



University of New Mexico  
Bureau *of* Business & Economic Research

# **BARELAS MAINSTREET: COMMUNITY ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT**

Gillian Joyce and Dr. Jeffrey Mitchell

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New Mexico MainStreet

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## 1. Introduction

The history of Barelás is closely tied to the history of transportation in the area. Originally settled as the private estancia of Pedro Varela, the community was established as an official settlement by the Spanish government in 1662. The original settlement boundaries included an essential river crossing along the Camino Real – where now stands the bridge across the Rio Grande on Bridge Boulevard. Growth of the community was slow, with just 350 residents according to the 1880 census and the economy of the community was primarily agricultural until the coming of the railroad in the 1880's. At the time, Albuquerque was a mile and a half from the train station, whereas Barelás was quite close. Barelás' location just south of New Town and just west of the rail yard led to Barelás's boom years, as the Barelás' economy pivoted from agriculture to railroad related industries and Barelás' boom years began. By 1900 Barelás' population was up to 1200. In 1891, Barelás was incorporated into Albuquerque, ending its era as a self-standing village. Until 1937 Route 66 ran along 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Bridge Boulevard and Isleta – providing an important local and tourist base for commercial development along 4<sup>th</sup> Street – where local residents could find services including grocery stores, drug stores, etc. The re-routing of Route 66 along Central Avenue in 1937, the supplanting of US 85 with I-25 as the major north-south route through Albuquerque in the 1950's further decreased outside traffic through the area, and was a blow to the businesses along the corridor. The final blow to the 4<sup>th</sup> Street businesses was the converting of 4<sup>th</sup> Street into the Civic plaza in 1974, resulting in the total loss of 4<sup>th</sup> Street as even a secondary artery through the city. It was also in the early 1970's that the Santa Fe Railway shops closed, eliminating 1500 jobs from Barelás and negatively affecting the ability of the Barelás community to support 4<sup>th</sup> Street businesses. As the Barelás business community along 4<sup>th</sup> street struggled and closed in the '70's, Barelás' residents looked to the South Valley Bridge corridor for their needs – until this business district too hit hard times with the widening of Bridge from two lanes to four – the construction process, razing of buildings, and resulting speeding up of traffic had deleterious effects on business in the area.

## 2. Demographics

### 2.1 Population

The total population of Barelás, as of 2010, was 3,362, down from 3,534 in 2000, for an annual total population loss of 4.9%. This is quite different than the larger geographies within the state— over the same period in the city of Albuquerque, the total population grew at an average annual growth rate of 2.0%; in Bernalillo County the population grew annually by 1.8%; and in the state overall there was 1.3% annual growth.

### 2.2 Households

There are 1,341 households in Barelás, of these 46.8% are family households, and roughly a third of all households (34.3%) are family households with their own children under 18 living in the home. Nearly one-fifth of all households with children are single parent households, a higher rate than in Albuquerque (14.5%), Bernalillo County (11.3%) or New Mexico overall (11.2%).

### 2.3 Race and Ethnicity

Barelás is predominantly Hispanic – nearly three-quarters of the population identifies as such (72.7%). Conversely, the percentage of the population identifying as Hispanic in Albuquerque (46.7%), Bernalillo (47.9%) and New Mexico (46.3%) is a little less than half.

Using Census Bureau ethnic origin data, it is possible to get a sense of what percentage of the Hispanic population identifies with New Mexico’s Hispano population present in the state since Spanish and Mexican colonial eras, and what percentage of the Hispanic population identifies as being of more recent Mexican or other national identity. These numbers are an imperfect representation of Hispanic identity due to the fact that some among New Mexico’s traditional Hispanic population may identify as Mexican and some among the ‘Other Hispanic’ group may indeed identify with groups other than New Mexico’s traditional Hispanic population – however it does give us a sense of the size of these populations within a community. Over a third of the population of Barelás identifies as being of Mexican origin (38.2%) – and 34.5% of the population identifies with the ‘Other Hispanic’ group.

**Table 1. Ethnicity by Geography**

	Barelás	Albuquerque	Bernalillo	New Mexico
<b>Hispanic or Latino (of any race)</b>	<b>72.7%</b>	<b>46.7%</b>	<b>47.9%</b>	<b>46.3%</b>
Mexican	38.2%	26.8%	27.6%	28.7%
Other Hispanic	34.5%	19.9%	20.3%	17.6%
<b>Not Hispanic or Latino (of any race)</b>	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>53.3%</b>	<b>52.1%</b>	<b>53.7%</b>
White Alone, Not Hispanic	20.2%	42.1%	41.5%	40.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2013, annual average

Only 20.2% of the population of Barelás identifies as White Alone, not Hispanic – compared to 42.1% of Albuquerque, 41.5% of Bernalillo County, and 40.5% of the state. While 2.8% of the Barelás population identifies as Black, just barely lower than in Albuquerque or in the county (3.3% and 3.0%, respectively) and barely higher than statewide (2.1%). Another 4.1% of Barelás identifies as Native American or American Indian – similar to the percentage in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County, (4.6% and 4.8%, respectively), but notably lower than statewide (9.4%). The Asian population is extremely small, just 0.4% of the population of Barelás, compared to 2.6% in Albuquerque, 2.3% of the county and 1.4% of the state. 30.6% of the population identifies as ‘some other race’ – this category is dominated by those of Hispanic identity who do not identify with any of the other race categories.

In order to offer a comparison between Barelás and similar neighborhoods with a long tenure of population settlement, BBER compared Barelás with other distinct Albuquerque neighborhoods. For this purpose, BBER examined data for the South Valley, Downtown Albuquerque, Martineztown/Santa Barbara, Los Ranchos and the North Valley.

**Table 2. Ethnicity by Geography – Local Comparisons**

	Barelas	South Valley	Downtown	Martineztown/ Santa Barbara	Los Ranchos	North Valley
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>72.7%</b>	<b>81.1%</b>	<b>21.1%</b>	<b>60.6%</b>	<b>37.0%</b>	<b>55.9%</b>
Mexican	38.2%	51.7%	6.5%	30.8%	17.4%	23.2%
Other Hispanic	34.5%	29.4%	14.6%	29.8%	19.6%	32.7%
<b>Not Hispanic</b>	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>18.9%</b>	<b>78.9%</b>	<b>39.4%</b>	<b>63.0%</b>	<b>44.1%</b>
White, not Hispanic	20.2%	16.4%	68.4%	29.3%	58.6%	37.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2013, annual average

Only the South Valley has a higher density of people identifying as Hispanic, which is primarily due to a higher density of Hispanics identifying as being of Mexican origin (51.7% in South Valley versus 38.2% in Barelas); however, a larger proportion of the population identifies under ‘Other Hispanic’ in Barelas than in the South Valley (34.5% versus 29.4%, respectively) or in any other listed geography. Only the North Valley (32.7%) comes close to the proportion of individuals identifying as ‘Other Hispanic.’

## 2.4 Native and Foreign Born Population

Roughly one-fifth of the population of Barelas is foreign born – this is about two times the percentage of people that are foreign born at larger geographies – in Albuquerque, 10.8% of the population is foreign born, in Bernalillo County 10.9% is foreign born and in the state overall 9.8% are foreign born.

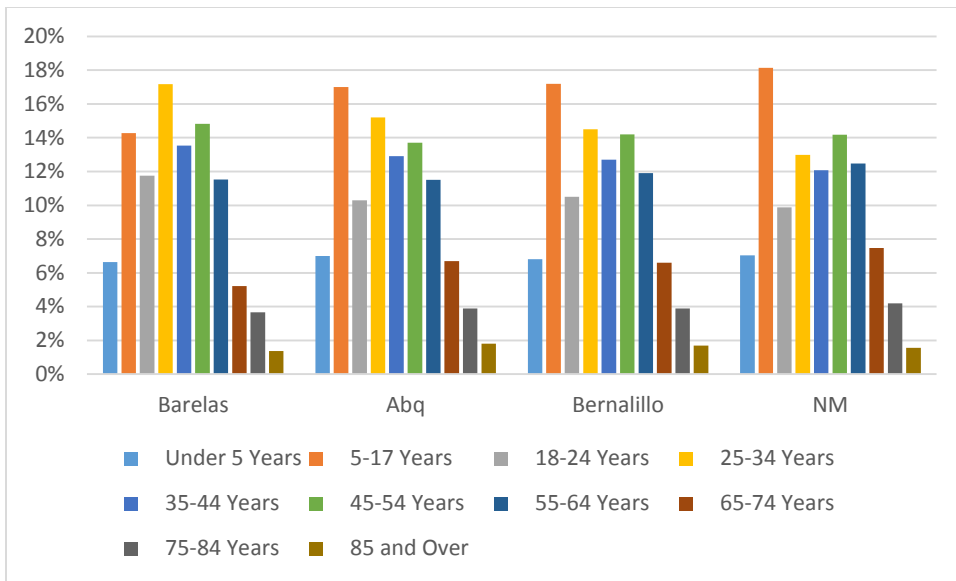
## 2.5 Language

An astounding 72% of households in Barelas speak a language other than English in the home – compared to just 29.6% of Albuquerque, 31% of Bernalillo County, and 36.1% of the state overall. The vast majority of these are speaking Spanish in the home – 63.0% compared to just 24.3% in Albuquerque, 25.8% in Bernalillo County and 28.7% in New Mexico overall. Not only is the number of Spanish speakers extraordinarily high, but the percentage of those who are bilingual in English is much higher than at other geographies within the state. Just 16% of those who speak a language other than English in the home, and 15% of those who speak Spanish in the home have limited English language skills – compared to 27.4% and 27.2% of Albuquerque, 28% and 28.3% in Bernalillo County, and 26.5% and 28.1% in New Mexico overall.

## 2.6 Age

The median age in Barelas is 34.6 – similar, but just slightly lower than seen in Albuquerque (35.1), Bernalillo County (35.8), and the state overall (36.7). This is despite the lower rates of children in the community than seen at other geographies and is largely due to the proportion of the population between the ages of 18 and 34. Overall, the age distribution in Barelas is quite healthy, with a large working-aged population – both among the more established and skilled workers in the 45-64 range and among young up-and-comers between 18 and 34. Dependent populations – those under the age of 18 and those of retirement age are at reasonable ratios to the working aged population.

**Figure 1. Age by Age Bracket: Barelas , Albuquerque, Bernalillo Co. and New Mexico**

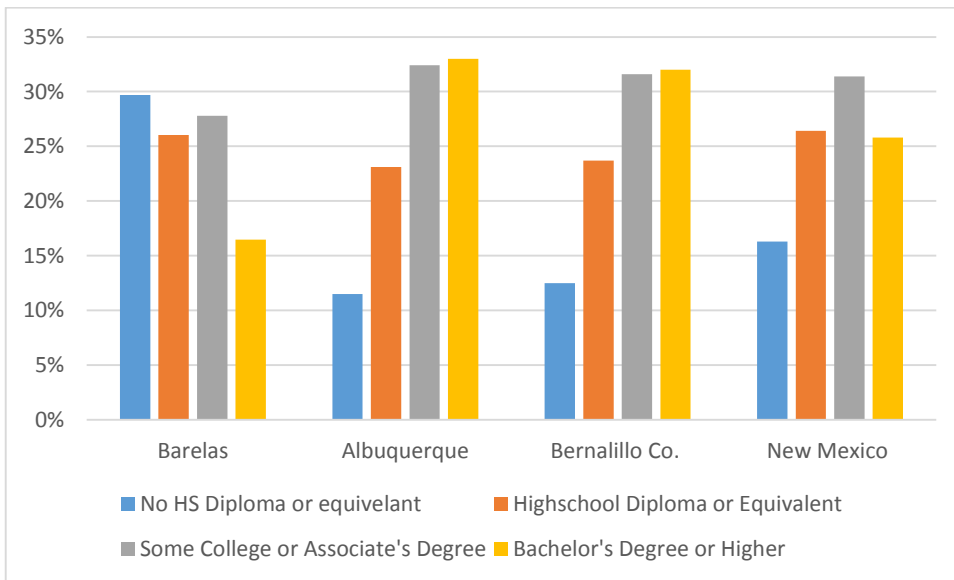


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census.

### 3. Education

Educational attainment levels among the population over the age of 25 look very different in Barelás than they do at larger geographies and within our comparison communities. As can be seen in the following figures, Barelás is the only geography in which the portion of the population who has not attained a high school diploma or equivalent is larger than the portions of the population found at any other level of educational attainment. Close to one third (29.7%) of the Barelás community over the age of 25 has not graduated from high school (or equivalent). This is compared to just 11.5% of Albuquerque, 12.5% of Bernalillo and 16.3% of New Mexico overall. The percentage of the population who has graduated from high school but not attended an institution of post-secondary education is similar to that seen at larger geographies, as is the percentage of the population who has attended some college but not received a degree, or has attained an Associate’s degree. However, the population who has obtained a Bachelor’s degree or higher degree is roughly half the proportion of the population seen at larger geographies – just 16.5% of Barelás’ population over 25 has a Bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 33% of Albuquerque, 32% of Bernalillo County and 25.8% of New Mexico.

**Figure 2. Education Among the Population Over the Age of 25, Barelás, Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, New Mexico.**

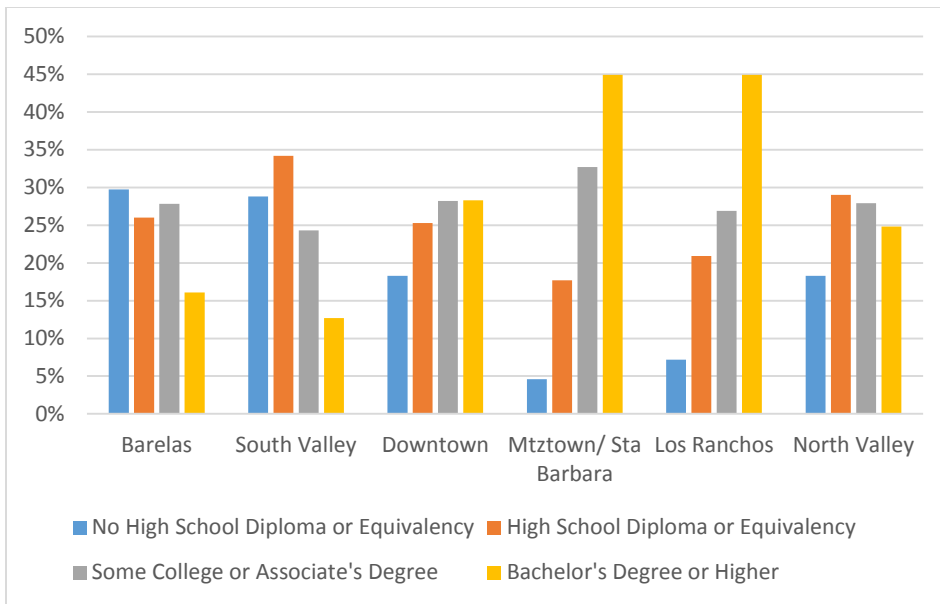


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2013, annual average

Among the comparison communities, only the South Valley comes close to having a similar proportion of the population that have not completed high school or obtained an equivalency – and similarly, only the South Valley has a similar dearth of population of whom have not obtained a Bachelor’s degree.



**Figure 3. Educational Attainment Among the Population Over the Age of 25, Comparison Communities.**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2013, annual average.

When it comes to the students in Barelás schools, there are youth excelling beyond what is seen in Albuquerque Public Schools overall or in New Mexico overall. The table below reports data according to enrolment in Barelás, Albuquerque Public Schools and public schools across the state. There are two elementary schools in Barelás, one of which, Coronado Elementary, is ranked by the NM Public Education Department as an A school. The other school, Dolores Gonzales Elementary, is ranked as a B school. Fourth graders in Barelás are performing noticeably better than 4<sup>th</sup> graders across APS and New Mexico Public Schools – particularly in math and science. Although, by eleventh grade, students are not performing as well, but are on par with APS and the state. There are no A or B ranked high schools in Barelás.

**Table 3. Reading Math and Science Proficiency, 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades – Percentage of Students Testing as 'Proficient or Above'**

	Barelás			Albuquerque Public Schools			New Mexico		
	Reading	Math	Science	Reading	Math	Science	Reading	Math	Science
<b>4th Grade</b>	51%	65%	65%	44%	42%	50%	44%	43%	48%
<b>11th Grade</b>	54%	47%	42%	55%	45%	43%	52%	43%	41%

Source: New Mexico Public Education Department, 2013-2014.

## 4. Housing

### 4.1 Vacancy

Of the total 1372 livable housing units within Barelás, just under three quarters are occupied. This is in comparison to a 92.3% occupancy rate in Albuquerque, a 92% occupancy rate in Bernalillo County and an 84% occupancy rate in the state overall. These numbers are also much higher than in any of the comparison communities where there is 16% occupancy Downtown and in Martineztown, 9.5% vacancy in the South Valley, 8.8% in Los Ranchos and 6.2% in the North Valley.

By examining the vacancy data it is noted that 163 homes in Barelás that were vacant in 2010, 58 or 36% were for rent, 22 or 13% were for sale, 3% were for seasonal or occasional use, and a questionable 75 or 46% were otherwise vacant. Vacancy rates were similar ten years prior with 160 homes in Barelás vacant – though at the time, the number of homes for sale was lower – 12, or 8%, the number of homes that were otherwise vacant was much lower – 49 or 31%. The number of homes for rent was also and the number for rent was much higher – 90 or 56%. The shift in the numbers of houses for rent and for sale suggest that some changes in home spending patterns occurred within the neighborhood over the ten year period.

**Table 4. Housing Vacancy in Barelás by Type**

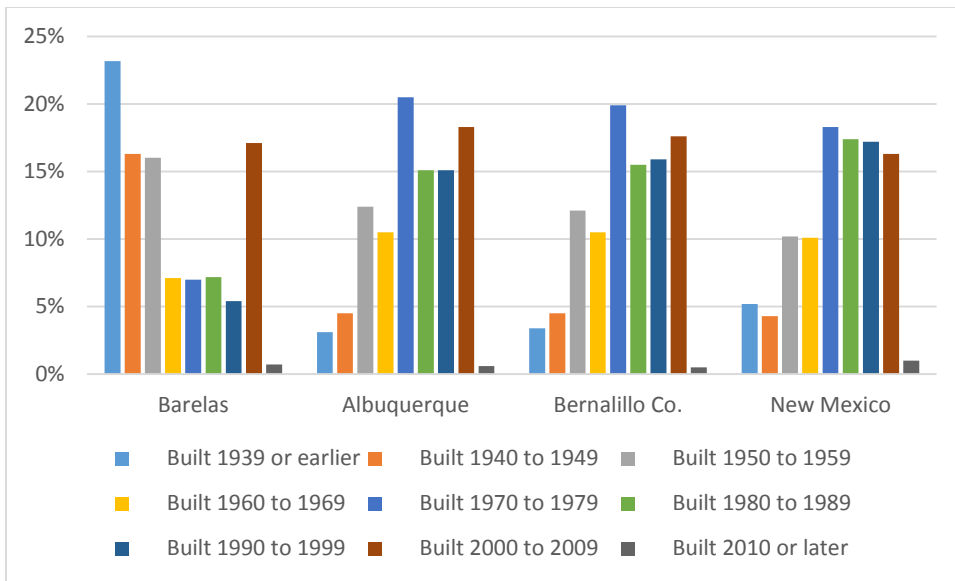
	2000		2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total:	160		163	
For rent	90	56%	58	36%
For sale only	12	8%	22	13%
Rented or sold, not occupied	9	6%	4	2%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	0	0%	5	3%
For migrant workers	0	0%	0	0%
Other vacant	49	31%	75	46%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Decennial Censes

### 4.2 Housing by Age

The housing stock in Barelás is much older than in the city, county or the state. Over half (55.5%) of all homes in Barelás were built before 1960 – more than half a century ago. This is in comparison to roughly 20% of all housing in Albuquerque, Bernalillo County and the state overall. Nearly a quarter (23.2%) were built in 1939 or earlier compared to 3.1% of all homes in Albuquerque, 3.4% of all homes in Bernalillo County, and 5.2% of all homes statewide.

**Figure 4. Housing by Age, Barelás, Albuquerque, Bernalillo Co., New Mexico**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2009-2013.

### 4.3 Home Ownership

Homeownership rates in Barelás are noticeably lower than at larger geographies. Just 46.5% of homes are owner-occupied – compared to 59.4% in Albuquerque, 62.3% in Bernalillo County and 68.1% statewide. However, among those who do own their homes, a high percentage own their homes outright - just 51% of owner-occupied homes in Barelás have a mortgage, compared to 70.6% in Albuquerque, 68.8% in Bernalillo County, and 58.4% statewide.

### 4.4 Housing Costs as Percentage of Income

Homeowners in Barelás are more likely to experience housing stress than homeowners at larger geographies. 39.4% of all homeowners with mortgages spend 35% or more of household income on housing costs – compared to just over a quarter of homeowners with mortgages in Albuquerque (25.9%), Bernalillo (26.5%) or the state overall (25.9%). Among homeowners without a mortgage, 12% spend 35% or more of total household income on housing costs – compared to roughly 9% at the city (8.7%), county (8.8%) and state (8.6%) levels.

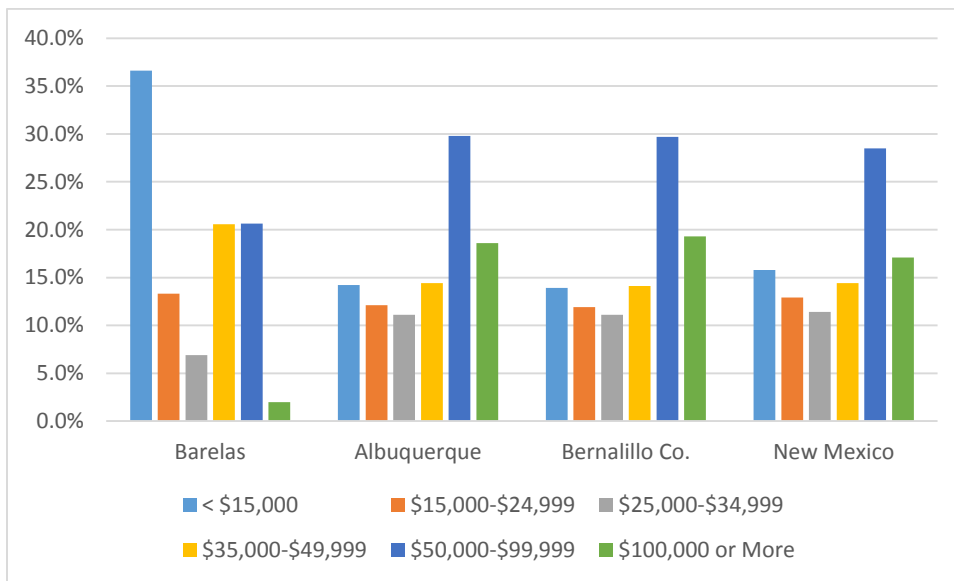
Among renters, housing stress is high, but commensurate with other geographies in the state– 41% of renters in Barelás spend 35% or more of household income on housing – in both the city and county this rate is at 42.9%, and statewide it’s at 41.7%.

## 5. Income

The per-capita income in Barelás is just \$16,567 – much lower than at larger geographies – in Albuquerque the per-capita income is \$26,769, in Bernalillo Co, it is \$26,814 and in New Mexico it is \$23,763. The median household income is \$33,102 – compared to \$47,989 in Albuquerque, \$48,401 in Bernalillo County and \$44,972 in the state.

As seen in the chart below, the percentage of households in Barelás living on \$15,000 dollars or less is extremely high – well over one third (36.6%) of the population – more than twice the percentage of the population in Albuquerque (14.2%), Bernalillo County (13.9%) or the state (15.8%). On the other side of the income spectrum, just 2% of households earn \$100,000 or more – compared to 18.6% of Albuquerque, 19.3% of Bernalillo County and 17.1% of New Mexico.

**Figure 5. Household Income by Bracket: Barelás, Albuquerque, Bernalillo Co., and New Mexico**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey

Looking at similar communities in comparison, Downtown has the lowest median household income at \$18,713 – decidedly lower than even in Barelás, followed by Martineztown where the median income is \$25,606. Low household income numbers in the downtown area are likely affected by smaller household size. South Valley, as is consistently the case, looks most similar to Barelás with a median household income slightly higher at \$36,821. North Valley sees a median income of \$47,556 and the Los Ranchos a median household income of \$63,163.

### 5.1 Earnings

The percentage of households reporting earnings in Barelás is low – just 58% compared to 79% in both Albuquerque and Bernalillo County and 76% of the state. Based BBER’s knowledge of age demographics, this is not entirely explained by the size of the retirement aged population. However the percentage of households with Social Security Income is quite high – 40%, compared to 26%, 27% and 30% and the city, county and state levels, respectively. A high rate of disability or other social welfare factors likely factor into the equation. A higher percentage of the population reports receiving Supplemental Security Income – 9%, compared to 5% in the city and county and 6% in the state. Over one-quarter of all households (27%) report receiving SNAP benefits (formerly known as foodstamps), which is roughly twice the rate seen at larger geographies – 13% of both Albuquerque and Bernalillo County and 14% of the state. Households reporting retirement income are quite similar to what those at larger geographies at 18.2% compared to 17.8%, 18% and 19.3%.

**Table 5. Household Income by Income Type**

	<b>Barelas</b>	<b>Albuquerque</b>	<b>Bernalillo County</b>	<b>New Mexico</b>
W&S Earnings	58%	79%	79%	76%
Social Security Income	40%	26%	27%	30%
Supplemental Security Income	9%	5%	5%	6%
SNAP/Food Stamps	27%	13%	13%	14%
Retirement Income	18%	18%	18%	19%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2013, annual average

## 5.2 Poverty

The percentage of the population living in poverty in Barelas is extremely high at 43% of the population, which is well over twice the percentage in the city, county or state. The percentage of the population living in poverty is 17.9% for Albuquerque, 18.3% for Bernalillo County and 19.3% statewide.

Barelas also has decidedly higher rates of poverty than any of the comparison communities: 25.9% in the South Valley, 30.5% downtown, 37.9% in Martineztown, 8.1% in Los Ranchos and 18.9% in the North Valley. The high rate of poverty in Barelas compared to the South Valley is particularly interesting in light of the overall similarities between the two communities.

## 6. Economy

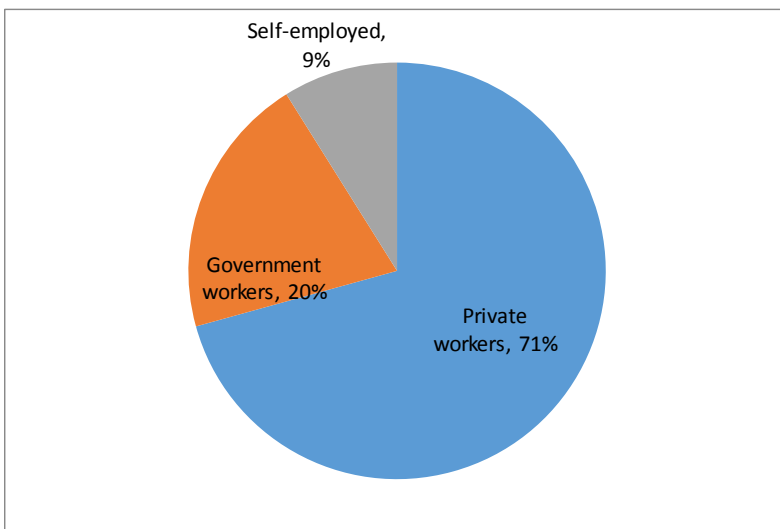
### 6.1 Employment

Just 45.8% of the population of Barelás is in the labor force compared to 66% of this population in Albuquerque, 64.8% of this population in the county and 60.7% of this population statewide. Unemployment, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's five year estimates was, on average, at 3.8% between 2009 and 2013 – lower than seen at larger geographies – 5.5% in Albuquerque, 5.4% in Bernalillo County, and 5.8% in the state overall. However, more than half (54.2%) of the potential workforce is not participating in the workforce at this time and is a serious strain on the Barelás community.

### 6.2 Employment in the Public and Private Sectors

The proportion of private sector workers in Barelás (71%) is not dissimilar to the proportion of private sector workers in New Mexico (70%); however, it trails the proportion in the city of Albuquerque (74%). The proportion of government workers in Barelás (20%) is slightly lower than in Albuquerque (21%) and the state (7%). In contrast, the proportion of individuals classified as self-employed is somewhat higher in Barelás (9%) than in Albuquerque (5%) or New Mexico (7%).

**Figure 6. Barelás Employment by Sector**

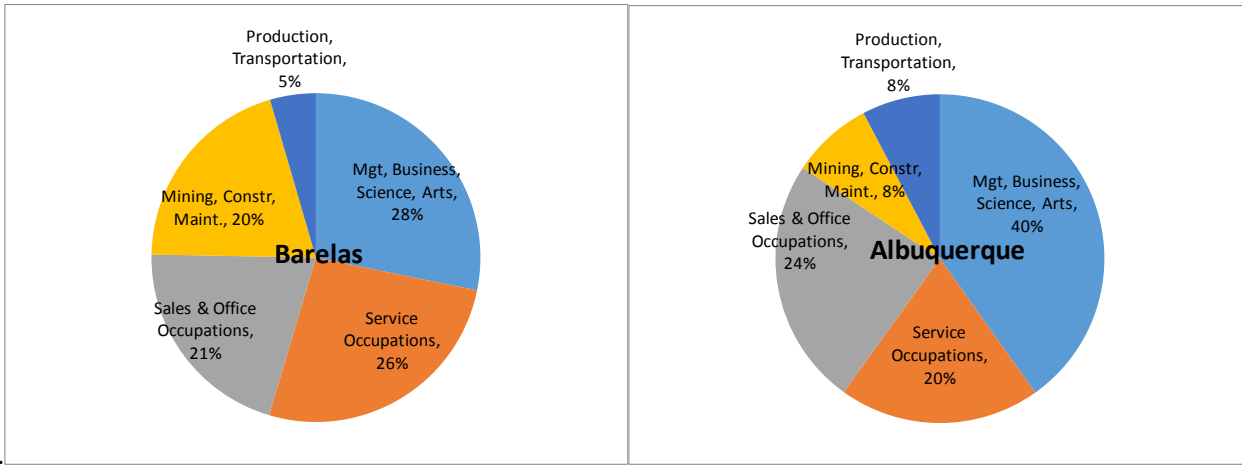


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2013

### 6.3 Employment by Occupation

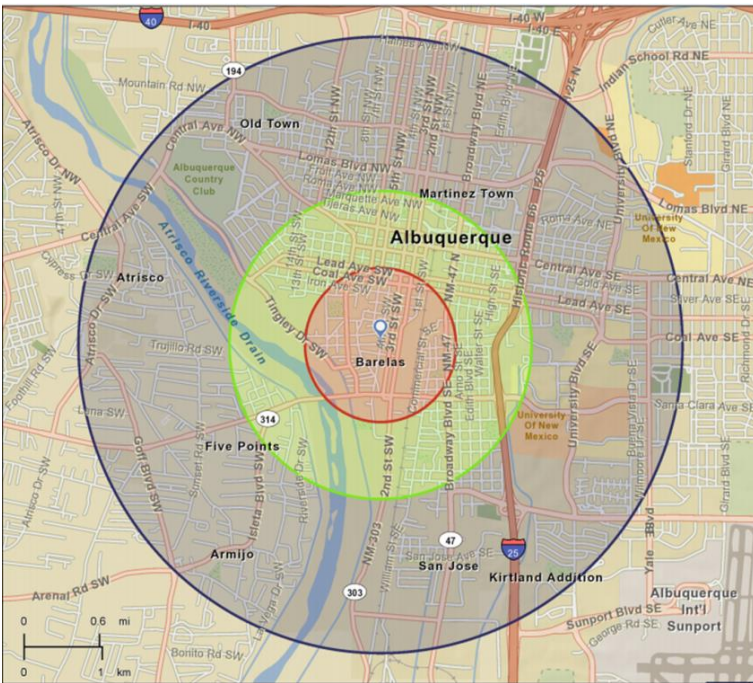
Despite being located within the city of Albuquerque, the composition of workers' occupations tends to be different. In particular, workers tend to be employed in occupations related to services and construction at higher rates compared to both Albuquerque and the state. In Barelás, 26% of all workers' are employed in service occupations, while only 20% of workers in Albuquerque and 21% in the state are employed in services. 20% of Barelás workers are employed construction and maintenance occupations while only 8% and 12% are employed in those occupations in Albuquerque and New Mexico, respectively. However, relatively smaller proportions are employed in management, business, science and art industries in Barelás (28%) compared to Albuquerque (40%) and New Mexico (35%). Transportation-related occupations show a similar pattern with Barelás (5%) trailing Albuquerque (8%) and the state (9%).

**Figure 7. Employment by Occupation, Barelás, Albuquerque and New Mexico**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2013

**Figure 8. Trade Area Map of Barelás Trade Area, 0.5 miles, 1 mile and 2 miles**



Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2015

Barelás is within close proximity of one of Albuquerque’s major employment hubs, the downtown area, and is also not far from Presbyterian hospital or the UNM campus and hospital. Also located near the ecosystem services provided by the river and Bosque areas, Barelás has many dynamic options located within its trade area. Other features include museums, parks, and light rail and bus transportation.

### 6.4 Barelás MainStreet

Due to the small size of the Barelás MainStreet District, BBER chose to look at the demographics of the district and all areas within a quarter mile of the district – generally considered the definition of walkability. See Map 1 in the Appendix for a description of these boundaries.

#### Population

Within the MainStreet Buffer Zone, the population as of 2010 was 3,331, up 1.2% since the beginning of the century when it was 2,953.

## Households

There are 1,384 households within the MainStreet District and buffer zone. This area is distinct from Barelás overall as well as from the city in its household patterns. The population in this area is less likely to be part of a family household (just 37.9% are family households – compared to 46.8% of Barelás and 59.7% of Albuquerque and 65.5% of New Mexico), and is more likely to live alone (49.9% - compared to 42.1% of Barelás, 21.8% of Albuquerque and 28% of New Mexico). Among family households, there are fewer with children (20.8% - compared to 34.3% of Barelás, 47% of Albuquerque and 44.5% of the state)), and among those with children, they're nearly all two parent households (4% of households with children are single parent).

## Race and Ethnicity

58% of the Buffer Zone identifies as White and 27% identifies as 'Some Other Race,' 3.8% of the population identifies as Black, which is slightly higher than is seen at other geographies. 5.8% of the population identifies as Native American or American Indian – also slightly higher than is seen in Albuquerque or the county. 65.5% of the population identifies as Hispanic or Latino – while higher than we see in Albuquerque, Bernalillo County and New Mexico overall, it's lower than we see in Barelás overall by 7 percentage points.

## Age

The median age within the MainStreet District and buffer zone is 34 – roughly the same as is seen in Barelás overall. The age breakdown is quite similar with healthy aged and youth dependency ratio – a decent portion of the population in the first-half of their career/work lives and a similarly decent portion of the community in the second-half of their career/work lives.

## Economy

The vast majority of employment in the district is concentrated in public and not-for-profit institutions, accounting for over half of all employment in the District. Foodservices makes up the second largest area of employment, accounting for roughly 15% of employment in the District. Most private businesses, outside public and not-for-profit institutions and foodservices are small businesses, the vast majority of which are employing fewer than five people each. These numbers are inexact due to the lack of reliable data at such a small geographic scale.

Despite the number of setbacks the MainStreet District businesses have faced over the years, a number of these mom-and-pop style shops have managed to hold on for decades – some even for a century or more. Further, while data on the subject is scarce, it seems a few new small-scale businesses have popped up since the peak of the recession and a few other businesses have increased employment – suggesting the resilience of the area and the glimmer of potential growth.

The reopening of a restaurant at the National Hispanic Cultural Center, with dinner service for at least part of the week and with a liquor license, has the potential to be a boon to the district. Efforts to incorporate the NHCC and restaurant into the District can increase the value of these assets. Co-promotion with both NHCC and the restaurant with events within the district and Barelás are recommended. Aside from the restaurant at NHCC, the district is decidedly lacking in evening food and entertainment opportunities and this would be a valuable area for growth, particularly at the northern end and in the central area of the district.



## 7. Challenges and Opportunities

The 4<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor was historically the home of mom-and-pop style shops, many of which provided a specific service to a specific geographic area – with some profiting off of through traffic along Route 66 and later 4<sup>th</sup> Street when it still served as continuous north-south artery. With the expansion of retail in the northeast quadrant of Albuquerque and decreased through-traffic, combined with the major hit to Barelás with the closure of the rail yard shops, the Barelás MainStreet District suffered major loss in the customer base for the corridor. The depressed incomes we see both in Barelás and the downtown area make the re-development of services for the immediate community difficult.

Many small business districts find themselves caught between the option to gentrify, by developing boutique retail opportunities, or embracing chains that can provide the goods required by the local community at reasonable prices. Small niche businesses serving a small local community are hard pressed to survive today. Business development within the District should focus on two things: 1.) the support and development of culturally appropriate niche businesses that help maintain the distinct character of Barelás within the downtown area and take advantage of Barelás' distinct cultural identity to pull in customers from not just the South Valley and the Downtown area, but the state overall and beyond. Businesses such as MEL Music and Rupee's Drugs are excellent examples of the sorts of businesses that could serve both the local community and a customer base from across the state and beyond. For niche businesses serving a geographically broad customer base, strong internet presence will be necessary for success. 2.) The development of retail that serves a broad range of basic needs for the predominantly economically disadvantaged local population. The grocery store coming in at Silver and Second has the potential to meet some of these basic needs, however it is yet to be known whether the price point of the new store's products will serve the Barelás community.

With the density of the Hispanic-identifying community and the density of Hispanic owned, and culturally Hispanic-oriented businesses and Hispanic-serving organizations, Barelás and the 4<sup>th</sup> Street corridor/MainStreet District, along with the South Valley and the South Valley MainStreet have the opportunity to become the epicenter of Hispanic cultural discourse, celebration and economic development within Albuquerque and Bernalillo county – and New Mexico overall. This will require vision as well as some honest discourse within the community about cultivating space for a range of intra-ethnic identities. It is important that the community both find avenues through which to welcome newcomers and new cultural perspectives and simultaneously celebrate its distinct identity as one of the early Spanish settlements in the area.

Major draws for outsider customers to the district are at the very southern end of the zone: namely, the National Hispanic Cultural Center and Barelás Coffee House. The new development at the corner of Coal and 4<sup>th</sup> is important for creating a northern cornerstone to the District. Assuring that this development serves both the Barelás community and the larger community is important.

There is little community space within the District. Its nature as a historically (and primarily) commercial corridor does not provide a natural community gathering space other than the Catholic Church, which does not serve the entirety of the local community. The development of the city- and church-owned properties into a plaza at the center of the district is an excellent opportunity, even if politically challenging. In the meantime, the Barelás Community Center is a centrally-located and historic adobe building within the community that should be seen as important in the community development efforts.

Age of housing stock is both a boon and a challenge. The age of the housing adds to the historical and cultural integrity of the community; however, is likely in dire need of attention. Further, because of traditional regional home construction and expansion patterns, many of these homes lack features and layouts that are appealing to the modern homeowner. This, along with other issues, is affecting the desire of youth raised in Barelás to stay in the community to raise their own families. The number of vacant homes – roughly a quarter of all homes in Barelás, is not contributing to the cultivating of a vibrant community. Of the estimated 163 vacant homes in Barelás, 75 are 'otherwise vacant'. These 'otherwise vacant' properties are of particular concern. Many are likely long-held properties and/or family properties owned outright. Many may be being left vacant due to the investment required to make the properties marketable.

Efforts to work with owners to get these 'otherwise vacant' properties inhabitable and inhabited is important in community development efforts.

Barelas, with its proximity to downtown and relatively affordable housing for the downtown area leaves it vulnerable to gentrification and loss of neighborhood identity – particularly when combined with an out-migration of the New Mexican Hispano community. The community will need to be proactive about nurturing and celebrating Barelas' unique identity and history in such a way that, as newcomers arrive, they are moving into and adding to the already well-developed cultural and community dynamic. Efforts such as the Fiestas de Barelas exemplify the sort of activity that will maintain local identity while engaging newcomers and outsiders.

# 8. Appendix

Map 2. Barelas Boundary, Barelas MainStreet Walkability Buffer Zone and MainStreet District.

