



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

# **SOUTH VALLEY MAINSTREET: COMMUNITY ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT**

Gillian Joyce and Dr. Jeffrey Mitchell

June, 2015

Funding Provided by:

New Mexico Economic Development Department

New Mexico MainStreet

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Demographics.....	4
Housing.....	7
Education.....	9
Income.....	11
Employment.....	13
South Valley MainStreet.....	16
Challenges and Opportunities.....	19

## List of Tables

Table 1. Hispanic identity in the South Valley vs. Abq, Bernalillo County and N.M.....	5
Table 2. Race and Ethnicity in the South Valley vs. Abq, Bernalillo Co. and N.M.....	6
Table 3. Median Income & Income by Income Category.....	11
Table 4. Sources of Income.....	12
Table 5. Poverty Rates by Age Cohort.....	13
Table 6. Labor Force Participation.....	13
Table 7. Employment by Occupation.....	16

**List of Figures**

Figure 1. Age by Age Bracket, South Valley, Abq, Bernalillo County, and N.M.....7

Figure 3. Housing by Age, South Valley, Albuquerque, Bernalillo Co., New Mexico.....8

Figure 4. Educational Attainment, South Valley, Abq, Bernalillo County and N.M.....10

Figure 5. Educational Attainment, South Valley and Comparison Communities..... 11

Figure 6. Employment by Sector, South Valley.....14

Figure 7. Employment by Industry, South Valley (New Mexico).....15

Figure 8. South Valley Trade Areas, 0.5 miles, 1 mile and 2 miles.....16

Figure 9. South Valley Mainstreet District Boundaries.....17

Figure 10. South Valley MainStreet District Businesses by Industry..... 18

## Introduction

The South Valley was founded as the Atrisco Merced in 1692 and comprised of several small villages including Atrisco, Arenal, Los Padillas and Armijo, among others. The plazas of these historic settlements have lost their centrality and are little known except to long-time residents. As was true for much of north and central New Mexico, the local economy was dominated by agriculture into the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century with the increased importance of wage-labor in the New Mexico economy. The area was a major regional producer of agricultural goods – in particular sheep and wool products with as many as 70 registered looms once recorded in the Valley.

The South Valley MainStreet district runs along a thoroughfare that has been in use since at least the 1500's as the Camino Real. The bridge of Bridge Boulevard runs above the original river ford on the Camino Real. In the late 1930's Route 66 was realigned to follow what is now Central Avenue. With the development of the interstates and growth in the Northeast quadrant of Albuquerque, South Valley businesses began to decline. The expansion of Bridge Boulevard to four lanes in the 1980's further hurt the economic corridor on Bridge with the speeding up of traffic and the razing of old buildings and closure of local businesses during and after construction.

## 1. Demographics

### 1.1 Population

The South Valley has seen noticeably slower growth in recent years than the city of Albuquerque, Bernalillo County or New Mexico overall. As of 2010 the total population of the South Valley was 40,967 – compared to 39,060 in 2000 – for an average annual growth rate of just 0.5%. This annual rate of growth is slower than in Albuquerque (2.0%) and the state as a whole (1.3%). Within the South Valley MainStreet District the total population as of 2010 was 1,892 – down fractionally from 1,898 in 2000.

### 1.2 Households

The household data for the South Valley demonstrates a strong family orientation. In total there are 13,802 households in the South Valley with an average household size of 2.9 persons, which is higher than in Albuquerque (2.4) Bernalillo County (2.5) and New Mexico overall (2.6). When we look at family households, or households with two or more individuals who are related by blood or marriage, 73.1% of all South Valley homes are family households. This is noticeably higher than we see at larger geographies: 59.7% of households are family households in Albuquerque, 61.7% in Bernalillo County and 65.5% in New Mexico. The percentage of households with children under the age of 18 is similar, just slightly lower, than we see at other geographic levels: 43.5% of households in the South Valley have children under the age of 18, 47% in Albuquerque, 45.9% in Bernalillo County and 44.5% in New Mexico. The percentage of householders living alone (i.e. non-family households) in the South Valley is essentially the same as in Albuquerque (21.6% and 28.8%, respectively). Of the non-family households, the percentage of householders over the age of 65 living alone is slightly lower than we see at other geographic areas at just 7.5% in the South Valley, compared to 8.9% in Albuquerque, 8.7% in Bernalillo and 9.2% in New Mexico.

### 1.3 Race and Ethnicity

The strong Hispanic identity of the South Valley is also readily apparent in the data. According to the 2010 Decennial Census, 80.2% of individuals within the South Valley identify as Hispanic, which is higher than the proportion in Albuquerque (46.7%), Bernalillo County (47.9%) and the state (46.3%). More than half of the individuals in the South Valley (51.7%) specifically identify as Mexican – compared to 26.8% in Albuquerque, 27.6% in Bernalillo County and 28.7% in New Mexico. In addition, 28.0% of all individuals in the South Valley identify as ‘Other Hispanic,’ which is much higher than the proportions in Albuquerque (18.9%), Bernalillo County (19.3%) and (17.0%). In terms of the proportion of individuals self-identified as Hispanic, a slightly larger share is identified with Mexican heritage (64.5%) than in other areas of the state (62.0%) and noticeably higher than in Albuquerque or Bernalillo County (57.4% and 57.6%, respectively).

In addition, a relatively small proportion of individuals in the South Valley identify as not Hispanic or Latino (19.8%) and only 16.5% identify as white and not Hispanic. This is in contrast to the three larger geographies where more than half of the individuals within each identify as non-Hispanic and more than 40% identify as white and not Hispanic.

**Table 1. Hispanic identity in the South Valley vs. Albuquerque, Bernalillo County and New Mexico**

	South Valley	Albuquerque	Bernalillo Co.	New Mexico
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	80.2%	46.7%	47.9%	46.3%
Mexican	51.7%	26.8%	27.6%	28.7%
Puerto Rican	0.3%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%
Cuban	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%	0.2%
Other Hispanic	28.0%	18.9%	19.3%	17.0%
Not Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	19.8%	53.3%	52.1%	53.7%
White Alone, Not Hispanic	16.5%	42.1%	41.5%	40.5%

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

To place the South Valley in local context, we can compare the area to other areas and neighborhoods with a long history of settlement within Bernalillo County. For this purpose, BBER examined data for the South Valley, Downtown Albuquerque, Martineztown/Santa Barbara, Los Ranchos and the North Valley. This time, data from the American Community Survey is employed rather than the Decennial Census (which explains the slight disparities between the following and previous table). With regard to race, 60.4% of individuals within the South Valley identified that their race was white. This is similar to the proportion in Barelmas (59.5%) and the Martineztown/Santa Barbara area (56.2%) and much lower than the three other communities: Downtown (75.6%), Los Ranchos (86.5%) and the North Valley (76.2%). The South Valley’s second largest race density is ‘Other’ at 33.5% of the population. This is again similar to Barelmas (32.7%) and Martineztown/Santa Barbara (28.0%). In addition, there is a relatively paucity of Native Americans in the South Valley (2.2%), which is the same proportion in Barelmas, but lower than most other comparison communities: Downtown (7.4%), Martineztown/Santa Barbara (10.5%) and the North Valley (4.0%). Only Los Ranchos (1.5%) had a lower proportion.

With regard to ethnicity, the South Valley had the lowest proportion of non-Hispanics (18.9%) of any of the listed communities implying a strong Hispano-centric community. The closest in proportion of non-Hispanics to the South Valley is Barelás (27.3%); however, that percentage is still significantly higher. With regard to non-Hispanic whites, the differential narrow somewhat: 16.4% of individuals in the South Valley and 20.2% of individuals in Barelás. Nevertheless, the proportion of non-Hispanic whites is still quite a bit below the other communities: Downtown (68.4%), Martineztown/Santa Barbara (29.6%), Los Ranchos (58.6%) and the North Valley (37.7%).

On the flip side, the South Valley (81.1%) has the highest proportion of individuals identifying as Hispanic of any of the comparison neighborhoods by a large margin, with Barelás (72.7%) being the only community even coming close. Among those identifying as Hispanic in the South Valley, a noticeably higher percentage identify as being of Mexican origin (63.7% of Hispanics) than any of the other communities we examined and only 35.4% of Hispanics in the community identified as ‘Other Hispanic.’

**Table 2. Race and Ethnicity in the South Valley vs. Albuquerque, Bernalillo County and New Mexico**

	South Valley	Downtown	Barelás	Mtztown/ Sta Barbara	Los Ranchos	North Valley
<b>Race</b>						
White	60%	76%	60%	56%	87%	76%
Black	1%	3%	1%	5%	1%	1%
Native American	2%	7%	2%	11%	2%	4%
Asian	0%	2%	0%	N/A	1%	1%
Other	34%	10%	33%	28%	7%	15%
2 or more races	3%	3%	4%	0%	4%	4%
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
Hispanic	81%	21%	73%	61%	37%	56%
Mexican	52%	7%	38%	31%	17%	23%
Puerto Rican	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1%
Cuban	1%	1%	N/A	6%	N/A	0%
Other Hispanic	29%	14%	35%	24%	20%	32%
Not Hispanic	19%	79%	27%	39%	63%	44%
White, not Hispanic	16%	68%	20%	29%	59%	38%

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

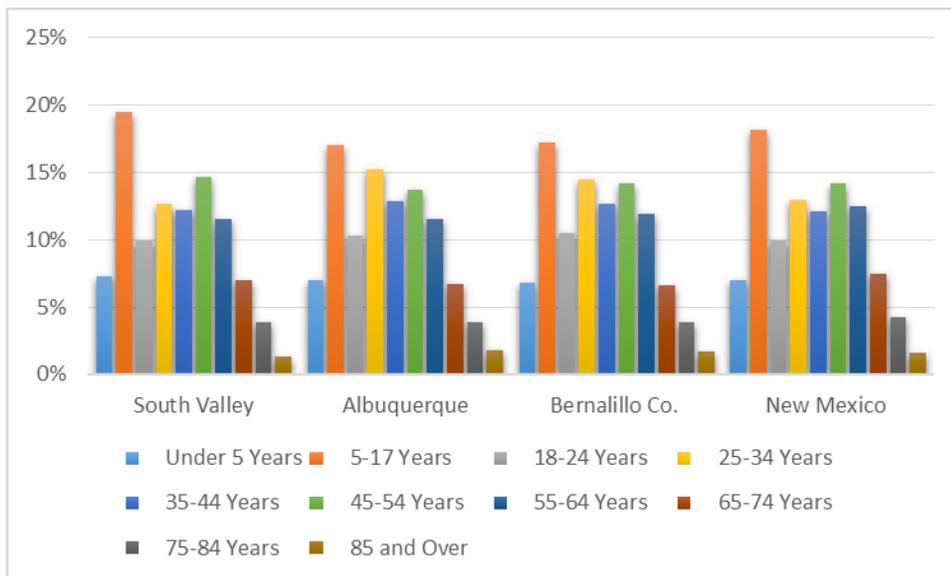
Looking at Census Bureau data on ethnic origin, we are able to get a sense of the size of the traditional Hispano population who identifies with Hispanic settlers in the area during the Spanish colonial period and the Mexican territorial period, as well as those who identify with other Latin American origins. In order to identify those identifying with New Mexico’s traditional Hispano population, we look at an umbrella category ‘Other Hispanic’ – this group includes those who identify as Spaniard, Spanish, Spanish American, as well as colloquial terms for this population. This category is not a perfect representation of the size of an area’s long-time Hispano population – it may capture Hispanics who do not identify with particular national origins and therefore offer an over count, and it does not include those Hispanos who, while having roots in New Mexico going back to at least the Mexican Territorial era, choose to identify as being of Mexican origin, therefore potentially offering an undercount. Similarly, the origin data for those identifying as being of Mexican origin may include those who came from

Mexico since New Mexico became a part of the United States as well as those with longer family tenure in the area. Despite these issues, this data offers an important opportunity to understand the makeup of New Mexico’s Hispanic population.

## 1.4 Age

According to the 2010 Decennial Census, the median age in the South Valley (35.5 years) is similar to what we see at larger geographic levels, 35.1 years in Albuquerque, and 35.8 years in Bernalillo County and 36.7 years in the state overall. The slightly lower median age compared to the county and state is primarily due to a higher percentage of children between the ages of 5 and 17 and slightly fewer people between the ages of 25 and 34. The age distribution in the South Valley is economically well-balanced: the size of the population less than 17 years of age and over 65 years of age in comparison to the working aged population is in line with the statewide average.

**Figure 1. Age by Age Bracket, South Valley, Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, and New Mexico**



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

For context, in Martineztown has a large population under 17 years of age, with a median age of 26.9 years. Los Ranchos and the North Valley are much older with median ages of 49.9 and 46.2, respectively. As is the case with many indicators, the median age in Barelvas is quite similar to what we see in the South Valley at 34.6.

## 2. Housing

The average household size in the South Valley is 2.9 persons, which is somewhat larger than we see in Albuquerque (2.4), Bernalillo County (2.5) and the state (2.6).

## Vacancy

9.5% of livable housing units in the South Valley are vacant – a slightly higher vacancy rate than we see in Albuquerque (7.7%) or the county (8%), but notably lower than we see statewide (15.9%).

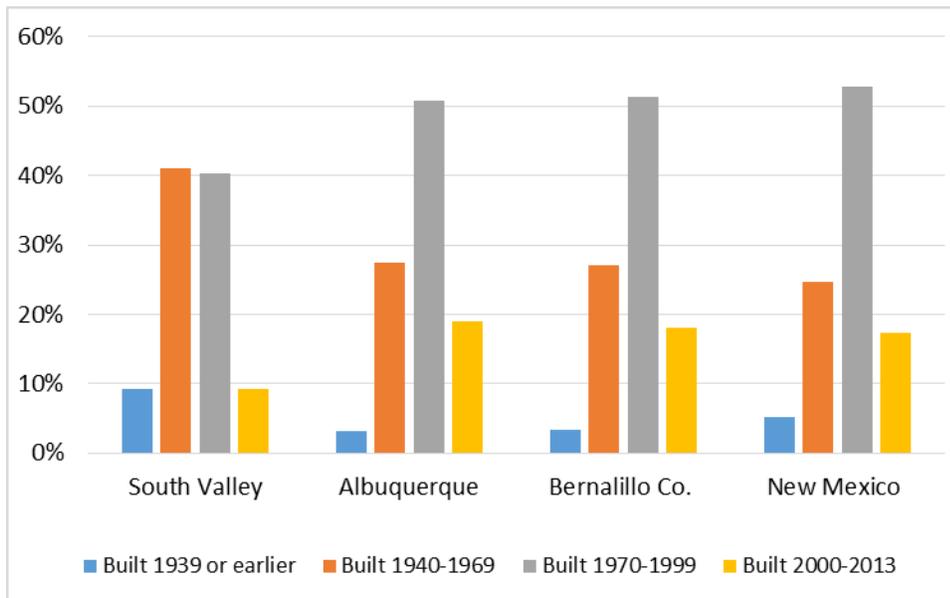
## Housing by Type

Detached, single-unit homes dominate the housing landscape in the South Valley, accounting for three quarters (74.8%) of all housing units – compared to just under two thirds of all housing units in Albuquerque, Bernalillo County or New Mexico (61.6%, 63.9% and 64.4%, respectively). Mobile homes make up a much larger portion of housing in the South Valley than we see in Albuquerque or the county – 15.8%, compared to 3.8% and 5.6%, respectively, but account for a similar percentage of housing units as we see statewide (16.7%), and make up a smaller percentage of housing units than we see in many rural and economically depressed areas of the state.

## Housing by Age

The housing stock in the South Valley is noticeably older than we see at larger geographies.

**Figure 2. Housing by Age, South Valley, Albuquerque, Bernalillo Co., New Mexico.**



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

9.3% of the housing units in the South Valley were built before 1939, compared to 3.1% of homes in Albuquerque, 3.4% of those in the county and 5.2% of those in the state. Half of all housing in the South Valley was built before 1970, compared to less than one-third of all housing in Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, and the state (30.5%, 30.5% and 29.8%, respectively). Just 9.3% of the South Valley's housing units were built since 2000, roughly half what we see in Albuquerque, Bernalillo Co, and New Mexico (18.9%, 18.1% and 17.3%, respectively).

## Home Ownership

Home ownership rates are very high in the South Valley –even for New Mexico where homeownership rates are already high. Roughly three-quarters of all homes in the South Valley are owner-occupied,

which is a rate higher than we see in Albuquerque (59.4%), Bernalillo (62.3%) and New Mexico (68.1%). Among our comparison communities, only the North Valley has higher rates of home ownership (79.9%) and only Los Ranchos comes close (68.7%). Just 26.7% of homes in Martineztown are owner occupied, and 7.4% of housing units Downtown.

Among those who own their homes, 43.9% own them free and clear without a mortgage, which is decidedly higher than we see in Albuquerque where 29.4% of owner-occupied homes are owned free and clear; Bernalillo County, where 31.2% are owned free and clear; and fairly similar to the state where 41.6% are owned free and clear.

The estimated median value of owner-occupied homes in the South Valle is \$139,200, which is noticeably lower than we see at larger geographies. The median value in Albuquerque is \$186,500, \$186,800 in the county and \$160,000 statewide.

### Housing Costs as Percentage of Income

Among owner occupied homes with a mortgage, over one-third (34.5%) are experiencing housing stress – or spending 35% or more of household income on housing costs. This is in comparison to roughly one-quarter of all homeowners with a mortgage in Albuquerque, Bernalillo and New Mexico (25.9%, 26.5% and 25.9%, respectively).

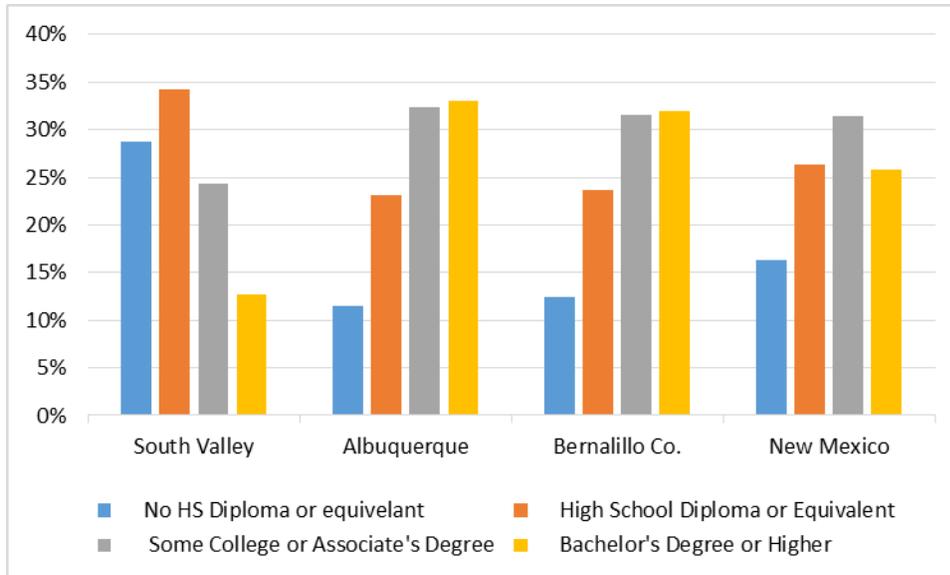
Among homeowners without a mortgage, just 7.5% experience housing stress which is lower, though not significantly lower, than we see in Albuquerque, Bernalillo County or New Mexico (8.7%, 8.8% and 8.6%, respectively).

Among renters, half (50.4%) are suffering housing stress in the South Valley, which is higher than we see at other geographies. In Albuquerque and Bernalillo County, 42.9% experience housing stress I and 41.7% experience housing stress in the state.

## 3. Education

Educational attainment levels among the population 25 years of age and older in the South Valley is decidedly different than at other geographic levels. More than a quarter of the population (28.8%) in the South Valley does not have a high school diploma or equivalency (GED) – a significantly higher proportion than in Albuquerque (11.5%) or in state as a whole (16.3%). Roughly one-third (34%) of the population has graduated from high school or obtained an equivalency, but did not attend a post-secondary educational institution. In Albuquerque, Bernalillo County and the state, this number is roughly one-quarter of the total population. 63% of the population has never attended a post-secondary institution, compared to 35% in Albuquerque and 42% in the state. 13% of the population has obtained a bachelor's degree, compared to roughly one quarter of Albuquerque and one third of the state.

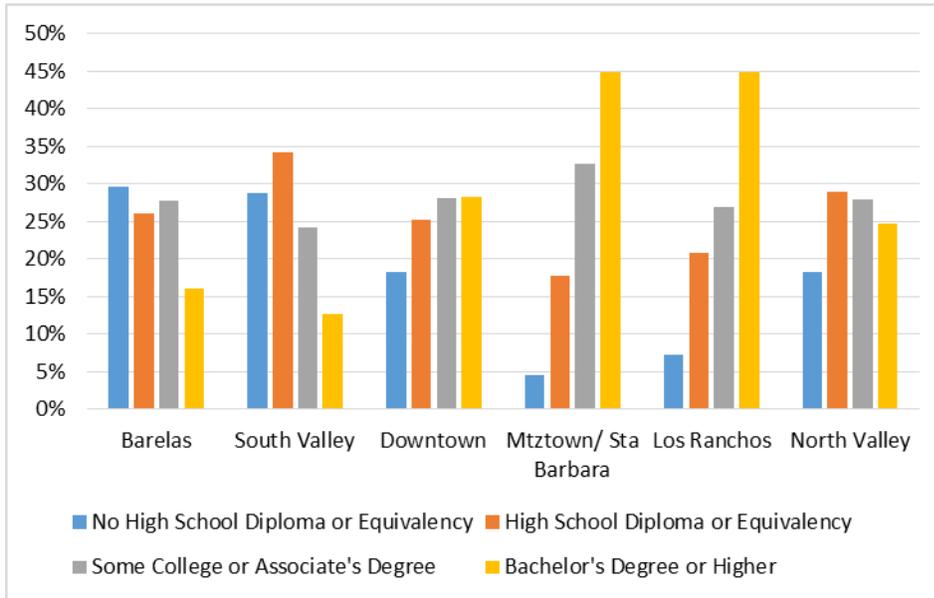
**Figure 3. Educational Attainment for population 25 years of age and older, South Valley, Albuquerque, Bernalillo County and New Mexico**



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

Relative to comparison communities, with the exception of Barelás, the South Valley has noticeably lower rates of educational attainment. In both the South Valley and Barelás, nearly 30% of the population does not have a high school diploma or equivalent. Furthermore, 63.0% of individuals within the South Valley have no college (i.e. high school diploma, equivalent or lower). This is similar, but higher than Barelás (55.7%), and quite a bit higher than the other comparison communities: downtown (43.6%), Martineztown/Santa Barbara (23.3%), Los Ranchos (28.1%) and the North Valley (47.3%). In addition, at 12.7%, the South Valley has the smallest proportion of individuals with a Bachelor's degree or higher. This statistic is again similar to Barelás (16.1%), but is significantly lower than the other comparison communities: downtown (28.3%), Martineztown/Santa Barbara (44.9%), Los Ranchos (44.9%) and the North Valley (24.8%).

**Figure 4. Educational Attainment for population 25 years of age and older, South Valley, and Comparison Communities.**



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

## 4. Income

Median incomes in the South Valley (\$36,821) are noticeably lower than we see in Bernalillo County (\$48,801) and the state (\$44,927) and lower than in the city of Albuquerque (\$49,989). Within all income brackets we see the South Valley lagging behind larger geographies – but by very little – until we look at households with incomes of \$100,000 or more, at which point we see a recognizable difference between the South Valley and other geographies.

**Table 3. Median Income & Income by Income Category**

	South Valley	Rest of County	Bernalillo	New Mexico
Median Household Income	\$36,821		\$48,801	\$44,927
< \$15,000	16%	14%	14%	16%
\$15,000-\$24,999	16%	12%	12%	13%
\$25,000-\$34,999	15%	11%	11%	11%
\$35,000-\$49,999	17%	14%	14%	14%
\$50,000-\$99,999	25%	30%	30%	28%
\$100,000 or More	11%	20%	19%	17%

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

## 4.1 Earnings and Benefits

Overall, households in the South Valley are relatively more dependent on government transfers and social safety nets at rates greater than Bernalillo County and the state average while a relatively smaller percentage receive income by way of earnings compared to those two geographies. In particular, 75% of households in the South Valley receive income through earnings, which is similar in proportion to, but still smaller than, the New Mexico average (76%) and noticeably lower than the proportion in Bernalillo County (79%). Meanwhile, a slightly larger percentage of households in the South Valley receive Social Security Income (31%) than individuals in Bernalillo County (27%) and the state (30%). The percentage of the population receiving Supplemental Security Income is slightly higher than we see at other geographies – 8% in the South Valley compared to 5% in Bernalillo and 6% of the state. Just over one fifth (21%) of all households receive SNAP benefits (formerly known as food stamps), which is noticeably higher than we see in Albuquerque and the county (both 13%), and statewide (14%). 3% of households receive cash public assistance which is essentially commensurate with what we see at other geographies. 18% of households in the South Valley receive retirement income – again, quite similar to what we see at all other geographies.

**Table 4. Sources of Income**

	South Valley	Rest of County	Bernalillo	New Mexico
Earnings	75%	79%	79%	76%
Social Security Income	31%	26%	27%	30%
Supplemental Income	8%	5%	5%	6%
SNAP Benefits/Food Stamps	21%	13%	13%	14%
Cash Public Assistance	3%	2%	2%	3%
Retirement Income	18%	18%	18%	19%

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

## 4.2 Poverty

Just over one quarter (26%) of the population of the South Valley lives at or below the poverty line, which is higher than we see in Albuquerque (18%) or New Mexico (20%). Looking at our comparison communities, poverty rates in the South Valley are much lower than we see in Baretas (43%), lower than we see in Martineztown (38%) and downtown Albuquerque (31%) but higher than we see in the North Valley (19%) and Los Ranchos (8%).

Breaking down poverty rates by age group, we see children are the hardest hit by poverty in the South Valley with 37.6% of all children living in poverty – compared to just 25.3% of children in Albuquerque, 25.8% of children in Bernalillo County, and 28.9% of children statewide. 22.8% of working-aged adults live in poverty, compared to 16.8% in Albuquerque, 16.7% in Bernalillo County and 18.8% in the state. 18% of seniors live in poverty which is roughly double what we see in Albuquerque (9.2%) and the county (9.6%) and as well higher than we see statewide (12.1%).

**Table 5. Poverty Rates by Age Cohort**

	South Valley	Rest of County	Bernalillo	New Mexico
Total	26%	18%	18%	20%
Under 18 y/o	38%	25%	26%	29%
18-64 y/o	23%	16%	17%	19%
65 y/o and Over	18%	9%	10%	12%

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

After breaking down poverty rates according to educational attainment, rates in the South Valley are generally commensurate with Albuquerque, the county and state, with a range of, at most, two percentage points. The exception is those with a bachelor’s degree or higher, where poverty rates are nearly double what we see at other geographies – 10.6% of the population with a bachelor’s degree or higher in the South Valley live in poverty – compared to 5.9% in Albuquerque, 5.7% in Bernalillo Co. and 5.8% in the state.

## 5. Employment

**Table 6. Labor Force participation**

	South Valley	City of ABQ	Rest of County	New Mexico
Population 16 and over	32,597	433,493	60,575	1,612,730
In Labor Force	58%	66%	60%	61%
Employed	51%	60%	55%	54%
Unemployed	7%	6%	4%	6%
Not in Labor Force	42%	34%	40%	39%

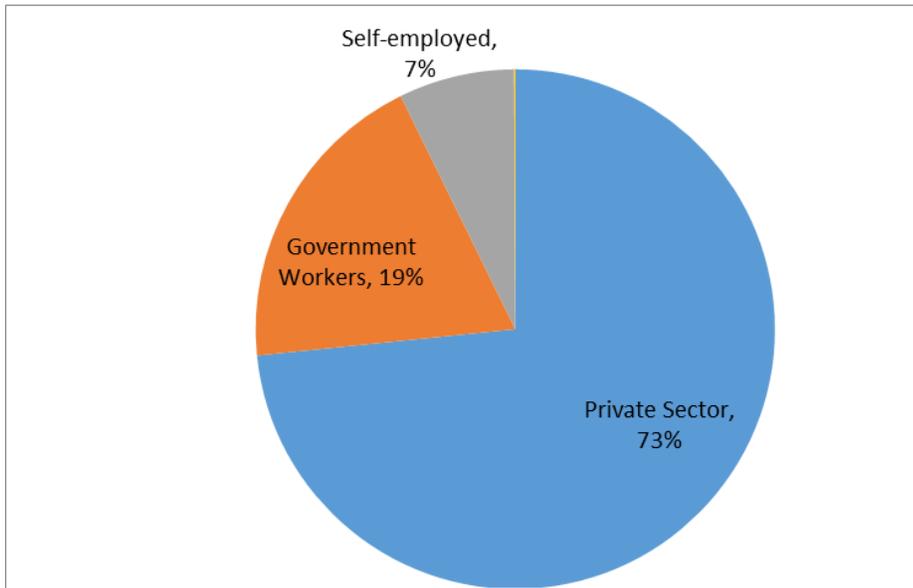
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2013 annual averages.

A smaller share of the population of South Valley, aged 16 years and older, is active in the community’s labor force than in the City of Albuquerque or across New Mexico. (Active engagement in the labor force, or “labor force participation”, is defined as persons aged 16 or older who are either employed or otherwise actively searching for employment.) Of those active in the labor force, 7% are unemployed, compared to 6% in Albuquerque and New Mexico as a whole.

### Employment in the Public and Private Sectors

Most workers in the South Valley are employed in the private sector (73%), which is similar to the county average (74%), and higher than the New Mexico average (70%). Only 19% of workers are employed in the government sector, which is noticeably lower than the county (21%) and state (23%) averages. The proportion of self-employed individuals is similar across all geographies at around 6% to 7%.

**Figure 5. Employment by Sector, South Valley**



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

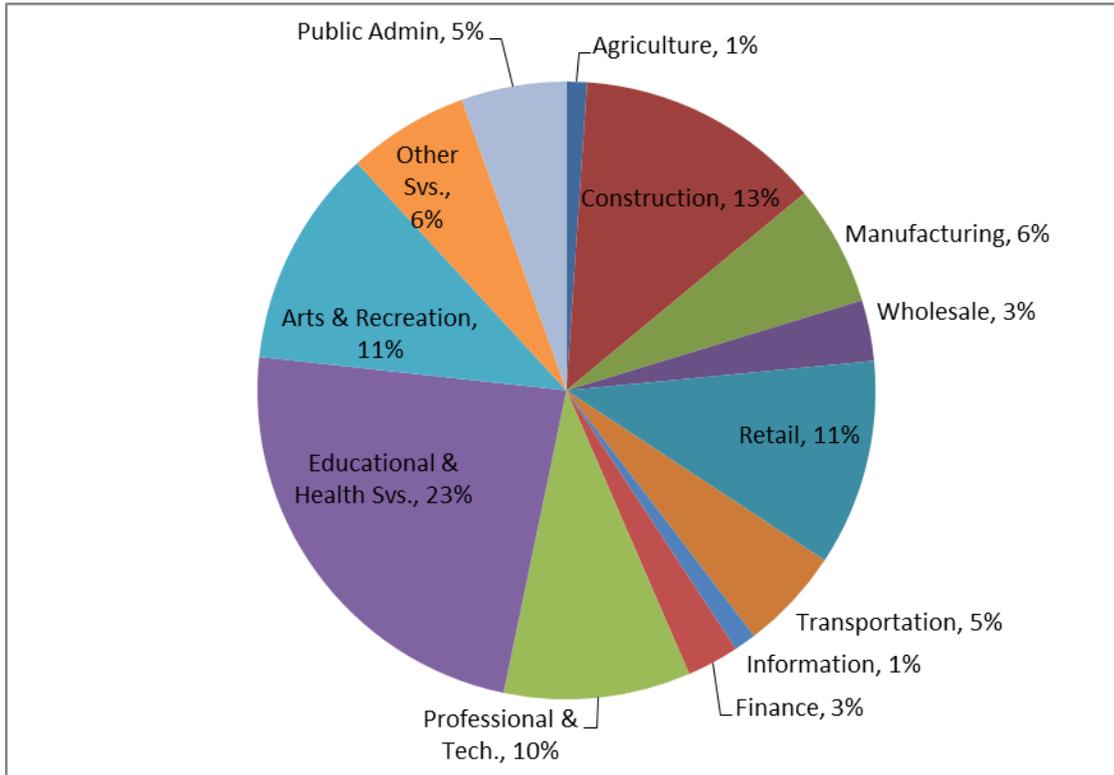
### **5.1 Employment by Industry**

Employment patterns in the South Valley and among the industrial sectors generally mirror the diversity typical of both the county and state averages. Overall, five primary industries dominate and constitute about 70% of the workforce. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the largest concentration of workers is in educational & health services (23%). This includes all workers involved in the provision of healthcare services including doctors, nurses, medical technicians and the like. It also includes both charter schools as well as the provision of private educational services such as for profit secondary institutions – it does not, however, include public schools. Although the sector comprises a hefty 23% of the areas workforce, that proportion is lower than the county and state averages, both of which are 25%.

The construction industry also constitutes a fair percentage of the total workforce at 13%, which is quite a bit higher than the Bernalillo County and New Mexico averages, both of which are 7% of their respective totals. Both retail trade and the arts, entertainment & recreation industries comprise 11% of the total, which is generally in line with the county and state averages. The professional & technical services industry, which includes engineers, accountants, architects, lawyers and the like accounts for 10% of the total workforce, which is similar to the New Mexico proportion (11%), but noticeably lower than the county average (14%).

The remaining industries, which comprise around 30% of the total, are generally similar to the county and state breakdowns. However, there are two exceptions. The first is public administration, which accounts for 5% of the total workforce in the South Valley, but comprises 7% of the total in Bernalillo County and 8% of the total in the state. In addition, the proportion of jobs in the finance and insurance industry is relatively lower in the South Valley (3%) than in the county (5%) and the state (5%).

**Figure 6. Employment by Industry, South Valley (New Mexico)**



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

## 5.2 Employment by Occupation

Stepping back from the disaggregated industrial breakdown, the makeup of workforce occupations is somewhat dissimilar to the county and state suggesting that the types of jobs that individuals are doing in the South Valley tend to be different than in the other two geographies. For example, compared to Bernalillo County (40%) and the state (35%), relatively fewer individuals in the South Valley (23%) are engaged in management, business, science and art occupations. However, occupations tend to be more highly represented in the service, natural resource, and production and transportation industries in the South Valley compared to the county and state averages – often running between 3%-5% higher than the other two geographies. Sales and office occupation are similar across geographies at about 23%-24% of the workforce.

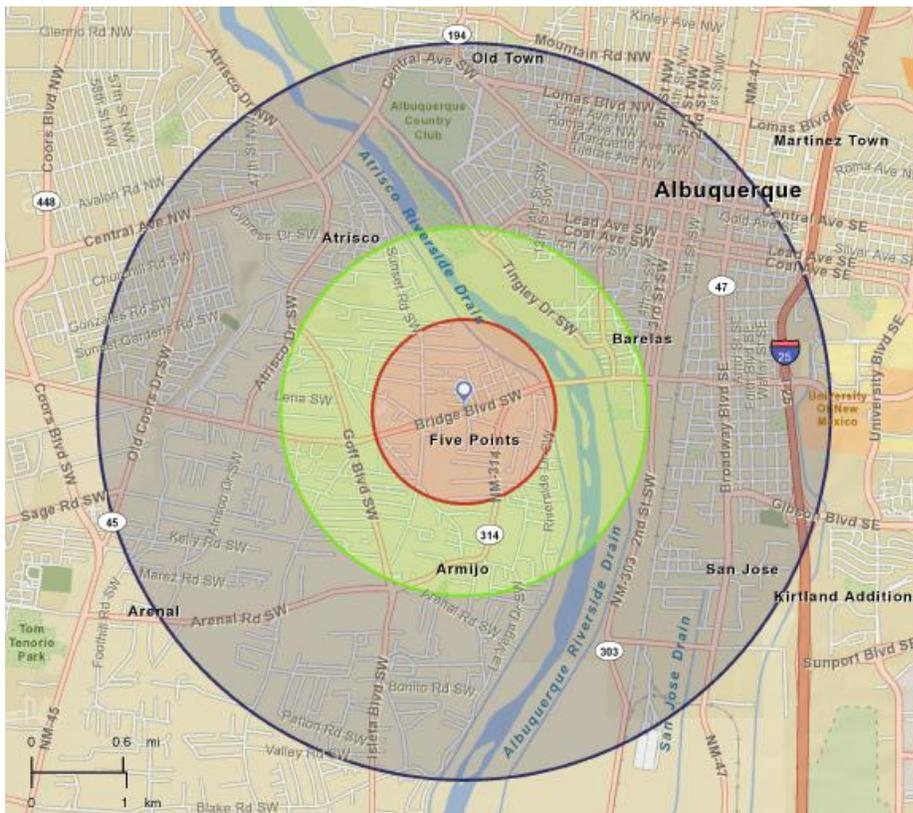
**Table 7. Employment by Occupation**

	South Valley	Rest of County	Bernalillo	New Mexico
Management, business, science, arts	23%	41%	40%	35%
Service occupations	25%	19%	20%	21%
Sales & office occupations	23%	24%	24%	24%
Natural resources, construction	15%	8%	9%	12%
Production, transportation	13%	8%	8%	9%

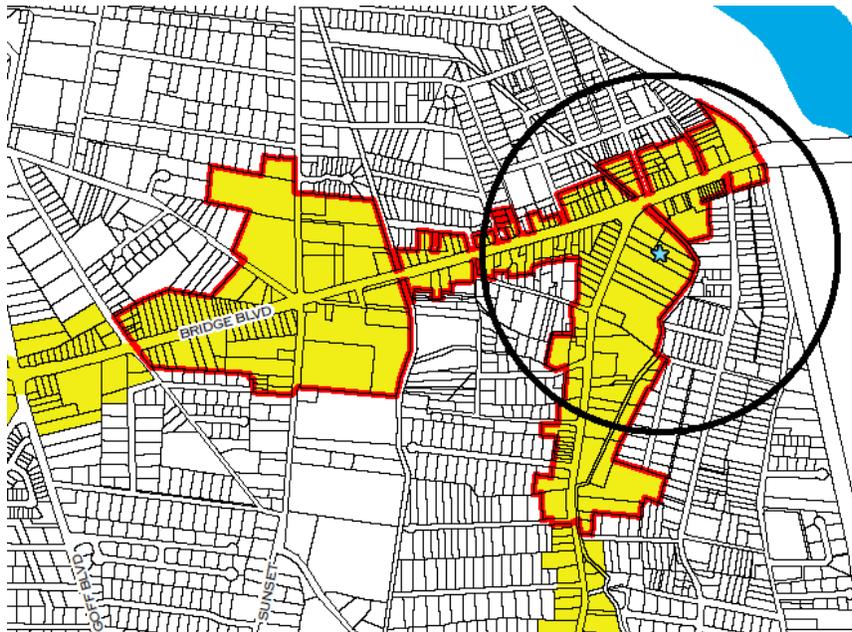
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2013 annual averages.

## 6. South Valley MainStreet

**Figure 7. South Valley Trade Areas, 0.5 miles, 1 mile and 2 miles.**



**Figure 8. South Valley Mainstreet District Boundaries**



### **6.1 MainStreet Demographics**

Within the South Valley MainStreet District the total population as of 2010 was 1,892 almost unchanged since 2000 (1,898).

The average household size in the MainStreet District is 2.7 persons, which is slightly smaller than in the South Valley overall, but slightly larger than in Albuquerque, Bernalillo County or New Mexico. Two thirds (66.3%) of households are family households – slightly fewer than in the entire South Valley area, but slightly more than we see at other geographies. Households within the district are somewhat less likely to have children than at other geographies at 41.2%.

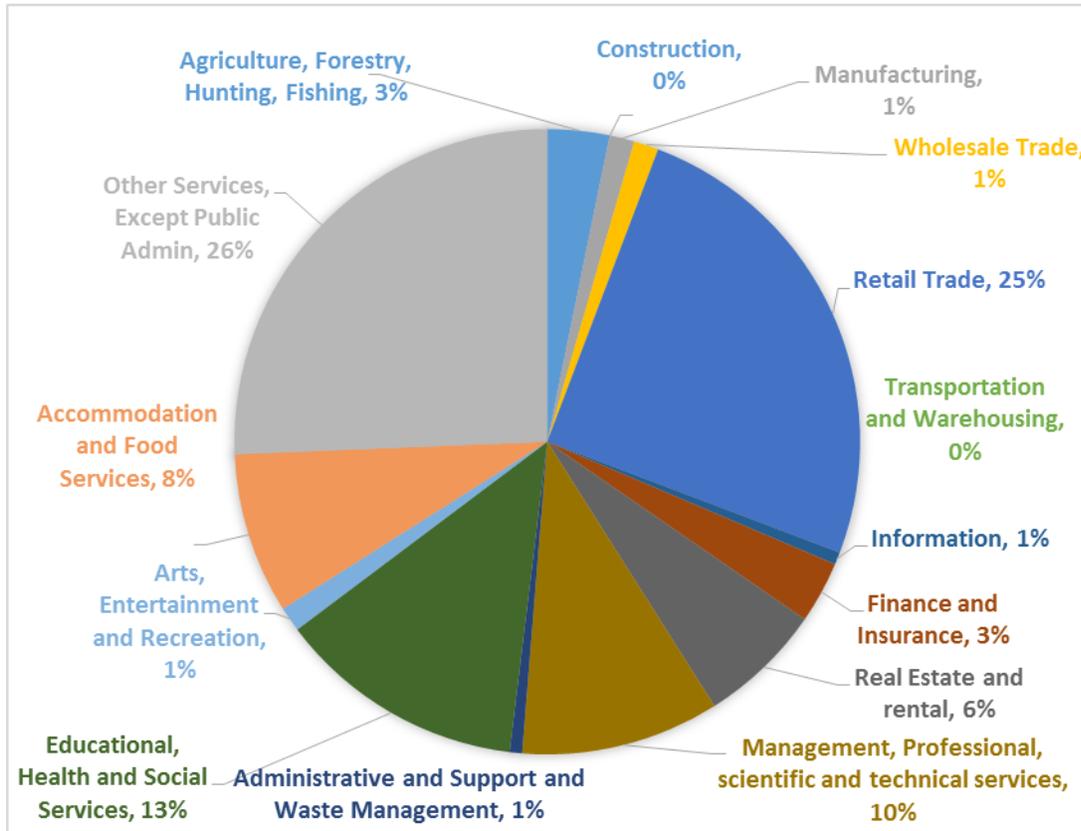
Within the MainStreet District, a smaller percentage of the population identifies as 'White' (52.6%) and a much larger percentage of the population identifies as 'Some Other Race' (40.2%) than the entire South Valley area. This speaks to its strong Hispanic identity. With regard to ethnicity the vast majority of the population identifies as Hispanic in the District at 83.5%, which is somewhat higher than the rest of the South Valley area (80.2%).

### **6.2 South Valley MainStreet Economy**

The South Valley MainStreet District acts as the commercial gateway to the district. Historically, the MainStreet District has served as an important commercial corridor for South Valley and Barelás

residents, and until 1938 for through traffic along Rt. 66. Today, we estimate roughly 4% of all businesses within the South Valley are located within the South Valley MainStreet District<sup>1</sup>.

**Figure 9. South Valley MainStreet District Businesses by Industry**



Source: South Valley MainStreet Business and Service Directory, 2014.

The District provides a broad array of services, including a strong base of professional services including accountants, architects, attorneys, business services, environmental services, financial services, realty services, public relations services, web design service, and the like, accounting for 10% of all businesses within the district. Further, the large retail trade sector is made up of diverse retail establishments serving many basic needs of the local community. This is strength of the District. However there is surprisingly limited food service, recreational or ‘cultural’ retail opportunities to keep locals in the district after the completion of essential errands, or to draw customers in from outside the South Valley.

The National Hispanic Cultural Center is a valuable cultural resource for the District – and to Albuquerque and New Mexico as a whole. Yet, beyond the NHCC the MainStreet District is decidedly lacking in arts, entertainment and recreation opportunities. Only the nascent McKernan Events Center falls into this category. A significant opportunity exists for the District to develop collaborative and co-

<sup>1</sup> Dunn and Bradstreet National Establishment Time Series data for 2012.

promotion efforts with NHCC. To accomplish this, the District must better develop its organizational infrastructure.

Accommodations and food services are also important to look at more closely. There are no accommodations to be found within the District – with the technical exception of the Center for Action and Contemplation, which does not meet the traditional definition of accommodations, nor the needs of the general traveler or visitor to the area. Looking at food service, the number of full service restaurants with beer and wine licenses and serving dinner is decidedly lacking, which when combined with the lack of arts, entertainment and recreation opportunities, is going to drastically effect the social and cultural vitality of the district.

As shown above, the ‘Other Services’ sector stands out in its size – this category is dominated by automotive related services, barbers and hair salons, and churches. Speaking to the value of car culture within the South Valley, 16% of businesses within the District are automotive related<sup>2</sup>, and while some of these fall under the retail category, many fall under other services – including mechanics, auto body and paint specialists and auto audio installation businesses. 12, or 8% of businesses within the district are salons or barber shops, and 6, or 4% are churches.

Four farms and 2 agricultural organizations lie within the district, and at least two acequias run through the district – an atypical amenity to be found with in a MainStreet District, an unquestionably culturally important industry within the South Valley, and certainly one to be capitalized upon in the cultivation of the MainStreet District identity.

It is important to note the vitality of the Mexican culture that is strongly expressed in the businesses within the district. This influence has become essential to the identity of the South Valley and the District and it is important that this be supported and cultivated as the narrative of the district develops. Simultaneously, it is extremely important to also give expression to the traditional New Mexican Hispano culture which has had such deep influence on the development of culture in the South Valley. Great care must be taken in the development of the district to nurture the diverse and vital identities of the Valley.

## 7. Challenges and Opportunities

### 7.1 Demographics

Today, just over 80% of the population of the South Valley identifies as Hispanic. Just over half of the population identifies as being of Mexican origin and just over a quarter identify as being of ‘Other Hispanic’ origin, which we often use as a proxy for measuring New Mexico’s Hispanics who have family history in the area dating back to the pre-territorial era. Historically, the South Valley was dominated by the traditionally New Mexican Hispanic population and the population of Hispanics who have come to the area since Statehood has been the minority. This demographic shift within the dominant ethnic group has the potential to create tension between the two groups and a sense of alienation among

---

<sup>2</sup> MainStreet Business Directory 10.14

both. Curating public space in order to incorporate the range of identities, in order to embrace new cultural influences while not forgetting past cultural influences will be a challenge for the South Valley and its MainStreet District.

Educational attainment in the South Valley among the population over the age of 25 is trailing far behind what we see at larger geographies. Over 60% of the population over 25 has never attended any formal post-secondary educational institution. With nearly 20% of the population of the South Valley between the ages of 5 and 17 and a very large portion of those coming from households where parents do not have experience in formal post-secondary education, efforts to support these students to engage in post-secondary education will be extremely important for the economic future of the community's children.

With close to 40% of the population under 18 in the South Valley living in poverty, poverty among youth and families requires attention from both a humanitarian and an economic perspective. Further, poverty among those 65 or older is twice what we see in the rest of the county at nearly 20%. Service programs focusing on families and the elderly, with broad or universal outreach at multiple points of contact with families – from healthcare facilities to educational facilities using a collaborative, whole family approach should be implemented and existing programs expanded, addressing not just specific, symptomatic issues but instead the full spectrum of challenges faced by families struggling with poverty.

Strong family orientation and household size suggests future housing development should be intended for use by larger and extended families.

## 7.2 Economy

The Southwest Mesa exploded beginning in the nineties and up until the Great Recession, creating a good bit of east-west traffic along Bridge and through the MainStreet District. The West Mesa continues to grow – though previous growth projections may need to be adjusted down in light of the very slow growth the Albuquerque MSA has seen since the Recession. This through-traffic has often been viewed as a valuable market to capture. However, the level of economic development necessary for the South Valley to compete with the offerings of greater Albuquerque are likely unrealistic in the short-term and as well would likely have a deleterious effect on the identity of the South Valley and on the small business economy of the District, which is where the area has comparative advantage in the Albuquerque MSA.

The South Valley MainStreet District's business community, though diverse, is almost exclusively comprised of small businesses that cater to local customers. This is a mixed blessing. From an economic perspective, this results in the leakage of local dollars. Area residents, who spend a large share of their income on groceries and otherwise at "Big Box" retailers, go elsewhere. And on the other hand, there is little activity to offset these leakages. There are few businesses, such as accommodations, that attract customers from outside the community.

Yet the composition of the local business community does reflect and serve the unique cultural traditions of the area, particularly the growing Mexican Hispanic population. The MainStreet District has a remarkable number of Hispanic-owned and culturally-oriented businesses, including carnicerias, panaderias and tortillerias, traditional healers, fashion and personal care businesses, religious organizations, a Spanish language radio station and even a couple of working farms.

It is not certain that efforts to restructure or diversify the composition of the local business community would necessarily address the economic needs of the community. As an unincorporated part of Bernalillo County, tax revenues generated by larger retail outlets would only minimally – if at all – benefit the South Valley. Further, it cannot be assumed that jobs created by larger grocers and Big Box retailers would employ local residents.

Instead, South Valley MainStreet should continue to emphasize the initiatives that re-enforce and promote the unique traditions of its community. Programs and businesses that seek to bridge and integrate the “communities within the community” have the most to offer. These are opportunities that would be unique to the South Valley, which cannot be easily replicated and dislodged from the community. Over the longer-term, and only to the extent that they support local traditions and culture, these initiatives can serve as a foundation for the South Valley MainStreet District to truly become a ‘gateway’ to the South Valley without fear that it will compromise its character in the process.

The South Valley overall is well poised to take advantage of one of New Mexico’s fastest growing industries – transportation and warehousing with the development of the warehousing district off of Rio Bravo. This is an industry capable of providing decent paying employment within a community where the percentage of the population who has completed a formal post-secondary education is comparatively small. The South Valley should look to this industry as an excellent opportunity to expand.

At essentially the geographic heart of the MainStreet District is the relatively new Gateway Park. This publicly owned outdoor space is an excellent resource for the MainStreet District. However, only recently established, the park has not yet met its potential in terms of programming and as a catalyst for economic development in the neighboring community. The Gateway Grower’s market in Gateway Park shows potential for being a valuable cultural and economic asset to the district and offering some amelioration to the food desert status of the area, the Chile Fest is an excellent example of culturally inclusive programming that serves to engage both the local South Valley community as well as the larger Albuquerque community and could develop into a strong tourism attraction for the District.

The existence of a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area overlaying the MainStreet District positions the area to address issues of economic disinvestment, infrastructural challenges related to deterioration and planning housing development and open space development, providing opportunities to harness funding and cultivate public/private partnerships. Efforts to develop a Tax increment Financing District (TIF) offer the potential to support future infrastructural needs within the District.

The cornerstone organization of the District is the SVEDC, the importance of which goes far beyond the impressive 60 small, Albuquerque-owned businesses it houses and excellent infrastructure it provides to the public. The SVEDC represents the real capacity of the South Valley. The collaborative and creative approaches to economic development we see coming out of the South Valley such as what we see at the SVEDC and in programs like the Agricultura Network point to possibly the South Valley’s greatest opportunity for making an impact in the regional economy.

### **7.3 Identity**

Balancing the interests of different cultural groups is a challenge faced in communities throughout New Mexico. Because of our historical settlement patterns, these dynamics are rather different in New

Mexico than what is seen in many other parts of the country and we do not have good models to look to in order to better understand how to create an intercultural space that honors our broad range of ethnic and identity communities.

The South Valley has the opportunity to be a leader among New Mexico's communities in creating a vital and inclusive intercultural community. However, this requires active efforts to make space, both physically and culturally, for the multiple identities to be honored and reflected within the community.

The challenge of creating this vibrant intercultural space is further complicated by developments outside of, but very relevant to, the South Valley; including Santolina, which has roots in Atrisco Land Grant but now has the potential to overshadow the South Valley.

The challenges to these efforts are high and low. Even something as apparently practical and straightforward as the Bridge Redevelopment Plan brings competing visions into contrast. The Bridge Redevelopment Plan poses what may be an imbalance between the Gateway District, conceived as a destination for consumers from across the Albuquerque Metropolitan Area and farther abroad, and the Five Points Village Center, which is to serve the daily needs of the local South Valley community. The 'Gateway District' has historically been the center of local commerce for both the South Valley and Barelás. It would serve the South Valley well to foster this long-time identity with the place and the MainStreet District should work to maintain and expand the provision of regular services for the South Valley within the District in order to assure the frequenting of the area by the local South Valley community. While the creation of place with the intention to draw spending by outsiders may have worked for tourism development in places like Santa Fe and Taos during the 20th century, it may not be an effective model for the South Valley in the 21st Century. The attraction of outside cultural consumers may undermine efforts to foster a vibrant and cohesive community based on local economic needs and cultural identities. The initial priority should be to create a space that draws together the people of the South Valley, fostering cohesion and pride in its unique and diverse Hispanic cultures. From that solid community foundation, initiatives to draw outsiders to the area with retail and amenities may prove to be more sustainable.