

Bernalillo County Unincorporated Areas Cultural Assets Report

Executive Summary

According to the Arts and Economic Prosperity Report III, developed by Americans for the Arts, communities that invest in the arts see an increase in jobs, economic growth and an increased quality of life that positions a community to compete in the growing creative economy. Despite the economic downturn in recent years, there has been continued growth in the arts and cultural economy. The past five years has seen a 24% increase nationally in the non-profit arts and culture industry, generating \$166.2 billion annually and generates nearly \$30 billion in revenue to local, state, and federal governments each year.

In 2007, the University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research, prepared a report the Economic Importance of the Arts and Cultural Industries in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County. Their findings indicate that Arts and Cultural Industries generate \$1.2 billion in revenues, \$413 million in wages and support 19,500 jobs within Bernalillo County. The report, Albuquerque 2012, the State of the Creative Economy, found that the 74 non-profit arts organizations in Bernalillo County and their audiences generated \$91.9 million in economic activity and delivered \$11.6 million in state and local government revenue. An additional \$142,693,000 in revenue and sales were generated by for-profit arts. From these findings it is clear that the Creative Economies are a strong contributor to the economic health of Bernalillo County.

In 2013, the Bernalillo County Cultural Services Division contracted Creative Albuquerque to conduct a cultural asset inventory for the unincorporated areas of Bernalillo County. The information developed through this process is intended to provide a baseline of existing assets and provide initial findings to guide future planning efforts, including the creation of a Cultural plan for Bernalillo County.

The inventory was conducted over six month period and included an inventory and mapping of existing arts and cultural industries in the unincorporated portions of Bernalillo County, a County-wide online and paper survey developed to gain insight on citizens experience with existing arts and cultural amenities and services, steering committee meetings with key stakeholders, personal interviews and field visits. As businesses come and go, the results and findings of this effort should be considered as a snapshot in time, a baseline record of existing arts and cultural resources in the unincorporated portions of Bernalillo County with a cursory understanding of resident perceptions, experiences and expectations.

Overall, preliminary research, interview and study findings reveal a strong showing and appreciation of cultural assets in the unincorporated portions of Bernalillo County. The landscape, including the mountains, river, arroyos and agricultural lands resonate strongly with respondents as the primary cultural asset of the unincorporated areas. The landscape is seen as an opportunity for recreation, for festivals and as a determining factor in establishing a sense of place. In addition, data demonstrates that there is a diverse composite of arts and cultural assets in unincorporated areas including artists, fabricators, recreational facilities and cultural activities.

Summary of Findings

The initial research has provided insight into areas for further research to expand the existing arts and cultural assets within the unincorporated areas of Bernalillo County. Maps developed with physical inventory data combined with input from interviews and surveys indicate cultural nodal opportunities in all four geographically separated areas of unincorporated Bernalillo County. Further research is needed to best determine how to foster and grow these areas into rich and diverse cultural destinations.

Survey respondents were generally equally distributed by district. Responses from the survey show that arts and culture are considered strong assets to the quality of life in the unincorporated portions of Bernalillo County. Existing cultural programs and programming are considered to be of good quality and more than half of the respondents consider these to be essential to their quality of life. Physical inventories demonstrate the majority of cultural facilities and spaces to be churches and religious facilities and schools. Public Art, community centers and libraries make up the majority of arts and cultural assets in unincorporated Bernalillo County.

Based on physical data collection and focus group data performed for the Cultural Asset Inventory, 15 nodes and 4 roads were identified as potential cultural clusters based on aggregates of cultural industries, community activities and cultural resources. These nodes and roads, located throughout the North Valley, South Valley, Far Northeast Heights and East Mountains, were visited to further understand the potential development of Arts and Cultural districts and to identify other opportunities to grow the local creative economy. Field visits evaluated each potential cluster using applicable criteria from the National Assembly of the State Arts Agencies as well as the New Mexico Mainstreet Arts and Cultural District requirements. In addition, cultural clusters were evaluated as to proximity and accessibility of similar or complimentary cultural activity.

Generally, field visits revealed that clusters of arts and cultural assets tend to be diverse in nature, and are not generally clustered within a walkable area. Some areas, however, such as portions of the North and South Valley have clusters of activities that generate a regional draw. Other areas, such as the community facility clusters in Tijeras and Sandia Heights, tend to draw people for a specific activity. At this time, none of the identified nodes has strong potential to be developed as a New Mexico Mainstreet Arts and Cultural District. However, many opportunities exist in each of the four geographical areas to build upon existing arts and cultural assets to grow the local economy and in many areas, attract tourism. Further research is needed to best determine how to foster and grow these areas into rich and diverse cultural destinations.

The following is a list of opportunities by unincorporated area:

South Valley Opportunities

- **Develop a cultural plan to guide coordinated cultural effort.**
- **Create a scenic drive along Isleta Boulevard from Bridge Bridge to I-25 at the county's south end is the original route of El Camino Real and Route 66.**
- **Grow Agri-Tourism by expanding the Gutierrez-Hubbell House experience for people visiting area farms by adding additional accommodations, such as casitas or bed and breakfast type lodging and a farm to table style restaurant.**
- **Create trail linkages between Pajarito, Durand and Gutierrez-Hubbell House Open Space areas in order to increase trail distances and provide more pedestrian connectivity in the South Valley.**

North Valley Opportunities

- **Grow agri-tourism and local art scene.**
- **Install wayfinding and historical marker signage.**
- **Develop an Arts and Cultural Plan to further explore the area's needs and opportunities and develop strategies to build upon existing assets.**

East Mountains Opportunities

- **Build upon existing public assets such as community centers and libraries to feature exhibits of local artists and provide information about the exhibit and artist on County websites.**
- **Improve access and connectivity between recreational facilities and cultural activities.**
- **Support development of lodging and hospitality services.**

Sandia Heights/North Albuquerque Acres Opportunities

- **Coordinate efforts with City of Albuquerque 50 Mile Loop Plan along Tramway Road and Roy Road from Alameda Boulevard to Tramway Boulevard.**
- **Support equestrian trail connections across Tramway Boulevard from Vista Sandia Equestrian Park.**
- **Improve riding trails in the South Domingo Baca Arroyo, landscaping at the Equestrian park, playground equipment and walking trails.**

Next Steps

- **Prepare an more in depth analysis of potential cultural nodes.**
- **Conduct an initial inventory of County arts and cultural assets within incorporated areas.**
- **Develop a Arts and Cultural Plan for Bernalillo County**