inventory of key redevelopment properties.   | 2011         |
| Preserve and protect the historic character of downtown Belen. | B-1 | Designate a downtown historic district in Belen, and regulate construction activities within the district in order to preserve its historic architectural and cultural features.  | Designation of one or more historic districts.   | 2010         |
|  | B-2 | Administer a building permit review process for designated historic districts and landmarks, based on local standards for rehabilitation and other significant changes that may be proposed for relevant buildings and structures.  | Conduct public meetings by the Historic Properties Review Board.   | 2010-20      |
|  | B-3 | Document and maintain an official inventory of historic landmarks within the City of Belen, based on local, State, and/or Federal criteria.   | Completion of Landmarks Inventory.   | 2010         |

## City of Belen Strategic Growth Plan – Recommendations for Action

| <b>Goal Statement</b>  | <b>ID</b> | <b>Strategic Action Statement</b>  | <b>Implementation</b>  | <b>Target</b> |
|--|-----------|--|--|---------------|
| Establish the Rail Runner station as a special gateway into Belen. | C-1       | Develop a conceptual plan for an “Arrival Park” along both sides of the railroad tracks extending from the Rail Runner station north to Aragon Road.   | Develop Master Plan.   | 2010          |
|  | C-2       | Develop a “pedestrian connections plan” defining various routes between the station and the Becker Avenue district. This plan may include elevators and/or ramps, stairs, pedestrian infrastructure on Reinken Street Bridge, sidewalks, acequia path, and street intersection improvements.   | Design and construction of pedestrian structure from rail station to First Street. | 2010          |
|  | C-3       | Develop a conceptual plan to enhance visual continuity between the Rail Runner station and Downtown Belen, including “way-finding” signage, uniform streetlights, special flags/banners, and pavement treatments.  | Adopt conceptual plan.   | 2010          |
| Enhance and improve the area surrounding the Rail Runner station.  | D-1       | Acquire or protect right-of-way for a new road along the east side of the railroad tracks from Aragon Road to the Rail Runner station to provide additional access and on-street parking; and create a buffer for the surrounding uses.  | Secure acquisition or protection of right-of-way                                   | 2010          |
|  | D-2       | Continue to seek funding to remediate the brownfield site on the northwest corner of Wisconsin and Reinken in order to provide a more functional roadway access to the Rail Runner station from Wisconsin Street.  | Brownfield assessment and remediation.   | 2015          |
|  | D-3       | Create and adopt a roadway, pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure plan connecting the Rail Runner station with Downtown, nearby neighborhoods, and the regional bikeway network.   | Adopt Station Area Infrastructure Plan   | 2013          |
|  | D-4       | Evaluate the current zoning of lands east of the Rail Runner station with the objective of preserving agricultural land use and protecting rural neighborhoods. Research alternative zoning and land management techniques to preserve the rural character and provide a buffer to the more intensive development near the Rail Runner station and along River Road (and Reinken). | Review and revise Belen Zoning Ordinance.  | 2011          |
| <b>Activity Center: North Belen Gateway</b>                        |           |  |  |               |
| Establish a North Belen commercial and industrial center.          | E-1       | Complete the reconstruction of the North Belen Interchange to provide access to the west side of the I-25 Highway, in particular the Rancho Cielo master planned area that was annexed by the City in December 2006.   | Reconstruction of I-25 Interchange.  | 2010          |
|  | E-2       | Prepare and adopt a North Belen Corridor Plan for the northern portion of Main Street between the I-25 Highway interchange and the NM 314 overcrossing, focusing on the streetscape (i.e., landscaping, lighting, pedestrian trails) and appropriate land development along the roadway.   | Preparation and adoption of Corridor Plan.   | 2015          |

## City of Belen Strategic Growth Plan – Recommendations for Action

| Goal Statement  | ID  | Strategic Action Statement   | Implementation   | Target  |
|---|-----|--|--|---------|
| <b><i>Activity Center: West Belen Gateway</i></b>               |     |  |  |         |
| Create a mixed-use development cluster for West Belen.          | F-1 | Establish a new zone district in the Belen Zoning Ordinance to be referenced as the West Belen Gateway District employing standards and regulations that allow for higher density residential and compact mixed-use development.                           | Review and Revise Belen Zoning Ordinance.              | 2010    |
|   | F-2 | Promote the continuing development of traveler accommodations such as hotels, motels, and restaurants around the I-25 Interchange.   | Marketing and promotion.                               | 2010-20 |
| Establish a Highway Transportation Hub for Belen.               | G-1 | Acquire or lease land near the interchange for development as a park-and-ride lot with amenities such as lighting, security fencing, and pedestrian shelters.  | Acquire or lease land for Park-and-Ride Lot            | 2015    |
|   | G-2 | Provide transit services with stops in the vicinity of the Camino del Llano/I-25 Highway interchange.  | Coordination with Regional Transit District.           | 2010    |
| Improve accessibility to the Belen West Mesa community.         | H-1 | Reconstruct the Camino del Llano roadway segment from the I-25 Highway over the top of the escarpment of the west mesa area of Belen.  | Reconstruction completed.                              | 2010-11 |
|   | H-2 | Prepare and adopt an areawide drainage master plan for the West Belen Gateway District to protect future development along the I-25 Highway and mitigate storm water runoff in steep slope areas.  | Conduct drainage study.                                | 2010    |
|   | H-3 | Develop secure funding sources for implementing drainage plans on the western escarpment by activating the statutory process to establish and implement a regional Flood Control District [72-18-1 et seq. NMSA 1978] that includes all of the Belen area. | Conduct feasibility study for Flood Control Authority. | 2015    |
| <b><i>Activity Center: South Belen Gateway</i></b>              |     |  |  |         |
| Concentrate highway-related business activities in South Belen. | I-1 | Review both City and County Zoning of lands surrounding the South Belen Interchange and develop incentives for rural oriented businesses, particularly along NM314 and NM 116 (Old Highway 85).  | Review and Revise Belen Zoning Ordinance.              | 2013    |
|   | I-2 | Evaluate the feasibility of annexing additional lands around the South Belen Interchange.  | Annexation cost/benefit study.                         | 2015    |
|   | I-3 | Promote the development of an RV park with traveler amenities and services in the vicinity of the South Belen Interchange.   | Review and Revise Belen Zoning Ordinance.              | 2013    |

## City of Belen Strategic Growth Plan – Recommendations for Action

| Goal Statement  | ID  | Strategic Action Statement   | Implementation                                | Target  |
|---|-----|--|---|---------|
| <b><i>Activity Center: Airport Center</i></b>                   |     |  |   |         |
| Expand the functions and services of Belen's municipal airport. | J-1 | Relocate Camino del Llano around the airport and construct a new crosswind runway with taxiway at the municipal airport.                               | Construction of crosswind runway.             | 2015    |
|   | J-2 | Construct new hangars with direct access to the new crosswind runway.  | Construction project.                         | 2016-17 |
|   | J-3 | Construct a new fire station at the airport.   | Construction project.                         | 2010    |
| Ensure compatible development of lands surrounding the airport. | K-1 | Adopt a future land use plan and recommended zoning for the municipal airport and surrounding lands within a three-mile radius of the airport runways. | Collaborate with County on Airport Area Plan. | 2011    |
|   | K-2 | Adopt a Joint Powers Agreement between the City of Belen and Valencia County to coordinate zoning jurisdiction of lands around the municipal airport.  | Adopt Joint Powers Agreement with County.     | 2010    |

**APPENDIX I**

**Belen City Council Resolutions**

**CITY OF BELEN**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2009-06**

**A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE STATION AREA STUDY TO INFORM  
AND GUIDE LAND USE, TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED POLICY  
DECISIONS IN THE PORTIONS OF THE CITY NEAR THE NEW MEXICO  
RAIL RUNNER EXPRESS COMMUTER RAIL STATION**

**WHEREAS**, the opening of the Rail Runner station presents a significant change in existing conditions for the City and presents unique opportunities to achieve a range of land use, transportation, economic development and other opportunities; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Belen adopted resolution no. 2007-02 authorizing the City of Belen to participate in transit oriented development planning and implementation efforts for the Belen Rail Runner Express Commuter Rail Station Area; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Belen expresses the desire and intention to plan for, design, and implement development near the Rail Runner Station in a manner that will advance the goals of the City and promote Rail Runner and transit ridership; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mid-Region Council of Governments is managing a program for the planning and design of improvements of land, infrastructure and facilities within one-quarter to one-half mile from New Mexico Rail Runner station; and

**WHEREAS**, City officials and staff and representatives of the public participated in the planning activities undertaken by the Mid-Region Council of Governments and the consultant team and these parties participated in planning workshops and attended a public hearing; and

**WHEREAS**, the Station Area Study is a product of this effort and presents an assessment of existing conditions and a vision for the future of the area in the vicinity of the Rail Runner Station that were developed and presents recommendations to help achieve the vision; and

**WHEREAS**, the Station Area Study shall be used as a supplement to the existing Comprehensive Land Use Plan and other City planning documents to inform and guide land use and public improvement decisions

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL, THE  
GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF BELEN**, that the City shall formally accept the Station Area Study and recognizes the Study's recommendations regarding land use, transportation and other City activities in the station area

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED, this 4<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2009.

Ronnie Jones  
Ronnie Torres, Mayor

Attest:

Sally G. Garley  
Sally G. Garley, City Manager

**CITY OF BELEN**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2009-07**

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR  
THE STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN FOR THE CITY OF BELEN,  
NEW MEXICO.**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Belen has received funding through a Community Development Block Grant administered by the New Mexico Department of Finance Administration Local Government Division for the purpose of developing a Strategic Growth Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Belen has entered into a Planning Services Agreement with the Mid-Regional Council of Governments (MRCOG) to carry out a process for the preparation of the Belen Strategic Growth Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Belen City Council appointed a Steering Committee to oversee the strategic planning process and advise the MRCOG staff regarding feasible and desirable actions to stimulate growth in the City of Belen; and

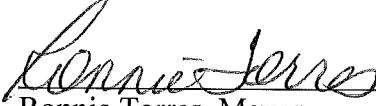
**WHEREAS**, the City of Belen has engaged in various activities to provide public information, ensure media coverage, and solicit community input through public meetings and workshops concerning the Belen Strategic Growth Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Belen Planning and Zoning Commission has reviewed the proposed Goals and Objectives for the Belen Strategic Growth Plan, and passed a motion at their regular meeting on April 27, 2009, recommending approval of the Goals and Objectives by the Belen City Council; and

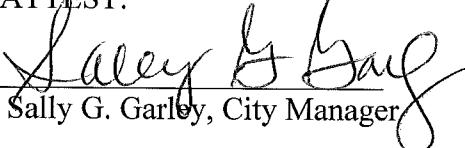
**WHEREAS**, the proposed Goals and Objectives for the Belen Strategic Growth Plan provide a basis for determining the most effective actions to guide City development in the near future, and to support realistic strategic planning recommendations.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL, THE  
GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF BELEN**, that the Belen City Council does adopt the Belen Strategic Growth Plan Goals and Objectives hereby attached and made a part of this Resolution.

PASSED, ADOPTED, and APPROVED this 14<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2009, by the City Council of the City of Belen, New Mexico.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ronnie Torres, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sally G. Garley, City Manager

**RESOLUTION No. 2010-01**

**CONCERNING THE APPROVAL OF THE STRATEGIC  
GROWTH PLAN OF THE CITY OF BELEN, NEW  
MEXICO TO GUIDE DEVELOPMENT AND PROVIDE A  
PLAN FOR EFFECTIVE ACTION.**

**WHEREAS**, the Governing body of the City of Belen seeks to establish strategic growth planning for the city; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Belen has received funding through a Community Development Block Grant administered by the New Mexico Department of finance and Administration Local Government Division for the purpose of developing a Strategic Growth Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Belen has entered into a Planning Services Agreement with the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) to carry out a process for the preparation of the Belen Strategic Growth Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Belen City Council appointed a Steering Committee to oversee the strategic planning process and advise the MRCOG staff regarding feasible and desirable actions to stimulate growth in the City of Belen; and

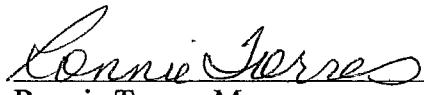
**WHEREAS**, the City of Belen has engaged in various activities to provide public information, ensure media coverage, and solicit community input through public meetings and workshops concerning the Belen Strategic Growth Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Belen City Council adopted the Goals and Objectives for the Belen Strategic Growth Plan on May 4, 2009; and

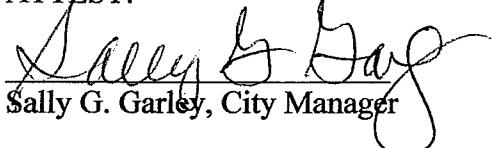
**WHEREAS**, the Belen Strategic Growth Plan provides a basis for determining the most effective actions to guide City development in the near future.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Belen City Council does adopt the Belen Strategic Growth Plan hereby attached and made a part of this Resolution.

**PASSED, ADOPTED, and APPROVED** this 8<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2010, by the City Council of the City of Belen, New Mexico.

  
Ronnie Torres  
Ronnie Torres, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Sally G. Garley, City Manager