

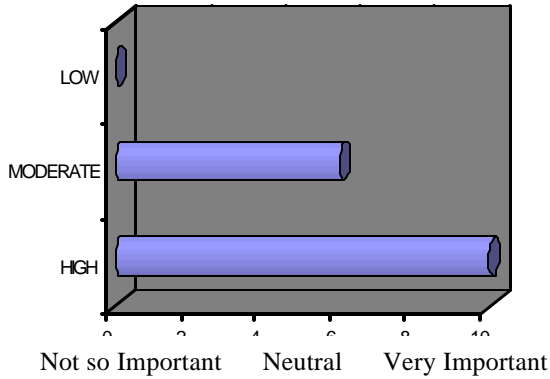


The Star Group, a well known research firm, pulled together three different groups to discuss their housing needs, and their interest in living downtown. The following is a summary from their 2001 report.

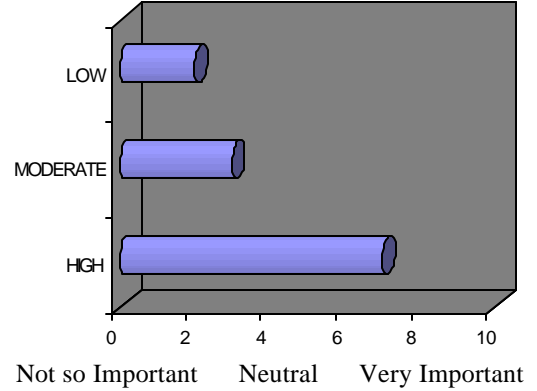


Focus Groups – Graphic representations of Results

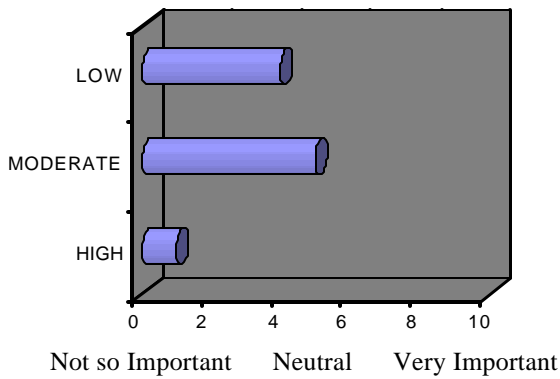
1. To what degree is it important to live close to work?



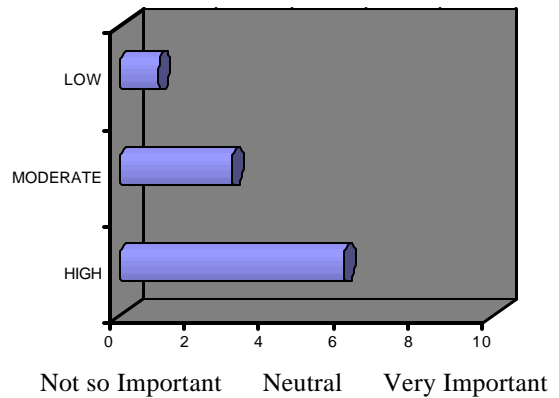
2. To what degree is the closeness of public transportation to your house important?



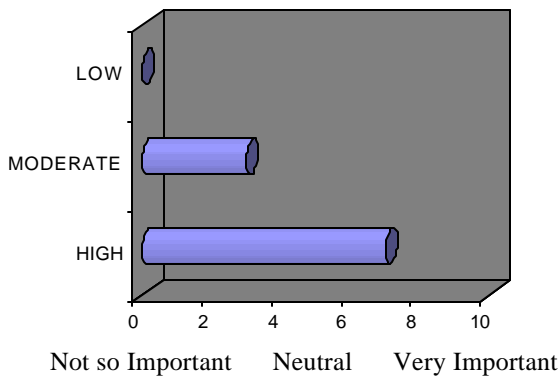
3. To what degree is it important to be able to walk to work?



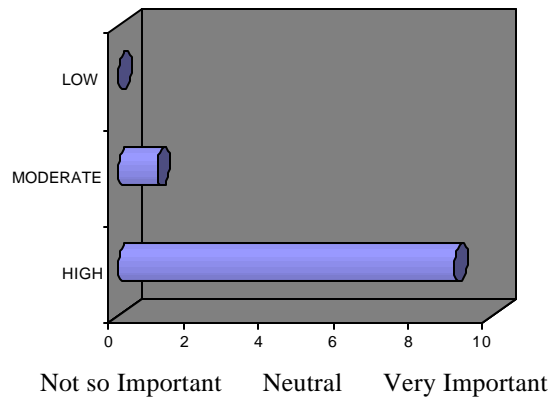
4. To what degree is security (controlled access) important in your community?



5. To what degree is it important to have a backyard?



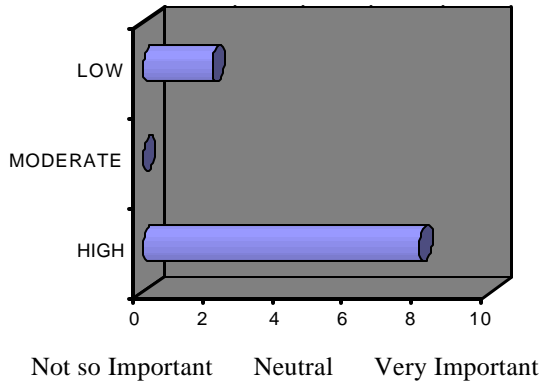
6. To what degree is parking important?



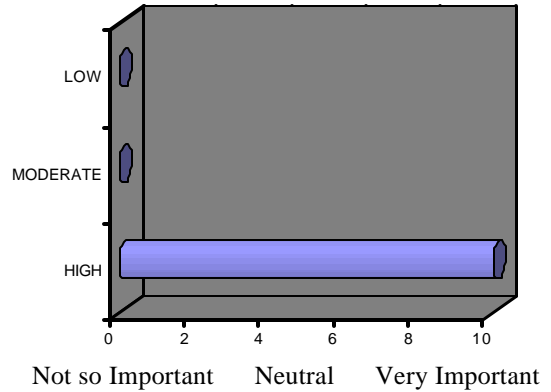


Focus Groups – Graphic representations of Results

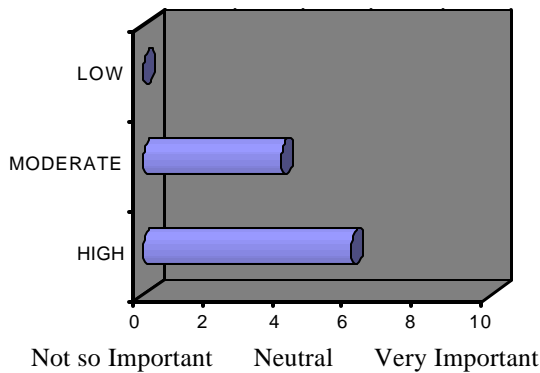
7. If there was adequate parking, to what degree is it important to have a garage?



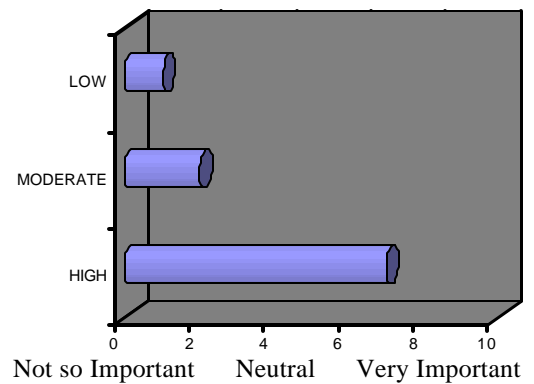
8. To what degree are house amenities important?



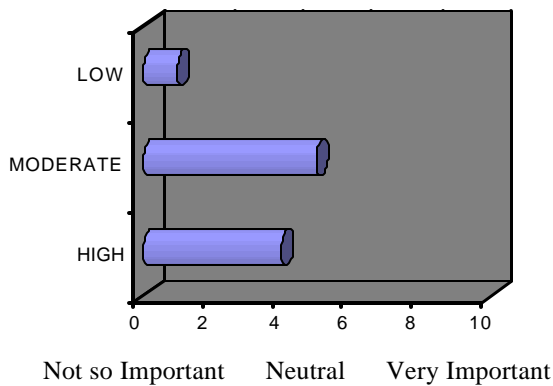
9. To what degree are cultural amenities important?



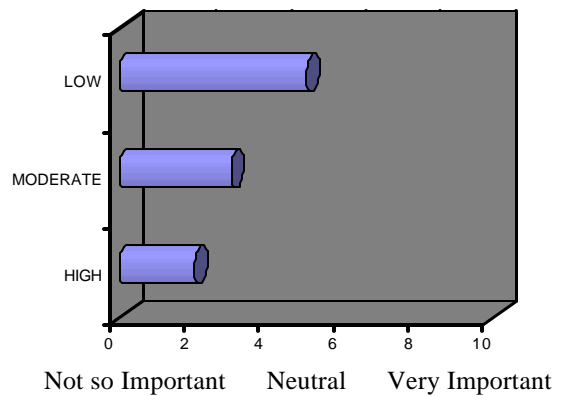
10. To what degree is the quality of nearby schools important?



11. To what degree is it important to have nearby facilities for children's activities during out-of-school time?



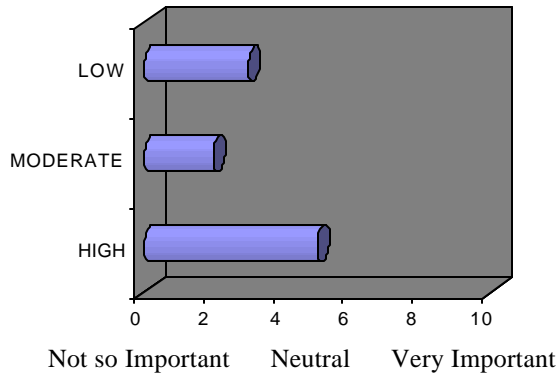
12. To what degree is nearby pre-school childcare important?



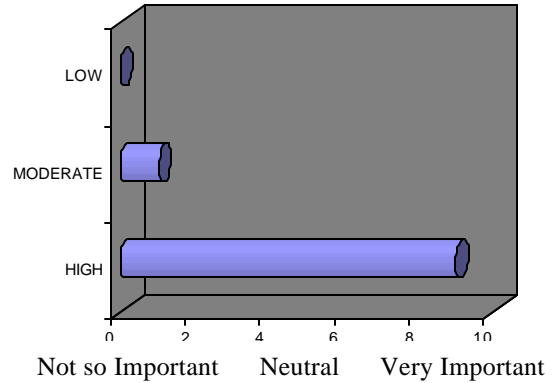


Focus Groups – Graphic representations of Results

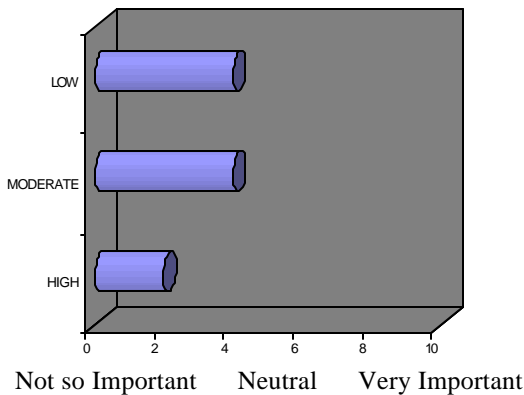
13. To what degree is it important for your community to be pet friendly?



14. To what degree is the closeness of shopping important?



15. What is your perception of the safety and security of the downtown streets? #1 being "not at all safe" and #9 being "completely safe"



If you were buying or renting a house in the downtown area,

How many rooms do you want?
 How many bedrooms do you want?
 How many bathrooms do you want?

High	Low
10	5
4	2
2.5	1

What price would you be willing and able to pay for the house you

	High	Low
Purchase	\$ 200,000	\$ 95,000

Focus Group - Participant Demographics

Residents of Downtown Focus Group

February 20, 2001

GENDER	AGE RANGE	ETHNICITY	INCOME RANGE	OCCUPATION	ZIP CODE
Female	50-64	Anglo	\$24,000 to \$49,999	ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	87104
Male	20-34	Anglo	\$50,000 to \$64,999	CIVIL ENGINEER	87106
Male	50-64	Anglo	Greater than \$99,000	REAL ESTATE BROKER	87106
Male	35-49	Hispanic	\$80,000 to \$99,000	EDITOR	87104
Male	50-64	Anglo	\$50,000 to \$64,999	ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST	87107
Female	50-64	Hispanic	\$24,000 to \$49,999	HOUSEWIFE	87102
Female	50-64	Anglo	\$24,000 to \$49,999	RETIRED	87102

Renters Focus Group

February 21, 2001

GENDER	AGE RANGE	ETHNICITY	INCOME RANGE	OCCUPATION	ZIP CODE
Male	50-64	Anglo	\$50,000 to \$64,999	ECONOMIST	87123
Male	35-49	Hispanic	\$24,000 to \$49,999	ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST	87109
Female	20-34	African American	Less than \$24,000	LEASING AGENT	87123
Female	50-64	Anglo	Greater than \$99,000	TRANSCRIPTIONIST	87110
Female	65+	Anglo	\$24,000 to \$49,999	PROPERTY MANAGER	87110
Male	50-64	Anglo	\$50,000 to \$64,999	PROGRAMMER	87109

Residents Outside of Downtown Focus Group

February 22, 2001

GENDER	AGE RANGE	ETHNICITY	INCOME RANGE	OCCUPATION	ZIP CODE
Male	20-34	Hispanic	\$50,000 to \$64,999	ELECTRICAL ENGINEER	87111
Male	20-34	Anglo	\$24,000 to \$49,999	PROGRAM SPECIALIST	87112
Female	50-64	Anglo	\$24,000 to \$49,999	PLANNER	87110
Male	20-34	African American	\$24,000 to \$49,999	PLANNER	87112
Male	20-34	Hispanic	\$24,000 to \$49,999	ACCOUNTANT	87110
Male	50-64	Anglo	\$50,000 to \$64,999	MARKETING	87123
Male	35-49	Anglo	\$50,000 to \$64,999	ENGINEER	87111
Female	35-49	Anglo	\$50,000 to \$64,999	ACCOUNTANT	87111
Female	35-49	Hispanic	\$50,000 to \$64,999	REGISTERED NURSE	87105
Female	35-49	Hispanic	Greater than \$99,000	MANAGEMENT	87107

Focus Group Report

Methodology

The Downtown Action Team commissioned this focus group project to assess Albuquerque citizens' opinions and concerns regarding residing in the downtown area of the city.

Three focus groups were conducted. The first, a group of residents of downtown, met at the Fannie Mae office at 500 Marquette from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm on February 20, 2001. The second, a group of renters, met at The Summit Apartments at 3901 Indian School Road from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm on February 21, 2001. The third, a group of residents who work downtown but own homes outside downtown, met at The Summit Apartments from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm on February 22, 2001. Participants were recruited from renter's lists and from major employers in the area such as St. Joseph's Hospital, PNM and the City of Albuquerque.

Bill Moye and Margaret Scally, focus group moderators for Star Group, LLC worked with Todd Clarke and the Downtown Action Team Housing Committee to design the focus group questionnaire and discussion outline. Focus group questionnaire and discussion outline are included in the Appendices.

The questionnaire began with information about each participant such as occupation, income level, age group and marital status. It followed with fifteen "to what degree" type questions answered on a scale of #1 (meaning not important at all) to #9 (meaning most important).

The discussion outline began with two general questions about participant's experience where they live now and where they have lived in the past. Next the participants wrote four

responses to a series of questions on large note cards, and then prioritized their answers. Each note card from each participant was then posted for the group to see and discuss.

Final questions allowed the group to expand their thoughts in a round table discussion. These comments were recorded and transcribed. Discussion comments are included.

Summary

"I haven't been downtown in years."

"I've lived downtown my whole life within a three block area."

The quotes above show the mixed experiences that focus group participants have had with the downtown area of Albuquerque.

Three groups convened: one of residents from the downtown area, one of renters and one of people who work downtown but own homes outside the downtown area. Participants were recruited from renter's lists and from major employers in the area such as St. Joseph's Hospital, PNM and the City of Albuquerque.

With a series of four questions, each participant was asked to write four responses. Here is a summary of their answers.

1. Why do you live in your current neighborhood?

Focus group participants agreed that affordability or price of their current residence influenced their choice. Most acknowledged that the atmosphere of their neighborhood – what it looks like and how it feels – influenced their selection. A good sense of neighborhood and good neighbors swayed them in picking a place to live. The issue of traffic or easy access to the freeway also



Focus Group Report

affected where they chose to reside.

All three groups listed:

- Affordability or price of their home
- Atmosphere i.e. old neighborhood, area looked appealing, city atmosphere with country feel, change from rural living, feels like Albuquerque
- People or neighbors, sense of neighborhood, good neighborhood feeling
- Traffic or freeway access, or ability to avoid freeway traffic

In two of the focus groups participants established the proximity of work, schools and family as priorities in their decision about where to live. Safety, the ability to feel safe and knowing the area had above average safety helped them choose their current homes. Another main concern for these groups was the amenities in their homes like the layout and square footage. Finally, two groups listed the nearness of the mountains or the valley as part of the enjoyment of their area of Albuquerque.

Listed by two groups:

- Work nearby
- Schools nearby
- Family nearby or personal roots
- Safety or feeling safe or area above average safety
- Amenities of the home, like square footage and layout
- Proximity to mountains or valley

In the focus group of downtown residents, participants mentioned the convenience to all other areas of town as a plus for them. Residents from outside downtown noted the importance to them of nearby shopping while participants from the renters group said

acceptance of pets played a part in where they selected to live.

Downtown residents listed:

- Convenience to all areas of town

Residents from outside the downtown listed:

- Shopping nearby

Renters listed:

- Pets accepted

2. What aspects of living Downtown do you/ might you like the most?

Focus group participants next were asked to write four aspects of living downtown they might like the most.

Most focus group participants liked the idea of living near work. They also viewed downtown as a central location in Albuquerque, close to restaurants and cultural amenities as well as family and friends.

Renters saw the downtown area as affordable and the Summerfest celebration as a positive part of the area.

Residents from outside of downtown liked the accessibility of public transportation downtown and the ability to walk to work, restaurants, etc. Older homes and mature trees appeal to them.

Participants from the downtown residents group felt they had already answered this. The other two groups both listed:

- Close to work
- Central to other interesting places
- Close to restaurants, walking distance to restaurants
- Close to cultural facilities, Zoo,



Focus Group Report

Botanical Center, Tingley Beach

- People, such as good neighbors, nearness of family and friends

3. What aspects of living Downtown do you/might you like the least?

Next, participants used their note cards to write four aspects of living downtown they like the least, or might like the least.

Overwhelmingly all groups showed concern about the presence of homeless people in the downtown area. Current downtown residents complained about homeless approaching them and sleeping in yards. Others saw panhandling as too prevalent. The lack of grocery stores in the area is a detriment in the opinion of all groups. All discussed the lack of cleanliness in the area, although residents of downtown would only admit it has dirty sidewalks and needs sprucing up, others went into more detail regarding empty buildings, untidy neighborhoods and lack of pride in the downtown area. Finally, all thought the lack of adequate parking was something they liked the least about the downtown area.

All groups listed:

- Homeless, street people, vagrants, beggars, drifters, panhandlers
- No grocery stores, market
- Dirty industrial feel, not clean, needs sprucing up, older unkempt neighborhoods
- Abandoned buildings, unsightly buildings, run down weedy areas, empty storefronts
- Parking, too little indoor parking, residential parking limited

Two of the focus groups saw the lack of safety as an issue in the downtown area. They felt

that crime rates were higher and that there was insufficient lighting downtown. Downtown residents said the bicycle police aren't present enough. Foot traffic by homeless people cause problems like vagrancy and panhandling. Both the downtown residents and the group living outside downtown perceived the price of real estate too high downtown.

Two of the groups listed:

- Safety, higher crime rate than other parts of the city, insufficient lighting (*downtown residents only mentioned this issue in regards to lack of bicycle police, beggars and drifters looking for trouble and too much foot traffic*)
- Price of real estate, high cost of housing

Each focus group then had some answers unique to their group.

Residents from outside downtown considered traffic noise, limited space for housing, inefficient zoning and lack of diversity in respect to socio-economic levels to be aspects of downtown they did not like.

Residents from outside the downtown added:

- Traffic noise
- Limited housing space
- Inefficient zoning, ideas being vetoed i.e. politics interfere with good ideas
- Lack of diversity in socio-economic levels

Renters considered the lack of quality retail businesses to be a drawback. An insufficient number of parks meant an area not pet friendly. Driving and parking during downtown special events was seen as a



Focus Group Report

problem.

Renters added:

- Area not pet friendly
- Lack of quality retail businesses
- Driving during events like Summerfest a problem

Downtown residents feel that commercial properties and businesses have taken over residential neighborhoods. They find air quality bad in the winter. The change of one-way streets to two-way was seen as a negative change. Finally, some perceive the proposed downtown baseball stadium as a threat to the quality of their neighborhoods.

Downtown residents added:

- City now encompasses residential areas
- Baseball stadium will have negative impact on nearby neighborhoods
- Changed traffic patterns not good
- Air quality not good in the winter

4. What house or neighborhood amenities would influence you or other people to move downtown?

Participants then wrote replies regarding house or neighborhood amenities that would influence them to buy or rent downtown.

Each of the focus groups stated that a cleaner, tidier neighborhood would influence them to move downtown. Safety and security must be present to persuade these participants to move downtown. People want more law enforcement, and want to feel safe for walking. They also want a safe neighborhood in which to raise their children. Last, each group clearly stated the importance of proximity to grocery shopping and other

quality retail shopping.

All groups listed:

- Cleaner and tidier neighborhoods, cleaner environment
- Safety, feeling of personal security, more law enforcement, safe for children, safe for walking
- Easy access to groceries, shopping

Two of the focus groups said they would be influenced favorably if they thought that downtown would flourish, that they could have faith in their investment and that the City would demonstrate a commitment to the area. These participants thought the issues around the homeless population in the area must be resolved. Participants expressed an interest in walking places and having parks nearby. They would like a garage or garage parking. Many would want easy access to entertainment and would like more entertainment and street festivals like they've seen in other cities.

Two of the focus groups listed:

- Belief that downtown would continue to flourish, faith in the investment
- City of Albuquerque must make a commitment to the area
- Homeless issues addressed
- Parks, area to walk and play, open space near house, area to walk/bike/hike
- Ability to walk places
- Garage, garage connected to house
- More entertainment, easy access to entertainment, street festivals

Two focus groups then had some answers unique to their group.

Renters would be influenced to buy or rent downtown if there was a gated community with large rooms, small yards and laundry



Focus Group Report

facilities. Quality schools downtown would also be important.

Renters listed:

- Gated community
- Quality schools
- Laundry facilities
- Large rooms
- Small yard

Residents from outside the downtown area commented that an affordable price would influence them. Some are interested in high-rise apartments or residences with good construction and energy efficiency. Accessibility to public transportation is important. Mature landscaping and shade adds desirability to downtown.

Residents from outside downtown listed:

- Affordable price
- High rise penthouse, views
- House well constructed, energy efficient
- Accessible to transportation
- Mature landscaping, shade

Finally, in a round table discussion, participants were given the opportunity to say more. They were asked, “If you had your choice between buying or renting your ideal home downtown or somewhere else, why would you choose downtown? Why not?”

Comments indicated that participants would choose downtown if it were affordable. They also perceive that getting to know one’s neighbors might be easier downtown. Being close to work and to cultural attractions held appeal as well as the ability to walk or use public transportation.

However, participants may not choose downtown because of issues with the homeless population, lack of retail services, rundown appearance of vacant storefronts and their view that the transit system needs to expand.



Focus Group Report #1 – Residents of Downtown

Introductions, Ground Rules, Purpose

the first question.

Purpose:

To gather information to improve the quality of life for living in the Downtown area.

Focus group responses:

1. How long have you lived in your current residence?

????4 year to 43 years

2. Where did you live prior?

????Las Cruces, downtown in 4 places during 21 years, nearby within 2 miles of downtown, SE Heights, South Valley, Far and near NE Heights, born at St. Joseph's

3. Four most important reasons why you live downtown? Each participant given four cards to write one reason per card.

????Proximity to North Valley, Trees

????Affordability, affordability

????Love the Atmosphere, It seems like a neighborhood, Old houses, sense of neighborhood

????Short Commute with little traffic, I work downtown, Close to where I work

????Services that are close by, Proximity to stores & restaurants, Close to what I enjoy, Convenience to all areas of town

????Schools Close by, Sons school nearby

????Feels like Albuquerque

????People, Not the cold heights, Spanish people in area

????Personal roots

????Avoid Freeway Traffic

4. What four aspects of living downtown do you like the most?

????Group thought this was redundant to

5. What four aspects... do you like the least?

????Changed traffic patterns, 5th St. being turned 2 ways, Street traffic

????Air issues in winter

????Street people approaching and sleeping in yards, etc., homeless, Get rid of motels that foster drugs and prostitution, beggars and drifters looking for trouble, too much foot traffic on my street going to Walgreens for booze, there is a certain level of hassle that comes and goes in graffiti, Lack of bicycle police, Dirty sidewalks, City policy contradicts development of DT

????No market in the heart of downtown, need grocery shopping

????Needs sprucing up, A lot of run down weedy areas,

????Nothing but bars stay open late

????Too little easy parking, too little indoor parking, residential parking is limited

????The city has moved to encompass the residential neighborhood

????Talk about a stadium- terrible

????High cost of housing

????Too many failed businesses on Central, abandoned buildings

????High cost of housing

????Too much foot traffic on my street

????Hot – in the summer it's cooler in the heights

6. What neighborhood amenities/ Services do you feel other people need to influence them to purchase or rent downtown?

????Cleaner & tidier neighborhoods



Focus Group Report #1 – Residents of Downtown 2/20

???? Easy access to entertainment; street festivals or other entertainment

???? Newer Houses, Increase dramatically urban housing

???? Higher profile safety measures

???? Faith in the Investment; City make long term commitment...

???? Deal with the vagrant issue; increased law enforcement security for homes; make it safe and pleasant to raise children in; safe feeling of able to walk to entertainment; higher profile safety measures; Feel as safe, clean, as NE Heights, Rio Rancho, etc.;

???? Easy access to groceries

???? Need housing conducive to today's lifestyle; Comparison to Nob Hill; Newer homes needed downtown; Many houses have been in families for generations; Too many houses are Law Firms;

7. Would you purchase Downtown again?

???? All but one say "yes"; if things are cleaned up e.g., homeless, health care facilities, half-way house, methadone clinic; if City doesn't deal with these problems, nothing will change; Stadium = traffic, pollution, noise

???? Builders should be sure they build what people want; Amenities and cost are important; whole spectrum of people and homes i.e. diversity; no children in neighborhood, except further out.

Focus Group Report #2 – Persons who Rent - 2/21

Introductions, Ground Rules, Purpose

Purpose:

To gather information to improve the quality of life for living in the Downtown area.

Focus group responses:

1. How long have you lived in your current residence?

????4 year to 24 years

2. Where did you live prior?

????Houston, Texas, in downtown;
Kansas City, Missouri within 2 miles of downtown, Phoenix, Rented about 3 miles from downtown but close to work; Indianapolis, Indiana in the suburbs

3. Four most important reasons why you live downtown? Each participant given four cards to write one reason per card.

????Price, Affordability
????Seemed like a nice neighborhood, sense of neighborhood, Feeling of being safe
????Found my residence on the Internet.
????Location and proximity to work, Area of town looked appealing.
????Private back yard, Small backyard
????Large size (square footage), Layout of the floor plan.
????Acceptance of pets (3)
????Freeway Traffic access

4. What four aspects of living downtown might you like the most?

????Albuquerque Country Club, Zoo, Botanical Center, etc; Zoo
Proximity to Tingley Beach

????Close to work (2)

????Summerfest

????Affordable

????Good Neighbors

????Close to Restaurants

????Central to other interesting and exciting places

5. What four aspects... do you like the least?

????Transients and gang activities

????Services and churches for transients are located DT and act as a magnet to the Homeless

????Not a safe place, higher crime rate than other parts of the city

????Number of homeless and panhandlers

????No pride in the DT

????No grocery stores

????Must be cleaned up to invite people
????Unightly buildings – architecture and condition

????Not pet friendly on the streets and park

????Absence of quality retail establishments, I like to buy gifts and clothes but cannot. Need a JC Penney's, Sears, Drug Store,

????Driving on DT streets during Summerfest

????Absence of parking, too little indoor parking

6. What house or neighborhood

amenities/ Services do you need to be influenced purchase or rent downtown?

????Gated Community with similar style of housing and price range

????Feeling of personal security; Parking

Focus Group Report #2 – Persons who Rent – 2/21

- very close to the front door,
- ????Quality Schools within walking distance
- ????Laundry facilities in the complex
- ????Nice parks and streets where you can feel safe from the transients
- ????Easy access to groceries
- ????Residence with large rooms
- ????Garage parking or a two car garage
- ????Being in a neighborhood where I do not have to drive somewhere to get what I want
- ????Small yard with a view
- ????Retail services – Shopping Center, Grocery (2), Grocery Store with a drug store, Supermarket
- ????Areas to walk and play with pets and children
- ????Cleaner & tidier neighborhoods
- ????The City Government must make an investment and commitment

7. Would you purchase downtown again?

- ????All would be willing to rent or purchase

8. If Choice, would you buy or rent DT

- ????If the changes we talked about, were in place and homes were affordable all said they would relocate – This assumed they were in the market to move.



Focus Group Report #3 – Residents outside of Downtown 2/22

Introductions, Ground Rules, Purpose

Purpose:

To gather information to improve the quality of life for living in the Downtown area.

Focus group responses:

1. How long have you lived in your current residence?

6-20 years North Valley, South Valley, Near Heights, Far Heights

2. Where did you live prior?

Rented downtown, Born and raised in Alb., UNM area, Native grew up in NE Heights, Boston, Native grew up in Ridgecrest area, Far South Valley then Las Cruces, Chicago then Colorado

3. Four most important reasons why you live downtown? Each participant given four cards to write one reason per card.

- ???? Gift (2) family property (built custom home)
- ???? Close to family (4)
- ???? Close to shopping (4)
- ???? Price of Home (4)
- ???? City atmosphere with country feel, proximity to the mountains (7)
- ???? Neighborhood safety above average (5)
- ???? Amenities for price (3), house was perfect
- ???? Public transportation
- ???? Freeway access
- ???? Close to neighborhood schools (2)
- ???? Good neighborhood feeling
- ???? Change from rural living

4. What four aspects of living downtown do you like the most? Group thought this was redundant to the first question.

- ???? Close to cultural facilities (7)
- ???? Close to friends and family (3)
- ???? Walking distance to work & leisure activities (3)
- ???? Close to work (6)
- ???? Public transportation (2)
- ???? Being part of proposed developments
- ???? Centrally located (6)
- ???? Love older homes (3)
- ???? Walking distance to restaurants (3)
- ???? Mature trees (2)

5. What four aspects... do you like the least?

- ???? Vagrants, homeless (6)
- ???? Vacancies and parking lots
- ???? Noise from traffic (3)
- ???? Dirty industrial feel, not clean (4)
- ???? Great ideas being vetoed i.e. politics interfere with good ideas
- ???? Lack of services, grocery (7)
- ???? Lack of safety, not well lit, (3)
- ???? Parking
- ???? Price of real estate (3)
- ???? Lack of mix of socio-economic levels
- ???? Inefficient zoning
- ???? Empty storefronts along Central
- ???? Limited housing (3), space
- ???? Older or unkempt neighborhoods

6. What house or neighborhood amenities do you feel you would need to influence you to purchase a home and live downtown?

- ???? Shopping (4)
- ???? Affordable, price (6)
- ???? Safety (4)
- ???? Garage connected to house (2)



Focus Group Report #3 – Residents outside of Downtown 2/22

- ????Walking/ biking/ hiking (5)
- ????Homeless (3)
- ????High rise penthouse, views (2)
- ????Separation living space, size of lot (3)
- ????More entertainment
- ????Belief that downtown would continue to flourish
- ????House well constructed/ energy efficient
- ????Open space next to house
- ????Cleaner environment
- ????Transportation access
- ????Mature landscaping, shade

7. Given your experience with the downtown area, what would influence you to purchase or rent a home downtown?
8. If you could buy the ideal home in your price range either downtown or in another neighborhood, why would you choose the downtown neighborhood? Why not?