

New Mexico MainStreet
Winter Conference 2024 | Santa Fe, NM

Urban MainStreet Roundtable
Session Review

February 2, 2024

Session Attendance by Organization

Downtown Las Cruces Partnership
South Valley MainStreet
Earthcare
Revitalize San Pedro
Alamogordo MainStreet
Los Alamos MainStreet
Nob Hill MainStreet
Downtown Albuquerque MainStreet
Santa Fe Business Incubator
City of Santa Fe Office of Economic Development
Los Alamos County Planning Division

Session started with introductions followed by a few examples of smart city technology [slides from session included with this document]. Inherent biases and inappropriate uses of data collected through smart city initiatives was mentioned.

Discussion moved towards services that city and county governments can provide to make business data more accessible. Session attendees mentioned that the city of Albuquerque does not have an online business renewal option and that information about businesses in a particular district (amount, industry, size, age) is not available. To learn that information many MainStreet districts are asked to survey businesses and provide that data back to the city. It was mentioned that the county of Los Alamos had recently discovered that their software license allowed for on-line business license applications and renewals. This may be the case for other counties and municipalities.

The issue of advocacy was raised. With business owners overly burdened and their time at a premium is it realistic or fair to assume that they can advocate for themselves to city and county governments. The same holds true for directors of nonprofit organizations like MainStreet orgs. Maybe a shift in focus towards the cities and counties themselves conducting outreach to determine the needs of business warrants consideration. This is often done as part of a BR&E program but maybe the tasks and outcomes associated with business outreach programs should be reevaluated.

The distinction between code enforcement and code compliance was discussed as they pertain to businesses. It was mentioned that 98% of the time businesses want to do the right thing - obey codes, ordinances, etc. but are often confused or obfuscated by city or county administrators and departments. Punishing businesses for not following procedures that are known to be unclear is ridiculous (code enforcement). Instead cities and counties should encourage businesses to follow outlined procedures and provide assistance when those procedures become cumbersome and confusing (code compliance).

It was decided by show of hands that the urban MainStreets within the NM MainStreet network should continue to have separate sessions and meetings at conferences and institutes and should have distinctive programming opportunities throughout the rest of the year. It was also mentioned that NMMS could work on policy papers to help guide local governments.

Followup

| tasks | assigned |
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| Check with Daniel about carving out an Urban Main program within NM MainStreet | Sean O'Shea - RS |