

# EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT AND RISK OF DISPLACEMENT:

Profiles of Four Santa Fe  
Neighborhoods

Executive Summary



# EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT AND RISK OF DISPLACEMENT

## Profiles of Four Santa Fe Neighborhoods

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Population shifts in cities don't happen by accident. Federal, state, and local decisions all encourage or discourage people's choices of where to live. A city's choices on where to put infrastructure, transit, affordable housing, and other resources significantly influence shifts in population, which can occur unequally across income, race, age, and other demographic characteristics. Where people live – whether by individual choice or influenced by resource allocation – has serious, long-lasting impacts on health and well-being.

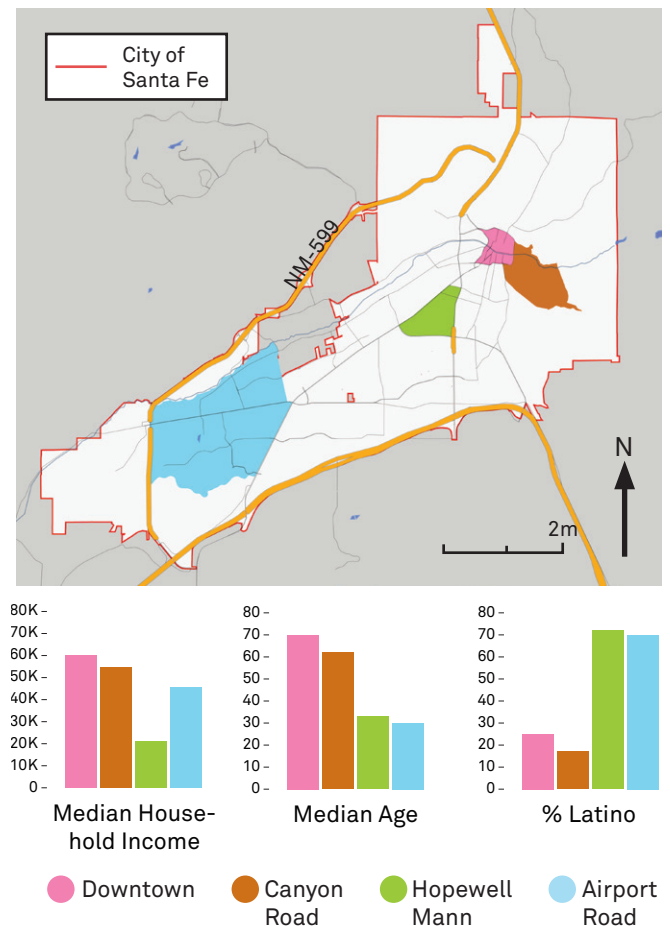
Many Santa Feans are concerned that a significant shift of low-income Latino residents is underway, and that the City's housing and infrastructure decisions are contributing to this shift. To help understand whether this is true, this report describes existing conditions for a number of indicators of gentrification and displacement, and examines public resource investment in four neighborhoods: Downtown, Canyon Road, Hopewell-Mann and the Airport Road corridor. We also conducted two focus groups with residents of Hopewell-Mann and the Airport Road Corridor.

Over the last 50 years, as tourism, the arts, upscale dining and retail transformed the core of Santa Fe, residents who could no longer afford to live close to Downtown moved to the outskirts. To accommodate this migration, the city annexed previously unincorporated territory and new housing developments sprang up. Over time, these changes shifted where and how people live, splintering the city into more distinct – but more stratified – neighborhoods. As a resident of the Airport Road Corridor said in a focus group: “When you get pushed out to these areas, it's already decided – who you are. Because you live here.”

### NEIGHBORHOOD DISTINCTIONS

Half of Santa Feans are Latino. But while Hopewell-Mann is almost three-fourths Latino, only about 1 in 6 residents of Canyon Road are Latino. The median annual household income is more than \$60,000 in Downtown and more than \$54,000 in Canyon Road, but only \$21,000 in Hopewell-Mann. The median age in Canyon Road is over 60, but only about half that in both Hopewell-Mann and the Airport Road Corridor.

Figure 1: Santa Fe Profiled Neighborhoods with Age, Latino Population, and Income Levels, 2009-2013



Many other distinctions among the neighborhoods have emerged.

- **Downtown** is primarily a commercial neighborhood. Its small, declining and aging population is mostly white. Downtown residents are less car-dependent, so they walk more. Downtown experienced gentrification and displacement in the 1960s and 1970s, but these trends are not active currently.
- **Canyon Road** enjoys proximity to downtown and is a destination for tourists and “snowbirds.” Housing costs in Canyon Road are higher than in Santa Fe as a whole, but it has the lowest percentage of households that are housing

cost-burdened.\* It has the lowest proportion of Latino residents in the city, and since 2000 has become older and whiter. It is not facing the challenges of gentrification and displacement; rather, a challenge is that it is a fairly inaccessible community that others in Santa Fe feel isolated from and unable to enjoy the benefits of.

- **Hopewell-Mann** is a majority renter-occupied and Latino neighborhood. Rents are lower than elsewhere, but over a third of residents are poor and 60 percent are burdened by housing costs. One in four residents are under 18. Proximity to Downtown, a small but growing number of upscale retail amenities, and access to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure are indicators that may put Hopewell-Mann at risk for gentrification, with subsequent risk of displacement.
- **The Airport Road Corridor**, largest of the four neighborhoods, has had a significant population increase since 2000. It has the city's largest proportion of Latinos and of people 18 and under. Two-thirds of houses are owner-occupied; nearly one-third of houses are mobile homes. Home values and rents are the lowest among the four neighborhoods. Rents are increasing, but the proportion of households that are housing cost-burdened has decreased. Overall, it is a source of relatively affordable housing for Santa Fe's middle and lower income Latino households and for youth. These factors and its distance from Downtown place the Airport Road Corridor at low risk of gentrification and displacement, particularly when compared to Hopewell-Mann.

## CURRENT DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES

Our analysis focused on four areas of the City's investment in the public resources that shape neighborhoods, influence population shifts, and affect health, but may not always be distributed equitably.

- **Housing.** Housing costs in Santa Fe are higher than in Albuquerque and in New Mexico as a whole. Rents and home prices declined during the recession but are on the rise again. The City has made some significant efforts to provide affordable housing through zoning requirements

and facilitating private developments. Affordable rental housing is clustered in Hopewell-Mann and in the Airport Road Corridor, but there is still not enough supply to meet the demand, spurring some longtime residents to leave the city.

- **Green Space.** Some areas of the city are well-served by parks: Canyon Road has 7 acres of parks per 1,000 residents and Downtown over twice as much. But Hopewell-Mann has less than a third of an acre per 1,000 residents, and the Airport Road Corridor is also poorly served. The City has allocated about 30 percent of available funds from a 2008 parks and trails bond to the city council district where Downtown and Canyon Road are, and almost as much to the Hopewell-Mann council district, but less than 20 percent to the Airport Road Corridor council district (the remainder is in the council district that does not include our profiled neighborhoods). Given the large youth populations in Hopewell-Mann and Airport Road, this is a significant gap.
- **Sidewalks and bike lanes.** Downtown, Canyon Road, and Hopewell-Mann appear to be well-served with sidewalks, but the Airport Road Corridor appears to be lacking. Regional agencies are creating a Pedestrian Master Plan to identify priority projects in all four neighborhoods, but those projects are currently unfunded. City data indicate that Downtown, Canyon Road and Hopewell-Mann also seem well-served by bike lanes. But Hopewell-Mann residents say as a practical matter there is really only one bike lane, and again the Airport Road Corridor is lacking. From one recent bond issue, Airport Road received only 12 percent of bicycle and trail funds, far less than the other three neighborhoods.
- **Bus access.** The city's main travel corridors – such as Cerillos, Agua Fria, St. Francis Drive, and Rodeo Road – seem to have a fairly good network of bus routes. But many Santa Feans have to walk 15 or more minutes from bus stops to their ultimate destination, have a one-hour wait for a bus, and have limited access to public transportation in the evenings. Overall, bus access in Canyon Road and the Airport Road Corridor is limited. This is not a concern for Canyon Road, but because the Airport Road Corridor is farther from downtown jobs and other designations, its residents are highly car-dependent and would benefit from better bus service.

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\* The U.S. Census Bureau defines housing cost-burden as renters or homeowners who spend 30 percent or more of their income on housing.

## A PATH TO MORE EQUITABLE PUBLIC INVESTMENT

Available Santa Fe data shows that there are inequities among the profiled neighborhoods. Residents of the profiled neighborhoods experience vastly different conditions in demographics, housing, and public resources. Across Santa Fe's neighborhoods, displacement and the risk of gentrification are playing out unevenly and inequitably.

Increasing housing costs and declining incomes create a risk of displacement for some residents, particularly Latino and low-income residents of Hopewell-Mann and similar neighborhoods. Residents of Airport Road may not be as exposed to this risk, but this protection may come at the cost of having fewer public resources. In contrast, residents of more affluent neighborhoods such as Downtown and Canyon Road appear largely immune to these risks, all the while experiencing the benefits of public resource investment that low-income, majority Latino neighborhoods do not enjoy to the same degree.

To counter this imbalance, policymakers in Santa Fe should commit to a shared vision and code of ethics for equitable public investment – a set of principles that guide decisions, maintain the integrity of city planning, and hold elected officials accountable. We urge the City to embrace these steps:

- **The Resident's Bill of Rights.** Recently passed by the City Council, the Resident's Bill of Rights resolution identifies five indispensable pillars to ensure equity in public infrastructure investment and land use planning: 1) affordability; 2) quality, sustainability, and health; 3) accessibility, fairness, and equity; 4) stability and protection from displacement; and 5) community control.
- **Racial Equity and Health Assessments.** Conducting assessments of how proposed policies and projects will affect health and equity will help reduce, eliminate, and prevent persistence of racial disparities and divisions in Santa Fe, and improve health for the most vulnerable populations.
- **Community-Wide Affirmative Action.** Governing bodies should enact legislation requiring prioritization of the needs of communities of color for ongoing and new infrastructure, maintenance, and service provision.

- **Monitoring Change.** To achieve progress in planning and programs to address concerns raised in this report, for each neighborhood the City should track the distribution of funding for public resources; residents' participation in planning and economic development decisions; use of existing infrastructure; and the addition of new infrastructure.

Different levels of investment in public resources ultimately have health impacts on stress and anxiety, physical activity, injury, respiratory disease, and access to essential needs such as health care and healthy food. We hope that decision-makers in Santa Fe will take these health impacts into consideration and move forward on these recommendations.

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This report was authored by Human Impact Partners with collaboration from Chainbreaker Collective and the New Mexico Health Equity Partnership

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*The purpose of the NMHEP is to strengthen the capacity of New Mexico communities to shift power relations through advocating for systems and policy change that will improve the conditions where children, families, and communities are healthy. This requires addressing structural and institutionalized inequities based on race, class, gender and geography.*

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